

Summer 2011 Syllabus

Instructor: Allison H. Hitt
Course: English 304
Class Times: MTWRF 9:00 – 10:15 A.M.
Class Location: Colson Hall G18

Instructor e-mail: ahitt2@mix.wvu.edu
Dept. Phone: 304-293-3107 (msg. only)
Office Location: Colson Hall 332
Office Hours: MTW 10:15 – 11:15 A.M.

English 304: Business Writing

Overview and Course Goals. English 304 is designed to help you become effective professional writers and communicators before you enter the workplace, so we will focus primarily on analyzing and developing successful strategies for workplace communication. A fundamental assumption of this course is that writing happens in response to a given situation and with a clear communicative purpose. By discussing successful communication strategies and practicing them in a variety of common business forms—memos, letters, proposals, reports—we will learn to analyze different writing contexts, meet the needs of various readers, and organize and present material logically and practically.

Course goals for English 304 include:

1. Learning the nature, role and conventions of professional writing in the workplace.
2. Understanding and applying rhetorical principles of professional communication and articulating rhetorical analyses thoroughly and specifically.
3. Learning the formats, strategies, and basic approaches of professional writing and its genres.
4. Learning to design and professionally create workplace documents and visuals.
5. Learning to construct competitive employment documents.
6. Working collaboratively as members of a team on professional writing projects.
7. Applying research and professional writing techniques to professional situations to develop effective oral and written professional reports.

Course Policies & Procedures. Please familiarize yourself with the following rules:

Academic Integrity. Being a person of integrity in the workplace is crucial. This should be mirrored with your professional writing assignments for this class. Academic dishonesty—taking someone else’s published or unpublished words or ideas and calling them your own—has dire consequences in this class, in the English department, and in WVU as a whole.

Accommodations. If you have a documented learning disability, hearing or vision problem, or any other special need that might affect your performance or participation in the class, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester and contact Disability Services:

West Virginia University Office of Disability Services
G-30 Mountainlair

Phone: (304) 293-6700 Voice/TDD: (304) 293-7740 Email: access2@mail.wvu.edu

Summer 2011 Syllabus

Attendance. Regular class attendance is absolutely required in this class. Everyone is allowed two absences, and subsequent absences will lower your grade by one letter. Five or more absences result in a failing grade. If you are sick, have a severe injury, or critical personal problem, take care of yourself and please notify me *within 24 hours* of the missed class.

Conferences. Occasionally, we will cancel class to hold conferences. You will meet with me to discuss your progress, and you will meet with peers to critique and offer suggestions about their writing. Missing a conference or failing to complete the work will result in an absence.

Lateness. It is understandable to run late every once in a while. However, consistent lateness shows disregard and disrupts the class. Being 10 minutes late three times equals one absence.

Late Work. As in the workplace, late work is unacceptable. If there is a problem with any assignment, talk to me *before* the deadline. Otherwise, late work will not be accepted.

Submitting Work. You have the option to submit all writing assignments electronically through the eCampus discussion board, and they will be due by the time class starts. You may also print copies of all your work and turn them in at the beginning of class. Regardless, I will ask you to submit both physical and electronic copies of both the Midterm Portfolio and Final Portfolio.

Etiquette. Treating others in our class with respect is crucial to your success in English 304. Your classmates and instructor deserve your respect and support, just as you deserve theirs.

Computers and Cell Phones. If asked more than once to stop Internet browsing (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, email) or texting, you will be asked to leave class and will be counted absent for the day. If you are expecting a call, let me know *before* class.

Food and Drink. To protect our computer lab classroom, please finish your snacks and drinks *before* coming to class. We will observe the “no food and drink” policy within the classroom.

Office Hours. Though I have set office hours, you may also schedule an appointment with me to talk about any questions or comments you have about your progress in the course at any point in the semester. I am also happy to talk with you through email, and I will respond to you (in email or in class) within 24 hours Monday through Friday.

Pre-Requisites. English 101 and 102 are pre-requisites for this course. First- and second-year students should not be registered for English 304.

Social Justice. I am committed to social justice and a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. Discrimination of any kind will not tolerated.

WVU Writing Center. The WVU Writing Center is a great place to receive additional feedback on your ideas and written work. The center is located in G02 Colson Hall, and summer hours are 11:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. Monday – Friday. Call (304) 293-5788 to schedule a free appointment.

Summer 2011 Syllabus

Texts and Materials.

Oliu, Walter E., Charles T. Brusaw, and Gerald J. Alred. *Writing That Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job*. 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. Print.

In addition, you will need to access your MIX account and class eCampus page regularly.

English 304's Portfolio Approach. This course uses a portfolio approach in order to emphasize ongoing writing and revision. You will not receive a grade on individual papers, but you will always receive comments on your papers to give you a sense of what to revise for your final portfolio. You will also receive an “In-Progress” midterm grade and commentary, which will describe your work during the first half of the semester. You are welcome to talk to me if you have questions about your progress in the class. Success in this class depends on meeting all the requirements, the quality of your written work, and your willingness to revise and rethink.

Expect to complete four projects (about 20+ pages total) over the course of the semester, in addition to other informal writing. I will provide you with more information as we begin each of the four major projects, but they break down as such:

- Correspondence Assignment (Project #1);
- Job Application Package (Project #2);
- Collaborative Proposal (Project #3);
- Formal Collaborative Report (Project #4).

Your participation in class and conferences as well as your completion of a formal oral presentation will determine the remainder of your final grade in the course (see the scale below for a more specific breakdown of grading calculations).

Evaluation Criteria and Grade Descriptions

Final Portfolio	60%
Minor Writing Assignments	20%
Participation	10%
Formal Group Presentations	5%
Websites	5%

Grade Descriptions for Writing Assignments

A—Exemplary work that demonstrates originality and initiative. The content is thorough and suitable for the audience; the style is clear and accurate; genre conventions are effectively used; grammar and mechanics are correct. The portfolio demonstrates a range of well-written, well-edited, and well-documented texts that a company could use as exemplary materials.

B—Good work. The documents generally succeed in meeting their goals in terms of audience, purpose, and genre without the need for further major revisions. They may need some *minor*

Summer 2011 Syllabus

improvements in content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics. In the workplace, a company would be able to use the documents without major revisions of any sort.

C—Satisfactory work. Documents are adequate in all respects but require substantial revisions of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics; they may require further work in multiple areas. For instance, writing may lack adequate explanations or documentation. In the workplace, the documents would work for an immediate deadline but would require further revisions.

D—Documents are unprofessional. They require extensive revisions of content, presentation, writing style, and/or mechanics before a company could use the documents. The writer has encountered significant problems with goals of audience, purpose, and genre. In the workplace, a company would have to reassign the project to another writer for successful completion.

F—Documents do not have enough information, are not appropriate for the situation, or contain major problems in terms of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning. The portfolio may be incomplete, or plagiarism may compromise the portfolio. A company would most probably dismiss the writer from current projects.

Grade Descriptions for Participation

A—Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through verbal and written contributions. All assignments are completed on time and with strong attention to detail.

B—Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time and with attention.

C—Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned work, and contributes to small group workshops and class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time.

D—Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to class discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient.

F—Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, often unprepared, and unable to contribute to discussions or workshops. This student may be disruptive. Assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient.

Summer 2011 Syllabus

Schedule of Work

**Subject to change according to progress.

WEEK ONE: May 16 – May 20

Monday: Introductions to the course and professional writing. Introductory memo.

Homework: Purchase required textbook.

Read Ch. 8—“Understanding the Principles...” (pp. 275 - 315).

Email introductory memo to ahitt2@mix.wvu.edu. Practice email etiquette!

Tuesday: Discuss principles of business communication. Rhetorical/audience analysis. Policies and Expectations Memo.

***Due Today: Introductory Memo and in-class Policies and Expectations Memo**

Homework: Read Ch. 1—“Assessing Audience and Purpose” (pp. 3 - 21).

Read Ch. 3—“Writing the Draft” (pp. 75 - 90).

Wednesday: Introduce Correspondence Assignment (Project #1). Purposes and uses of correspondence. Addressing different audiences.

Homework: Read Ch. 9—“Writing Business Correspondence” (pp. 320 - 352).

Draft good-news and bad-news memos. Post to eCampus.

Thursday: Similarities and differences between memos and letters. Document design.

***Due Today: Drafts of good-news and bad-news memos**

Homework: Draft good-news and bad-news letters. Post to eCampus.

Revise memos for peer review. Post with letters.

Friday: Peer review workshop.

***Due Today: Drafts of good-news and bad-news memos and letters**

Homework: Finalize all materials for Project #1.

Read Ch.4—“Revising the Draft” (pp.107-114) for tips on how to revise.

WEEK TWO: May 23 – May 27

Monday: Introduce Job Application Package (Project #2). Skills freewrite. Look at company information and job postings.

***Due Today: Correspondence Assignment (Project #1) with Assignment Reflection**

Homework: Locate two different job postings and bring the job descriptions to class.

Read Ch. 16—“Finding the Right Job” (pp. 570 - 602).

Tuesday: Discussion of résumés. Document Design. Making information persuasive.

Homework: Draft first version of both résumés. Post on eCampus.

Read Ch.16—“Finding the Right Job” (pp. 602 - 608).

Wednesday: Discussion of cover letters. Document design. Telling vs. showing.

***Due Today: Drafts of both résumés**

Homework: Draft first version of both cover letters. Post on eCampus.

Revise résumés for peer review. Post with cover letters.

Summer 2011 Syllabus

Thursday: Peer review workshop. Sign up for conferences.

***Due Today: 2 complete résumés and 2 complete cover letters posted to eCampus**

Homework: Revise résumés and cover letters based on peer review feedback.

Prepare 2 - 4 questions about your drafted materials.

Friday: REGULAR CLASS CANCELLED — Conferences for Project #2.

***Due Today: Questions and copies of résumés and cover letters**

Homework: Revise résumés and cover letters. Draft memo component of Project #2.

WEEK THREE: May 30 – June 3

Monday: NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY.

Tuesday: Introduce Midterm Portfolio and midterm reflection. Web portfolios.

***Due Today: Job Application Package (Project #2) with Assignment Reflection**

Homework: Begin revisions for midterm portfolio. Prepare documents for peer review.

Wednesday: Portfolios and midterm letter. Peer review workshop.

***Due Today: Documents for peer review**

Homework: Draft Midterm Reflective Memo.

Gather, compile, and finalize all required Midterm Portfolio materials.

Thursday: Introduce Collaborative Proposal (Project #3). Purposes and uses of proposals.

***Due Today: Midterm Portfolio**

Homework: Read Ch. 5—“Collaborative Writing” (pp. 129 - 142).

Please email me by 5 P.M. with your proposed group member(s). Think of three specific/local topic ideas that you are prepared to share in class.

Finalized groups will be announced in class.

Friday: Meeting with group members. Discussion of topic ideas. Preliminary Topic Form.

***Due Today: Three topic ideas and Preliminary Topic Form posted to eCampus.**

Homework: Read Ch. 13—“Writing Proposals” (pp. 448 - 494).

WEEK FOUR: June 6 – June 10

Monday: Defining the problem. Problem statements. Project Topic Form.

***Due Today: Project Topic Form posted in-class to eCampus**

Homework: Read Ch. 6—“Researching Your Subject” (pp.148 - 181).

Find one solid source and annotate it. Post to eCampus.

Tuesday: Sources and resources. Primary and secondary sources. Argumentative support. Sign up for conferences.

***Due Today: One annotated source**

Homework: Read Ch. 6—“Researching Your Subject” (pp. 181 - 192 OR pp. 193 - 202)

Prepare draft of proposal for conferences. Post to eCampus.

Summer 2011 Syllabus

Wednesday: REGULAR CLASS CANCELLED — Conferences for Project #3.

Homework: Revise and finalize Collaborative Proposals.

Thursday: Introduce Collaborative Formal Report (Project #4). How companies read and use reports. Report elements.

***Due Today: Collaborative Proposal (Project #3)**

Homework: Read Ch.11—“Writing Formal Reports” (pp. 385 - 417).

Friday: Describing the problem. Describing solution criteria.

Homework: Read Ch. 7—“Designing Effective Documents and Visuals” (pp. 209 - 257)
Complete the Visual Aids Assignment. Post to eCampus and bring set of illustrated instructions to class.

WEEK FIVE: June 13 – June 17

Monday: Visual aids. Different types and uses of visual aids.

***Due Today: Visual Aids response to eCampus; instructions**

Homework: Draft body of report—introduction/background information, text, visuals.

Tuesday: Peer review workshop: body of report. Completing the remainder of the report.

***Due Today: Draft of body of report**

Homework: Continue working on report.

Wednesday: Introduce Progress Report. In-class collaboration. Sign up for conferences.

***Due Today: Draft of body of report**

Homework: Prepare questions for group conferences and a draft of Progress Reports.
Prepare comments about report-body peer review.

Thursday: REGULAR CLASS CANCELLED — Conferences for Project #4.

***Due Today: Draft of Progress Report**

Homework: Revise and finalize materials for Progress Report.
Read Ch. 14—“Giving Presentations...” (pp. 498 - 523)

Friday: Preparing for group presentations.

***Due Today: Progress Report**

Homework: Prepare (practice) for group presentations.

WEEK SIX: June 20 – June 24

Monday: Formal group presentations on final reports.

Homework: Prepare (practice) for group presentations.

Tuesday: Formal group presentations on final reports.

Homework: Finalize Formal Collaborative Report for peer review.

Summer 2011 Syllabus

Wednesday: Final letter brainstorming; editing and revision

Homework: Continue working on final letter and project revisions; web portfolio.

Thursday: Website peer review.

Homework: Finalize the materials for your website.

Post everything (Projects 1 - 4; memo assignments, reflections, presentations, etc.) to your website.

Friday: Farewells & SEIs.

***Due Today: Final Portfolio**

Note: Your final web portfolios must be published online by 5:00 P.M. today. Please email me with a link to your website; the Individual Group Assessment & Reflection Forms should also be attached. Thank you!

***Please check your emails for final portfolio pick-up during finals week.**