Writing in the Social Sciences

Course Description: This advanced writing course—based on the belief that effective writing substantially influences your career—will help to refine persuasive and informative writing skills for students with a strong interest and background in the social sciences. Understanding how to write with clarity and purpose will help you obtain a job, explain your ideas, and perform your duties more successfully in your field of study. Consequently, you will write about issues of concern in the academic disciplines of administrative justice, anthropology, economics, history, political science, nutrition, psychology, and sociology. You will determine your topics for the assignments based upon your academic interests, and this course will teach you how to write about those topics most effectively. More importantly you will learn community-based writing and how to enhance your skills as a practical and academic writer.

Course Objectives:
♦ Explain the writing process and demonstrate how planning, drafting, revision, editing, and formatting can help you produce essential job-related communications.
♦ Show you how to prepare job application documents, résumés and letters.
♦ Teach you the value of audience analysis with emphasis placed on the writer’s obligation to make ethical decisions in meeting the readers’ needs and fulfilling commitments to employers.
♦ Prepare you to write a multiplicity of business documents, from simple email messages to complex proposals, reports, and finally a grant application.

Textbooks:
Brian R. Holloway’s Proposal Writing Across the Disciplines (2003) and SF Express 2nd edition (2006) are both produced by Prentice Hall and are available at the bookstore.

Attendance: This course relies upon your active engagement in class discussion, activities and assignments. In addition, course participants must check email regularly as I will sometimes send readings, assignments, or reminders via email. If you must be absent, please email me—no more than three unexcused absences will be permitted. In accordance with university policy, I reserve the right to lower a student’s grade if that student has more than three unexcused absences. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact another student for notes and handouts. If you miss peer review, it is your responsibility to ask another student in our class to complete your peer review before the assignment is due. Consequently, I ask that you obtain the names and email addresses of at least two students in the class.

Format: Drafts, final drafts, memos, and all other formal written assignments must be typed and single-spaced, using 10-12 point font and black ink. To the degree possible, formatting of the finished product should reflect the professional or academic standards of the assignment.

Grades: In order to pass this course, you must complete all major assignments in a timely manner.
♦ Personal Statement or Interview Question – 5%
♦ Résumé Packet – 10%
♦ Annotated Bibliography – 5%
♦ Needs Statement – 5%
♦ Informal pre-proposal – 5%
♦ Intro, Conclusion, Objectives, Goals, and Evaluation – 10%
♦ Oral Presentation of Proposal – 15%
Office Conferences: Think of my office as an extension of the classroom and use my office hours to discuss any aspect of your reading and writing: problems, questions, projects you're working on, ideas you wish to develop, strategies you'd like to try, and so on. Plan on having at least one conference early in the course and then plan subsequent conferences with me as needed.

Academic Integrity: The instructor and the University take plagiarism very seriously. You are responsible for reading the department and university plagiarism policies, which can be found at [http://english.la.psu.edu](http://english.la.psu.edu). If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the assignment and your participation grade. You will also be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs for possible further disciplinary sanction.

Nota Bene: Penn State encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell your instructor as soon as possible.

**Course Schedule:** (subject to change, including additions)

| Week 1 | T 1/10 Introduction. Read pgs 1-14.  
R 1/12 Memo due. Introduce Personal Statement and Interview questions |
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| Week 2 | T 1/17 Résumés: academic and professional self-presentation.  
R 1/19 Personal Statement or Interview Question due. Résumés continued. |
| Week 3 | T 1/24 Coverletter discussion. Introduce Annotated Bibliography.  
R 1/26 Résumé and Coverletter due. Workshop on finding a topic for the grant proposal. |
| Week 4 | T 1/31 Annotated Bibliography continued.  
R 2/2 Memo due: contemporary social issue. Peer Review Annotated Bibliography |
| Week 5 | T 2/7 Discuss donor research and sample grant projects  
R 2/9 Annotated Bibliography due. Continue introducing grant projects and social issues |
| Week 6 | T 2/14 Form Project Teams. Workshop grant ideas. Submit three potential donors on donor worksheet in Angel drop box by 5 p.m. on 2/15 |
| | R 2/16 Discuss potential donors and present to class |
| Week 7 | T 2/21 Memo due: ideas for grants Discuss Needs Statement  
R 2/23 Business Ethics and grant projects continued |
| Week 8 | T 2/28 Class cancelled meetings scheduled. Informal pre-proposals due  
R 3/2 Class cancelled meetings scheduled. Informal pre-proposals due |
| | T 3/7 Spring Break— no class |
| | R 3/9 Spring Break— no class |
| Week 9 | T 3/14 Needs Statement due. Discuss Grant Components Assignment as well as Goals and Objectives. Read Chapter 5 (skip pgs 130-37 on scientific grants) |
Week 10
R 3/16 Discuss reading. In-class program activities discussion and workshop
T 3/21 In-class evaluation discussion and workshop
R 3/23 Professional issues discussion

Week 11
T 3/28 Grant Components Assignment due. In-class budget activity
R 3/30 Discuss introduction and conclusion

Week 12
T 4/4 Preparation for Oral Presentations
R 4/6 Professional issues

Week 13
T 4/11 Putting it all together
R 4/13 Peer Review of Final Grant

Week 14
T 4/18 Final Oral Presentations
R 4/20 Final Oral Presentations

Week 15
T 4/25 Final Oral Presentations
R 4/27 Final Grant Packet Due.