ENGL 3301.W02 Principles of Professional and Report Writing

Summer II 2015
Online

WELCOME to this writing community. In this setting you will be involved in various writing projects that allow you (1) to identify needs related to your academic objectives and your future workplace and respond to those needs and (2) to address concerns or problems in the community that affect you in some manner. The main objective of this class is to help you gain the skills needed to think through these needs/concerns, analyze the audience(s) involved, secure various types of resources, generate solutions, and present these solutions in an effective manner. In class and beyond the classroom, you will work collaboratively with your classmates to benefit from the competencies that each one of you brings to this writing and learning community as we immerse ourselves in each project. (In this classroom context, your teacher will function as an active participant in this community.) You have authority as a writer; your teacher is not the only expert in this class. In fact, in this student-centered course you will emerge as an expert. You will not passively receive information from the teachers. You will conduct interviews with professionals in your future workplaces, request information from contact persons within the community, study and respond to the ideas of other writers, search for many types of other information (both traditional sources and online sources as well), and interact with your peers. YOUR ROLE as a student is to make important decisions and choices based on the information you gather and interpret. You will work as an independent and active learner in a collaborative environment.

Required Texts and Materials

- Some reliable way to electronically save your work
- Computer access/internet access/word processing programs

Course Objectives By becoming aware of the writing required to be successful in the workplace and analyzing the different types of writing, you will gain an understanding of the following concepts and be able to apply them to multiple writing situations:
Audience - identify and understand the audience, writing for multiple readers
Purpose - what do you want your writing to do
Format - how will you present the information
Role of collaboration in the writing process - peer review, roles and functions of collaborating members
Revision/Editing - how each is revision different from editing, how does revision relate to audience and purpose
Role of Others (including your teacher) in the Writing Process
Design Elements - white space, paragraphing, headers & footers, document styles, typefaces, and visual aids
Role of Research - questionnaires & surveys, company publications and in-house documents, computer data bases,

You will understand and use these elements by writing and working with the following types of writing:

- Memos and Short Reports
- Reports and Proposals
- Interviews
- Instructions and Other Forms of Technical Writing
- Correspondence
- Job Search Documents
- Oral Reports
- Numerous Other Formats Based on the Needs of the Audience

Student Learning Outcomes

By engaging in the course activities, students will

(1) identify a need or problem by describing the factors involved

(2) generate a viable solution to the need or problem

(3) create a document that reflects an effective interweaving of purpose and audience.

Writing Workshop This class is designed as a hands-on writing workshop class. You will have an active role as you work on the phases of each project and respond to the work of your classmates and receive on your work. This class is designed to give you experiences that are similar to those you will experience in the workplace so you will also receive feedback from others outside the class. We will work on your assignments every day. The work is on-going and hands-on. Writing is an active process and the more you actively participate, the better results you will see in your writing progress.

Peer Review Professional writing means always having someone (usually a supervisor or co-worker) read, evaluate, and assess your work before it "goes out." As a regular part of the class, you will submit drafts to class of what you have written, and your classmates will review it for
you. "Draft" means "as good as you can make it," not a few lines thrown together. **If you do not have a draft posted for peer review when it is assigned, that portion of the assignment will be docked a ten percent penalty of your portfolio’s final grade.**

**Grading**

80% of your grade will come from portfolio projects, which can be found on Blackboard.

All of your major work will be submitted via Blackboard. Although the class will not be completely paperless, posting your work online will save paper, will save you money by limiting the amount you need to print, and will also assure your work is readily available to you wherever on the planet you happen to be.

10% will be based on professional responsibility; for each portfolio, if all of your work is submitted on time, including rough drafts, peer review, and in daily work, you will earn 2 ½ points. If these are not completed on time, you will not earn these points.

10% will come from your in-class writing and your abstract reflections about reading.

**Citations:** I prefer that you use MLA format when documenting or citing material; however, if your academic "home discipline" uses another, I will accept that provided you let me know what it is and can "point" me to some style guidelines for that format. (I am familiar enough with APA and Chicago that I don't need a style sheet for either).

"Attendance" In an Online Course

This class is offered online to give people who, for a variety of reasons, find it more convenient to work from a computer than to "come up" to campus.

Although we do not have formal class meetings, things have to be done on time, as they are found in the class schedule. This is just the same as it would be if you are in a regular class that meets 10 am MWF. I mention this because some students "forget" they have an online course, and try and do the work sporadically, trying to "load up" and trying to attempt the work in a few "bursts of activity."

This method does not work because an online course is just as much work as a regular class. You have to "keep up," you have to ask questions of your professor if you need a course concept clarified, and, as with any other writing course, there is peer review. Your work has to be posted on time (so people can read and respond to your work), and reading and responding to the writing of others is part of the regular business of what we do.

You will need **to log into** this class and **complete work**, at a minimum, **every class day**. And just so you know if advance, Blackboard, our course management software, monitors how many times you log in per week, how long you were on, and what you are doing.
**CLASS DISCUSSION** in an online course is "posting" in discussion forums. Your work needs to appear in these discussion forums regularly, depending on what the assignment--you might be asked to post an "in class" writing, you might be asked to respond to the writing of someone else, or you might be asked to comment on a reading, video, or other piece of information about writing in the nonprofit world.

This is NOT a correspondence course, or a "Work at Your Own Pace" course. An online course gives you the freedom to work at your own convenience--you can do your work at 2 o'clock in the morning or over your lunch hour--but, like any other course, it has real deadlines, with real due dates. I mention this because, in the past, some students have confused online courses with correspondence courses or other "do it when I can courses" and have tried to pack all the assignments into a few days at the end of the course. These students were not successful; e.g., they did not pass.

You probably noted that completing work on time is actually part of the way the course is graded--a full ten percent. If you want to see that in a positive light, you will do ten percent better--you will add a full letter grade to your course score--if you do everything on time. If you want to view this in a negative light, doing things late will drop your final score by ten percent--if your written work is of "B" quality but is consistently done late, the highest you can possibly earn.

**Office Hours in an Online Class**

Just as you need to communicate with me regularly to succeed, I have a responsibility to keep the lines of communication open with you. This can happen in a variety of ways:

1. You can call me during my office hours if you want to insure you can speak to me directly. Or, you can leave a voice mail. I'm quite good about returning phone calls--but make sure you leave a number I can call you back it.

2. I will keep "online office hours," which means I will be in a "chat room" on Blackboard where you can speak to me "Live." I will also be on Skype and Twitter during my online office hours; you can contact me via either medium. My ID for both is TechWriteDrE

3. You can e-mail me. I'm good about returning e-mails in a REASONABLE amount of time (no later than the next BUSINESS day), but I don't monitor my e-mail 24-7, and I spend time with my family on the weekends, so if you leave me an e-mail on Friday afternoon, you might not reasonably hear back 'til Monday morning.

4. If it's convenient, you can come see me in my office.

5. I do make appointments, even outside of regular hours, with advance notice.

**Facebook:** The class will have a Facebook group. You can use this to ask questions of each other, share interesting ideas, post clips of protest lit you have found, and to otherwise communicate with your classmates and me. You are not required to join this group; but it
might enhance your learning experience if you do. All materials and announcements will be made by regular e-mails.

Although Facebook is a way to communicate with me, I do not “friend” current students on Facebook. If you send me a request, please do not be insulted if I do not respond. I maintain both a personal and professional presence on the social media, as should you. Do you really want me to see your pictures of what you did last weekend, esp. if we have a paper due and you might have studied more?

**Late Assignments**

If you have an emergency and cannot submit a paper, write a memo to me to explain why you will not be able to meet the deadline. Keep in mind that in the workplace there would be serious consequences for turning in reports/projects late. Based on your memo, I will determine how much to deduct from your grade. BE SURE to include documentation such as doctor's office statements, court appearance papers, etc.

**Writing Center.** The Writing Center, part of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi’s Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA), provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. Writing center consultants are trained to work with writers one-on-one to help them find ideas, organize their thoughts, cite sources, and succeed at all aspects of the writing task. The writing center works closely with faculty across campus to understand the writing projects they assign and to help students meet the expectations of those assignments. The writing center is located in the Glasscock building. Both drop-in and scheduled appointments are available. More information, including hours of operation, is available at http://casa.tamucc.edu/wc.php.

**Academic Honesty**

I will follow the policy that appears in the university catalogue. Plagiarism, which is “the presentation of work of another as one's own work” is only one form of academic dishonesty, which also includes falsification (the intentional alteration of information), fabrication (the intentional invention of information), multiple submission (using the same material for two separate assignments or courses without permission from the instructors), and abuse of academic materials (the intentional destruction of resource materials). Sometimes students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example) because they are unaware of the standards that apply. If you are unsure of how to document or properly use information, please check with me WELL BEFORE THE PAPER IS DUE. Also, know that I have some heavy-duty anti-plagiarism web applications, so you'll probably get caught. If you have questions or doubts about what constitutes a breach of integrity, a violation of policies or a proper citation, it is important that you consult with me. The SMALLEST penalty you will get if you are caught is a zero on the project; you could, potentially fail the course, and, if you have plagiarized in other classes, you may face disciplinary action by the university.

I only feel it fair to notice that this issue is something the university is "Hot and Bothered" about right now, and that, if we suspect something, we are now REQUIRED to notify the administration. This isn't something we can keep "in house" any more.
Worse, you may have to eat haggis.

All of this can be avoided simply by doing your own work to the best of your ability.

**Academic Advising**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Grade Appeals Process**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, clatamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

**Students with Disabilities**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, clatamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

**Reminder to English Majors**

As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.
Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 6</td>
<td>Overview of the course; note it is project driven; we will be doing a series of projects designed to give you experience writing and a series of in-class exercises designed to sharpen it. Read <a href="https://sites.google.com/site/pinks6ses/home">https://sites.google.com/site/pinks6ses/home</a> SUBMIT, On Blackboard, a 1-2 page account of your background, your family, the jobs you have held, the writing you have done in those jobs, and your career plans. RESPOND to the work of at least two classmates.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Read Chapter 1 of Anderson (in “Readings Library” section of Blackboard). Discussion of Workplace Literacy SUBMIT, in the Daily Work Section, Bring a written list of the duties someone doing your preferred profession would have. If possible, do some Internet research and get a sense of what kind of writing someone in that career does. SUBMIT, on Blackboard, ten open-ended interview questions you will ask of a person who does your preferred job.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Read “The Importance of Letters, Memos, and Emails” in Harty. Critique each other's interview questions. You should have lined up a person to interview by now. It should be an individual doing your preferred job or in your preferred career. Submit to me, in writing, the name and contact info (phone no and e-mail address) of the person you are interviewing BS, Moose Muffins, and Common Writing Mistakes</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Read “Evaluating and Planning as You Revise” in Harty. Note what you are doing—you are trying to write an essay that profiles the person, discusses that career and what you can expect from it. Your interviews needs to be done sometime today. Be sure to ask your interviewee for examples of the kinds of documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Submit Abstract Reflection One (over all the readings done this week). Note what you are doing—you are trying to write an essay that profiles the person, discusses that career and what you can expect from it.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Writing Interview Due</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read “What do you Mean You Don’t Like My Style?” in Harty.&lt;br&gt;Analyze documents your interviewee writes in terms of <strong>Genre, Audience, Style, and Format</strong>.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Post</strong> these analyses on Blackboard.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Get at least three different people to fill out your usability study questionnaire.</td>
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<td>If you want to use the Email the Class function in Blackboard, you would be a good citizen if, you filled out at least three studies for three different classmates.</td>
<td>If you want to use the Email the Class function in Blackboard, you would be a good citizen if, you filled out at least three MORE studies for three different classmates. Begin analyzing your data.</td>
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<td><strong>27</strong> Watch the “How to Use Camtasia” Video. NOTE that I suggest using this software because you can get a free 30 day trial of the program. If you are familiar with some other video editing software, please feel free to use it instead. Meet/Communicate with your “client” for your service project; ascertain what her or his needs are. Begin drafting your video script.</td>
<td><strong>28</strong> Read <a href="http://www.bmyers.com/public/650.cfm">http://www.bmyers.com/public/650.cfm</a> Read <a href="http://www.bmyers.com/public/652.cfm">http://www.bmyers.com/public/652.cfm</a> Read <a href="http://www.bmyers.com/public/659.cfm">http://www.bmyers.com/public/659.cfm</a> Draft of your Script Should Be Submitted to your Client For Approval.</td>
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<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Watch Job Search Strategies Video</td>
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<td>Identify Three Jobs you Might Apply For.</td>
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<td>Begin drafting resume</td>
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<td>Read “The Basics of a Cover Letter” in Harty.</td>
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<td>Post rough draft of your resume.</td>
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<td>Peer review two classmates’ resumes.</td>
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<td>Draft Cover Letters, Project) Due.</td>
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<td>Project) Due.</td>
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<td>Abstract Reflection due.</td>
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**In Conclusion**

This should be a worthwhile and even enjoyable class. You can count on me to make class as interesting and as stimulating as possible. Finally, I am here to help you, but I cannot do so unless you let me know when you need help. Communicate.