English 202D: Business Writing
Course Description and Policies

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Spring 1996
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Office: 146 S. Burrowes Building
Office hours: T 9:00-9:45, W 1:00-3:00, and by appointment

Materials

Business Communication: An Audience-Centered Approach by Paul V. Anderson
NCTE Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language (recommended)
Course packet (Gnomon Copy)
2 10x13 envelopes

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to help you familiarize yourself with the discourse practices in your disciplinary and institutional communities now and in the future—and to help you manage those practices effectively in your own written communication. This course will focus on the production of a number of business texts in various rhetorical situations. We will learn theories of business writing from scholars in rhetoric and composition and business fields, and use these theories to critique our texts. Class will usually take place in a discussion or workshop format in which we give one another extensive oral and written feedback. Because business writing is often collaborative, we will write several of the texts in groups.

Course Objectives

- Discover and understand the discourse features in your disciplinary and institutional communities.
- Discover and specify the aims/purposes of your writing.
- Develop a range of writing processes appropriate to various writing tasks, including collaborative ones.
- Identify your readers and describe their characteristics in a way that forms a sound basis for deciding how to write to them.
- Learn and practice strategies for inventing the contents of communication through research and reflection.
- Arrange material to raise and satisfy readers' expectations, using both conventional and rhetorical principles and patterns of organization.
- Reveal the organization or your communications by using forecasting and transitional statements, headings, effective page design, and other elements.
• Use appropriate formats for memoranda, letters, resumes, reports, and other business texts.
• Design and use tables, figures, and other visuals or illustrations.
• Evaluate your documents to be sure that they fulfill their purposes and to ensure that you can revise them if necessary.
• Collaborative with your peers as a community of writers who provide feedback on each others' work and occasionally write together.
• Write several specific kinds of documents that recur in business discourse communities.
• Learn and use strategies for planning and delivering oral presentations.

Grades

When grading each of your assignments, I will ask one overriding question: "Does this paper do it's job successfully?" That is, would your communication have the intended effect on the reader(s) you are addressing? Your course grade will be determined according to the following distribution:

• Letters 1-6 .................................................. 25%
• Job application package .................................... 10%
• "Hot Topic" memo ........................................ 10%
• Community service project (includes proposal and progress report) .................. 20%
• Newsletter (includes progress report) ........................................ 10%
• Final portfolio (includes revisions of two texts above) .................. 15%
• Professionalism and participation (includes attitude as well as performances in class discussions, writing workshops, and writing groups) ............. 5%
• Classwork (includes memoranda, in-class writing, and quizzes) ............ 5%

Text Requirements

• Except for in-class writing and critiques, all texts must be word-processed.
• You should write correspondence to me (including comments, suggestions, responses, excuses, etc.) in memo format.
• Unless I instruct you otherwise, bring the original and two copies of drafts prepared for writing workshops.
• In this course, as in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All projects are due at the beginning of the class on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Assignments turned in late will be penalized at least one letter grade unless you have made arrangements with me well in advance.
Plagiarism

Talking over your ideas, getting comments from others, and writing with others are not examples of plagiarism. Taking someone else's published or unpublished words and calling them your own is plagiarism or academic dishonesty. When plagiarism amounts to an attempt to deceive, it has dire consequences.

Attendance

If you amass more than three unexcused absences, I reserve the right to dock your final grade one full letter grade. If you miss more than six classes, I reserve the right to penalize you even more severely. Two tardies equals one absence.

Disabilities

If you have a disability that may prevent you from meeting the requirements for this course, please see me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation.
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Course Syllabus/Schedule

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A = Business Communication
H = handouts
P = packet


Jan. 18: Letter 1 due. Invention (rhetorical situation, four aims, five canons, etc.). Assign.: H readings; A chap. 10, pp. 286-323.


Feb. 6: Critique samples. Assign.: draft of job application package.


Feb. 22: "Hot Topic" memo (cont.). Library research. Assign.: P samples


March 14: Community service project (cont.). Proposals. Assign.: meet with agencies; proposal for project.


March 28: Work at agencies.


April 4: Letter 6 (cont.). Assign.: draft of community service project.

April 9: Writing workshop for community service project. Newsletters. Assign.: P readings; H readings.

April 11: **Letter 6 due.** Newsletter (cont.).

April 16: **Community service project due.** Newsletter (cont.). Assign.: P samples.

April 18: Newsletter (cont.). Critique samples. Assign.: draft of newsletter.

April 23: Writing workshop for newsletter. Final revisions and portfolio. Assign.: proposal for revisions.

April 25: **Newsletter due.** Final revisions (cont.). Course evaluation.

April 30: **Final portfolios due, 5:00 p.m.**