Course Description

This course is designed to prepare you to participate effectively in workplace communication strategies. This course fulfills WVU’s “W” (writing) requirement. The assumptions behind the course are that professionals compose for practical purposes to solve problems, to develop proposals to increase business output, and to communicate to others both inside and outside the organization.

B&E Objectives

Graduates will be able to communicate recommendations to management and other constituencies.

- Students can effectively present material in written format.
- Students can effectively communicate material and respond appropriately.

Additional Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Use clear, concise, and grammatically correct language in writing email messages, memos, business letters, reports, citations, presentation outlines, cover letters, and resumes.
- Organize and deliver information for professional presentations using various forms of multimedia materials.
- Format and organize professional emails, memos, reports, and business letters.
- Apply editing, proofreading, and revision techniques in messages.
- Create business messages for appropriate audiences.
- Practice employment communication skills.

Required Materials


Microsoft Office Suite.

Flash drive to save work done in class.

Printing and binding for client project (costs shared among group members)

Course Policies and Procedures

Attendance Policy
Attendance and class participation are required and will affect your performance and grade in this class. Students are allowed three absences. Each subsequent absence reduces your final grade by one letter. Six absences result in failure. I take attendance at the beginning of class. As such, if you are late, you are considered tardy. Three instances of being tardy result in an absence.

Beyond required University-related activities (think teams), military duty, and college-related required functions for which I will need documentation, there are no excused absences in this course. Should you become ill and require hospitalization, or should you experience a death in your immediate family, contact the WVU Office of Campus and Community Life as soon as possible (304-293-5611). A staff member can notify all your professors and instructors of your emergency. However, there are no University-wide excuses provided by Campus and Community Life; this office provides notification only.

Class Participation

Students are expected to complete readings and any homework before each class session. Team work is an essential part of any employment scenario; therefore, working in groups will be an important component of this course. Should you miss class, it is up to you to find out what you have missed. In most cases, I will not accept late work.

Classroom Civility

This course abides by B&E’s Professionalism Code of Conduct. You will interact with peers and the instructor respectfully at all times. Plan on coming to class prepared and being willing to provide input on the readings and in-class activities. I expect you to turn off cell phones during class. During in-class activities, stay on-topic and use the computers for course-related activities only.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

The integrity of classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or fraud. Therefore, I enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For a detailed policy regarding WVU’s definitions of academic dishonesty and ensuing sanctions, see the Student Conduct Code at http://campuslife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct. If you have questions about potentially improper research citations or references, or other activities that may be interpreted as an example of academic dishonesty, please see me in advance of the due date for the assignment.

Attempting to use someone else’s work and calling it your own is the basic definition of plagiarism. Do not attempt to pass off ideas, writing, and/or materials of someone else’s work as your own. This is inclusive of homework, tests, papers, online paper mills, websites, music, presentations, graphs, and images. Materials borrowed from others should be properly cited to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism in this class will result in course failure and other sanctions as deemed by the WVU Office of Student Conduct.

Social Justice

The University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you believe you need accommodation in order to participate in this class, please inform me and contact the WVU Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-5600 or http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/). For more information on
WVU’s diversity initiatives, contact the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (304-293-5600 or http://diversity.wvu.edu/).

 Assignments and Grading Criteria

All work (papers and otherwise) must be printed and submitted in hard copy. I may also ask that you submit work through eCampus as well.

 Assignments

Midterm: 50
Final: 50
GEIC Mock Interview: 50 (Lack of participation will result in failure of this course)
Social Networking Business Plan (group project): 50
Career Path Informational Report: 20
Cover Letter: 20
Resume: 20
Quizzes: 50
Memo of Introduction: 20
Direct Claim Letter: 20
Client Proposal (group project): 50
Client Project (group project): 50
Individual Presentation with Handout: 50

 Grade Scale (Points)
500-450: A
449-400: B
399-350: C
349-300: D
299 or below: F

Midterm and Final Exams

Exams in this course will use essay and short-answer formats.

 GEIC Mock Interview
The interview is completed outside of class time with Master of Science in Human Resources and Industrial Relations (MSIR) staff and involves researching company information, preparing answers to behavioral interview questions, projecting a professional image, and submitting a professional resume to your interviewer. You are also required to attend any informational session sponsored by MSIR staff and complete your interview with them. You are also required to complete pre- and post-interview surveys. Your grade is based on participating in the actual interview process. Not participating in the Mock Interview will result in failure of this course.

Social Networking Business Plan

In groups, you will develop a social networking plan for a WVU student organization or campus department. You may select one that has limited social networking presence, or I can assign one to your group. You are encouraged to speak to organization or departmental representatives about their effort and current social networking scheme, if one is in place. You group will develop a comprehensive plan to create or reinvent this organization’s social networking, picking one or two platforms that would best serve the organization. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation with your group’s plan, using the organization as your target audience. Why did your group select this organization? How is its social media presence lacking? How would you improve it? Which platform or platforms might serve its needs best? Does the organization have other means of self-promotion, such as newsletters or other printed materials? How might these be useful in the social media plan? The group should also create a defined social media calendar limited to a period of time, such as a semester or a month.

Career Path Informational Report

For this assignment you will do research about your potential career and produce a memo that gives a reader informational background about your chosen profession or field. You should research specifically the following information:

1. Any library or internet resources that are specifically helpful to people entering this profession.
2. Professional associations and conferences.
3. Trade and peer-reviewed journals.
4. Social media resources.

As you research, it will be helpful to read widely so you can draw from a number of different sources. Remember, if you quote or paraphrase a source, you must give that source credit (use APA documentation style).

This memo should include the following sections:

• Introduction: Discuss your chosen area or field and why you are interested.
• Job Description: Consult the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook website (http://www.bls.gov/ooh/) about your field. Search the site by using a job title in your field (librarian, professor, real estate agent). You may have to try using different synonyms for your chosen career. For the memo, summarize, in your own words, the following:
1. The kinds of positions that are available, at entry-level and above, and what kind of training and experience each requires.
2. The tasks required for these positions.
3. The salary range, especially for entry-level positions and for a career average (if this differs by geographical location, note that).
4. The market for this career (are employers scrambling to find people? are there a lot of out-of-work professionals?).

- Professional Associations and Conferences / Meetings: Give web addresses for professional associations for your field. Remember that a professional association is an advocacy group for people in that profession, not a company who hires people in that profession. For example, the American Libraries Association is a professional association for librarians while the Library of Congress hires librarians.

Discuss the mission of your chosen professional association. Other questions to consider include: Who may join it? What are the membership fees? What are the benefits for members? When and where are meetings held? Are there regional associations? Does the association produce any publications? Include any other information that you believe is relevant.

- Professional Trade Journals / Peer-Reviewed Journals: Review journals and trade publications. Find and examine one or two issues of one peer-reviewed journal and one or two issues of a trade journal related to your field.

How often are these journals published? Who seems to be the audience for each one? In other words, how specialized is this journal? What types of articles are in each journal? How would these journals be of help to someone in your field? Include any other information which you think would be relevant.

- Social Media: What are the best social media resources for this profession?

Find at least one blog and one Twitter feed. Who are the authors? Why the authors are experts? What kinds of information do they share? Include any other information you think would be relevant.

Cover Letter and Resume

The cover letter and resume are each single-spaced typed pages (using double spaces where necessary). Please use Times New Roman 12 point font. Do not use your exact address on your cover letter. For letter style format, see page B-4, Figure B.2). Your resume can either be in a functional or chronological format. See pages 553-564 for advice and examples.

Quizzes

We will have eight quizzes on grammar, mechanics, and style. Your top five grades on these quizzes will count toward your final grade.

Memo of Introduction

Write a memo of introduction for your instructor. See page 34, Activity 1.5, for more information regarding this assignment. For memo style format, see page 378, Figure 11.4.
**Direct Claim Letter**

Address 8.22, 23, 24, or 25 (pages 279-280), writing a direct claim letter in response to the prompt. For letter style format, see page B-4, Figure B.2).

**Client Proposal and Project**

You will work in groups to identify an issue or problem facing a business or non-profit organization (NPO) with which you are familiar. The proposal and project should have, as part of the audience, the specific business or NPO you are targeting. You will incorporate design principles, multiple communication genres, graphics and/or charts, and problem identification and solution. Researching the mission and key audience of the business or NPO is a must. Professional attire is required when you are presenting.

Client Proposals (4-6 pages, single spaced) should include the following:

1. Header (use appropriate memo format).
2. Introduction (should contain a hook for the reader and a problem statement).
3. Discussion and background of the problem and why it needs attention (how did you or they identify this problem?).
4. Audience for the project.
5. Methods you will use to investigate the problem, including primary and secondary sources.
6. A bulleted list of the content and tentative section headings to be provided in the final project.
7. A tentative schedule for the project.
8. Estimations of time and resources needed to complete the project.
9. A list of each team member’s roles and responsibilities.
10. A request for approval (include additional questions or concerns).

After submission, I will either approve or require revision before your group begins the actual project. Your proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Thorough consideration of the project and each required section.
2. Feasibility of the proposed project.
3. Audience appropriateness and consideration of the organization’s needs.
4. Adherence to genre conventions.
5. Adherence to standard writing conventions (grammar, spelling)

The Client Project (15-20 pages, including references and a transmittal letter) may vary somewhat in length, depending on the client’s needs. Such projects may include the following:

1. Creating employee handbooks
2. Development of websites, social media, or other means to promote the business
3. Grant applications
4. Development of business plans
5. Creating a marketing plan

All projects will be subjected to several rounds of review in draft form prior to final submission. This project will be evaluated individually, as each project is a response to a different problem. The following criteria will be used to evaluate the project:
1. Presenting a realistic, workable solution.
2. A one-page handout illustrating your project.
3. The transmittal letter addressed to the client.
4. Quality of research, including primary sources (interviews, surveys, field observations) and relevant secondary sources (academic articles or journals) and/or reputable popular sources.
5. Correct citation of all sources (both in the text and in a references page) using strict APA style.
6. Audience consideration.
7. Completion of a group session with a Business Learning Resource Center (BLRC) communication tutor.
8. Meets appropriate design criteria and includes original graphics.
9. Cohesive writing with adherence to standard written English conventions.

**Individual Presentation and Handout**

You will research, develop, and present a brief presentation on a topic relevant to business communication. Your instructor will provide a listing of possible topics. You will receive feedback on your presentation skills and the content of your talk. You are also required to develop and distribute a one-page handout for the audience to engage them and help them absorb the content of your presentation. The handout should cover key points and use APA style, as well as any other material you deem useful.

**Course Schedule**

I reserve the right to make changes to the following schedule. Please be certain to bring your textbook to each class.

**January 11:** Course overview and writing sample.

15: Read Appendix B. Interview and introduce a classmate.
18: MLK Recess; no class.
25: Resume building and cover letter presentation (Toni Jones, WVU Career Services). If you have one, bring an existing resume. Activity 15.1.

**February 1:** Read Chapter 16, *Interviewing and Following Up*. DUE: Direct Claim Letter. Upload resume to MountaineerTrak.

3: Library informational session with Genifer Snipes. Meet at Downtown Campus Library.
5. Cover letter peer review. Interview skills. Watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGqVRM0d3OI, 20 Tips to Ace Any Job Interview.

8: GEIC Kickoff Presentation (Joshua Dye). DUE: Cover letter.


12: Read Chapter 5, *Organizing and Drafting Business Messages*. Quiz.


19: Midterm Exam.

22: Read Chapter 11, *Reporting in the Digital Age*.

24: Read Chapter 14, *Business Presentation*. Prewriting for Individual Presentation. Quiz

26: Individual Presentation and Handout draft due. Peer review.

29: Preparation for GEIC Interviews (March 1-2, 5:00 to 9:00 PM, Erickson Alumni Center).

*March 2: Individual Presentations.*

4: Individual Presentations.

7: Read Chapter 3, *Intercultural Communication*. Quiz


16: Group presentations for social networking business plan.

18: Group presentations for social networking business plan.

21: Spring Recess; No class at WVU.

23: Spring Recess; No class at WVU.

25: Spring Recess; No class at WVU.


*April*

1: Read Chapter 9, *Negative Messages*. Begin Client Proposal assignment.

4: Read Chapter 10, *Persuasive and Sales Messages*. Quiz.
6: Client Proposal workshop.
8: Client Proposal peer review.
11: DUE: Client Proposal submission.
13: Begin Client Project.
15: Client Project workshop.
18: Client Project workshop. Quiz.
20: Client Project peer review.
22: DUE: Client Project submission.
25: Client Project presentations.
27: Client project presentations.
29: Review for final exam and course wrap-up.

May  2: Final Exam, 11 AM to 1 PM.