Professional Writing for Business

Instructor
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Office Hours
Mon, and Weds.   9:00-11:00
Tues. and Thurs.   9:30-11:00; 12:00-1:50
Or by appointment

Course Description

Professional Writing for Business is designed for business majors. An introduction to and application of professional workplace genres. Practice in planning, designing, developing, producing, and evaluating business communications. Rhetorical aims will shape the information or document production and design.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of ENGL 2223, you should be able to

- recognize and employ the conventions and genres of business communication;

- use visual and written rhetoric to accommodate different audiences and purposes;

- craft a report through comprehensive research;

- develop skills in using citation methods (APA);

- edit documents for grammatical and syntactic correctness;

- and produce accessible, persuasive, and usable documents.

Required Textbook

Oliu, Brusaw, and Alred. (2020). *Writing that works: Communicating effectively on the job, 13th ed.* Bedford/St. Martin's. ISBN: 9781319104467

Readings on D2L.

Attendance

Regular attendance is required. While absences are sometimes unavoidable, please be aware that University policy (Policies and Rules, 42-27) states that a student whose absences are excessive "may run the risk of receiving a lower grade or a failing grade," regardless of his or her performance in the class. You run that risk if you exceed three unexcused absences in a MWF course, or two unexcused absences in a TTH course.

Technology Use in the Classroom

Students are responsible for his or her own engagement in class meetings and lab work. You may use your own laptops or digital devices during class; however, phones should be set aside during lectures and when we are writing. I will not re-explain material already covered if you were busy scrolling through your phone or working on material for another class.

Contacting Your Instructor

I am available via email (geoffrey.clegg@msutexas.edu) until 5 PM. All emails sent after 5 PM will be answered the next day. Emails may be answered within 48 hours.

Email Format

All emails should be written in a professional tone, format, and style. Unprofessional emails will be ignored.

Professional tone, format and style means you need to a greeting, at least two body paragraphs, and an end salutation. Your subject lines needs to be descriptive: 2223.101 Question about Project Three.

For example,

> Dear Dr. Clegg,
>
> I will not be able to make it to your 8:00 AM class today due to car trouble. I apologize in advance and will ask my peers for notes.
>
> Best,
>
> Student Mustang
> M100101010

Formatting and Submission of Written Assignments

All documents for this course must be formatted according to style guidelines as instructed on the assignment sheet. You may review the MLA or APA guidelines via the Purdue OWL website. Documents will be submitted to the D2L dropbox before deadlines set on D2L. Make sure you adhere to the following conventions for all documents:

- Your documents needs to saved as lastname.project number.section number (Williams.3.X21)—failure to do so will result in point deductions.
- You must follow the genre formatting asked for.
- No assignments will be accepted through email.
- All documents requiring research must include in-text citations: Behrend comments that "All economic factors preclude social responsibilities in the postmodern age" (Behrend 136).

Computer problems are not a valid excuse for missing or incomplete work. Make sure that you keep a backup of files in the cloud source of your choice (Google Drive, etc.).

Quality of Submissions

Your written work is a reflection of your abilities and, thus, a large part of your final grade for each assignment. You are required to produce high-quality, nuanced documents throughout this course.

What does this mean? Every document you turn in should be free of simple errors, visually appealing, and mechanically and grammatically correct. Documents should have the appropriate margins, spacing, and formatting. Low quality work shows low effort. Low effort will receive a grade lower than C-.

Revising and Peer Review

Writing is a process that takes time and effort. You are expected to draft, revise, and proofread your work before submission. Your projects should not be a one-and-done style submission that lacks development. While we will do peer review for most assignments, it is expected that you carefully read and enact the revision advice of peers.

Missing and Late Work

Late and missing work is unprofessional. **To pass this course you must complete all major assignments**. Additionally, all work should be submitted on time. *Late work may be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late*. If an emergency arises, you must contact me ahead of time to request an extension. Extensions will be granted based on the merits of each case.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will be punished with a failing grade. Please consult the *Undergraduate Handbook* for Midwestern State University's policies concerning academic misconduct.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing in the References section)–whether you use that material in a quote, paraphrase, or summary.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in my class. Doing so will result in an **F (0%)** for the paper and an **automatic F for the course**. Why risk an F when you can get a C?

You have the opportunity to appeal your grade if you feel this is in error.

Use of Artificial Intelligence Apps (ChatGPT, Bard, etc.) Polcy

I am knowledgeable when it comes to LLM applications like ChatGPT and Bard. I have used them myself to test out different techniques and responses to prompts. I can tell when you are submitting work that was created by an LLM application. Unlike predicative text generation (email clients, Grammarly, etc.), AI applications have a nasty habit of giving misleading or incorrect information, or will spit out made up citations. Similarly, these applications rarely produce texts that meet the needs of the assignments from this course.

Therefore, the use of ChatGPT, Bard, or any AI application for an assignment **where I do not ask for its use** will be considered cheating as it is not produced by you, the writer. You will receive an F grade if you turn in an assignment that has been created via any app.

Group Work

You will have two projects (Projects 2 and 4) that involve being placed in teams this semester. I expect all group members to communicate professionally and in a timely manner. Your group will need to work together on assignments outside of class time.

1. In business environments, you will need to collaborate to accomplish tasks set forth by your employer.
2. If a group member fails to do shared work, as agreed upon by their peers, or willfully disrupts the work of others, you can fire that group member. They must complete the assignment on their own.
3. If a group member sabotages the projects by willfully preventing others from complete the work, delaying the submission on purpose, or by other means, that group member will fail the assignment.
4. Any problems with group members who notice problems with a groupmate need to make the instructor aware of these issues and provide screenshots of the problem(s) encountered.

All group members must be from the same course section.

Writing Proficiency Requirement

All students seeking a Bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) completed 6 hours of Communication Core and 2) earned 60 hours. Students may meet this requirement by passing the Writing Proficiency Exam, passing two Writing Intensive courses, or passing English 2113. If you have any questions about the exam, visit the Writing Proficiency Office website or call 397-4131.

Tutoring Support

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning center provides tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Please see our schedule for more information about times and offerings. Remember that you don't need an appointment to utilize these services.

Some departments also provide tutoring. Check the "Tutoring at MSU" tab in the portal for more information about all campus tutoring opportunities.

For Distance Education students, TASP has partnered with Thinkingstorm, an online tutoring company that provides you with high-quality, 24/7 tutoring support. Located at the top of your D2L course page, select the Distance Education Tutoring course to book an appointment with a tutor. If you are a distance education student (i.e. you live more than 50 miles from MSU and are in all online courses), but you do not see this course pop up under your courses, please contact Ashley Hurst.

Graded Activities

Project 1: Everyday Workplace Writing	100 pts.
Project 2: Topic Proposal	100 pts.
Project 3: Negative Messaging/Neutral Messages	100 pts.
Project 4: Recommendation Report	100 pts.
Project 5: Job Packet	100 pts.
Participation/Discussion Boards	100 pts.
TOTAL POINTS	**600 pts.**

Final Grade Scale

100 - 90% — A
89 - 80% — B
79 - 70% — C
69 - 60% — D
< 60% — F

Late Submissions

Graded assignments submitted after their due dates will be penalized in the following ways:

- The grade for the assignment will drop 10% for each scheduled class meeting that it is late.
- Late assignments turned in two weeks after the due date will receive a zero grade.
- **For online sections:** Online courses still have discrete deadlines. You cannot wait until the end of the semester to turn in missing work. Treat this class like your face-to-face courses instead of an afterthought.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Midwestern State University is committed to providing equal access for qualified students with disabilities to all university courses and programs, and by law, all students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

This guarantee is provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA reads: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity."

To obtain disability support services, students must:

- be accepted for admission to Midwestern State University,
- complete a request for services form available through the Office of Disability Services, and
- provide current documentation from a qualified professional (such as a licensed physician, psychologist, audiologist, etc.) diagnosing the disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For information on Disability Services at Midwestern State University see the following: http://students.mwsu.edu/disability/

If the instructor does not have proper notification, he will expect the same performance from each student enrolled in the course.

Submission Format and Policy

All written assignments must follow APA format unless otherwise noted.

Documents must be uploaded as MS Word .doc or .docx files. Any documents uploaded not in these formats will not be graded (except for the Presentation). Likewise, all assignments will be run through TurnItIn.com's anti-plagiarism software.

Failure to upload all required documents will result in a failing grade for the assignment. You cannot email me your assignments. Instead, they must be uploaded to D2L.

By enrolling in this class, the student expressly grants MSU a "limited right" in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The "limited right" shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student's work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes.

Campus Carry Statement

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at http://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies.

Readings

PROJECT	CHAPTERS IN *WTW*
1 (weeks 1-2)	1-4, 8
2 (weeks 3-4)	13
3 (weeks 5-6)	16
4 (weeks 7-9)	9
5 (weeks 10-15)	5-7, 10-12

Some readings will be assigned and posted on D2L. These will consist of PowerPoints or articles.

ENGL 2223 Schedule

Please read the specified readings in advance and be prepared to discuss them on the dates listed below.

** Schedule subject to revision as necessary **

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignment Due This Week
1	8/28-9/1	Introduction to ENGL 2223 Foundations of Business Writing	DB1
2	9/4-8	**Labor Day (Monday)** Basics of Business Writing Writing e-mails	DB2
3	9/11-15	Memos and Proposals	Project 1: Email Introduction
4	9/18-22	Proposal Writing	DB3

		Ethical Issues and Research	
5	9/25-29	Applying for a Job Searching for Jobs	Project 2: Proposal DB5
6	10/2-6	Resumes Cover Letters	
7	10/9-13	Communication Packet Persuasive writing	Project 3: Job Application
8	10/16-20	Positive and negative news	
9	10/23-27	Formal Reports Document Design and Layout	Project 4: Communication packet DB 6
10	10/30-11/3	Formal Report	
11	11/6-10	Executive Summaries Table of Contents	DB 7
12	11/13-17	Letter of Transmittal	DB 8
13	11/20-24	**Thanksgiving**	**Thanksgiving**
14	11/27-12/1	**Job Packet assigned**	
15	12/4-8	Turn in Project 5	**Project 5: Job Packet**