English 4320.W01
Writing for Nonprofit Agencies
Fall Semester 2017
Online

Texts
Sand, Michael. *How to Manage an Effective Nonprofit Organization: From Writing and Managing Grants to Fundraising, Board Development, and Strategic Planning*
Barbato, Joseph and Daniel Furlich. *Writing for a Good Cause: The Complete Guide to Crafting Proposals and Other Persuasive Pieces for Nonprofits*. (This book will be referred to as 'B&F' in the syllabus)

Other Course Requirements
A computer with reliable internet access
A reliable office software suite (Microsoft Office or the Equivalent)--we will be using MS Word and MS Publisher; some projects may require Excel
Access to Blackboard, TAMUCC's Course Management Software (you have this by virtue of being a TAMUCC student).

Course Description and Tentative Syllabus

Catalog description: Tailored for individual students’ writing and publishing projects in their disciplines such as article writing, instructional manuals, grant writing, and feasibility studies.

My description: Any professional who works for a nonprofit agency is going to find her or himself required to do a great deal of writing, and to be able to complete a wide variety of writing tasks. English 4320 will teach students the basics of many kinds of writing found in the nonprofit world, and will give students practice at actually doing some of those tasks. Students will learn to
write for internal communication purposes, will learn some basic publications skills, will learn how to do writing that helps nonprofits interact with the media (including "new" or social media), will learn the role writing plays in the interaction between a non profit agency and its board, and will learn the basics of using writing for development purposes (getting money). At the end of this course, the student will have a portfolio of work that she or he can show to a prospective employer to demonstrate the ability to "step in" and handle many of the writing tasks necessary for success in the nonprofit world.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

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. Also, from your classmates you will receive feedback for your work. Please note that this is the way 'real world' writing works—you write something, you get feedback, often from a supervisor, you re-do it, and then you turn it in.

This class is designed to give you experiences that are similar to those you will experience in a professional workplace. Involved in a professional work setting is deciding what tasks you will do, when you will complete those tasks, how you will gather resources, and how you will complete the tasks. This class will require regular communication between you and me, you and your other classmates, and you and university and community sources you will need to contact in order to gather information.

Because of this approach, you need to be in class. You will treat this class as YOUR WORKPLACE, and you will work on your assignments regular and independently. Writing is an active process, and the more you actively participate, the better results you will see in your writing progress. Missed deadlines are the equivalent to not showing up for work.

"Attendance" In an Online Course

This class is offered online to give people who, for whatever reason, 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."

You will need to log into this class and complete work 3-4 times per week. 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.

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.

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.

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 for you, you can come see me in my office.
5. I do make appointments, even outside of regular hours, with advance notice.

Facebook: The class has a Facebook group. You can access it at https://www.facebook.com/groups/201523576864435/ or by using the Facebook “Search Bar” and typing in “English 4320 Writing for Nonprofits.” You may have to ask ‘permission’ to join; if you do so, I’ll be glad to let you in.

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. Many students find these groups helpful because they can post a question and, often, another student will have a similar question and they can talk the ideas through.

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.

Grades

You will have five portfolios, each dealing with an aspect of writing for the non-profit world. They are worth 20% each.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
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100%

All work will be done on Blackboard, which can be accessed at:  [https://bb9.tamucc.edu/](https://bb9.tamucc.edu/)

Each portfolio will be assessed in the following manner:

Maximum Possible grade on each portfolio is 20 points

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio Element</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>You get this if all work is turned in on time and peer review of your colleagues is done on time. At the end of the term, you’ll essentially have 5% of your grade based on this criteria (1 point, or one percent, per portfolio)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Weekly responses, critiques, and other weekly writing will be graded and averaged. Weekly writing is where you learn how to do the bigger assignments that will be graded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Memo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Turned in along with the 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; major writing of each portfolio, you sum up what you’ve learned about the subject of that unit’s aspect of writing in the nonprofit world as well as relate your writing growth, challenges, and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Writing 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(For Portfolio One, it’s the Memo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Writing 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(For Portfolio One, it’s the Policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Writing 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(For Portfolio Three, its’ the Job Description)</td>
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20 points total
How the class will run:

This is a projects based course. This means that, in lieu of class time, you will be doing things (reading, writing, and finding things out). Expect to spend the same amount of time you spend on a regular class (or more) on this class.

The class is divided in five units, each of which will focus on a different element of nonprofit writing. Each unit will take about three weeks, and at the end of each unit, you’ll complete a portfolio (for a total of five portfolios).

Each week you will

- **Watch** some videos—some of which are excerpts from interviews from working nonprofit professionals, and some of which are from my and contain info about the class
- **Read**—Work by professionals, as well as the work of your classmates
- **Write**—writing to learn, meaning you will do "in class" writings designed to demonstrate that you understand the material—and to ask questions that you have, as well as turning things in that will be graded.

Keep track of the schedule and deadlines careful. Generally, reading and writings are are due Friday, and your critiques of other people's drafts are due by Tuesday, and final drafts are due on Thursday.

If You Encounter Blackboard or Other Technical Difficulties

If you've never used Blackboard before, or if the new version (Version 9) confuses you, you might want to look at the 'Learning Blackboard 9.1’ information the university offers:

[https://iol.tamucc.edu/howtostu.php](https://iol.tamucc.edu/howtostu.php)

General information about Blackboard:

[https://iol.tamucc.edu/](https://iol.tamucc.edu/)

Other ways to seek help:

- By Phone:
  - 361-825-2825 (Local)
  - 1-866-353-2491 (Long Distance)
- By E-mail:
  - iol.support@tamucc.edu

More information on online courses at TAMUCC: [http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html](http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html)

Success in the Course

I am very pleased to be working with you. In this class we all help each other, and we applaud each other's successes. I treat each student with respect, and I expect students to treat each other and me with courtesy and respect. Each one of us should encourage behaviors that help reach excellence. If at any time you have concerns or questions regarding anything connected to the course, your performance in the course, and grades, please come to my office to talk with me privately. In the professional world, matters of a personal nature are discussed in private, not in front of fellow employees. In my office you and I can deal with any
concerns or questions. If you do not understand something, come to the office immediately or email me.

You will have a productive semester. I structure the course so that I can give you help online as questions arise, so be sure to ask. Also, you can get help from your peers. You will find that many of your peers have expertise in various areas. Your documents are public and will be read by professionals, and we will all work together to prepare documents that meet high expectations and standards. You need to understand that I **cannot assign an A to a paper that does not meet the criteria for excellence.** I take much time to read and respond to your papers, so please be sure to read my comments. They offer guidance.

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**
The University will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of intellectual/academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is a serious violation of departmental and University policies, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Regardless, work that is turned in for the course that is plagiarized will be failed. If you are unsure about your use of sources, please consult with me or visit the writing center (in the TLC, in the Glasscock building) for advice on source documentation BEFORE the item is due. For this course, you must use either MLA or APA citation style. Any grammar handbook and many web sites have directions on correct citation. Click [here](#) for an excellent review of the various forms of plagiarism, good for any teacher to review/use. It is long, but worthwhile.

Click here for site on [MLA documentation rules](#) and here for [APA documentation rules](#).

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call (361) 825-3466.

**DISABILITY SERVICES**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**GRADE APPEALS PROCESS**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in
the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

## Schedule

**NOTE:** Unless specified in the syllabus, the assignment for each week is due by midnight on the Friday of that week.

**REALLY IMPORTANT NOTE:** The course is divided up into weeks, and each task for each week needs to be done in order. You really need to log in regularly, and consult that week’s “learning module,” rather than refer to a paper or PDF syllabus. This is important for two reasons: first, to stay on task and on schedule. Second, the world of nonprofits is ever changing, and if some event comes up that is directly relevant to what we are learning, I will use readings about that event as part of that week’s reading. For example, last time I taught the course, the Susan B. Komen Foundation for breast cancer research self-destructed as I was teaching the unit on fund raising. It was a textbook base in everything the course was trying to teach; I would have been foolish NOT to make use of it.

**REALLY, REALLY IMPORTANT NOTE:**

We are doing a ‘Scenario’ approach, meaning each unit will simulate the work done in a real nonprofit. For the purpose of this course you are going to 'create' your own non-profit organization. Think about what work it might do to meet a need in your community. Might it meet the needs of the homeless, counsel juvenile delinquents, provide services for the blink, or provide health care for AIDS victims? Might it be an animal shelter? These are just some of the possibilities; you might think of a social issue that is over concern to you and see what real organizations exist in an area COMPLETELY OUT OF CORPUS CHRISTI and use that as an example.

My reasons for doing this are twofold:

1. Each portfolio will build on one another. You will use some of the material from earlier assignments as the basis for future assignments. To keep your work consistent, you need to do the work about the same (hypothetical) organization
2. Because of the demands of an online course, there will not be time for you to regularly work with an actual existing nonprofit. This method—the scenario method—is a usual practice in many professional writing programs.

**REALLY, REALLY, REALLY IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT SCHEDULING**

- The full course—assignments, readings, etc., is available in Blackboard.
- Each three week unit will be “rolled out” at the same time.
- Once we are done with a unit, it will be replaced by the next unit.
- The previous unit will not be visible on Blackboard once its due date is past.
Part One: Communicating within your organization

August 28-September 15

Part Two: Writing and the Media

September 18-October 6

Part Three: Publications

October 9-27.

Part Four: Fund Raising

October 30-November 17

Part Five: Board Relations

November 20-December 8

Final Examination

Your final portfolio, including your Board Report and Annual Report due by Thursday, December 14. It should contain a 2-3 page introductory memo summing up what you have learned about board relations in a nonprofit organization, and it should ask any questions you might have about this portion of the course. This should be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

In Conclusion

I have dedicated a good portion of my working life to workplace communication in the nonprofit world, so I'm looking forward to this class. It's like "my baby." This should be a worthwhile and even enjoyable class. You can count on me to do three things. I will read everything you have to, so depending on the author, we will either enjoy or suffer together. I will endeavor to make assignments 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.