ENGLISH 202D: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

English 202D.1
370 Willard Building
MWF: 8:00-8:50
Instructor: Sarah Breckenridge
Office: 50 H Burrowes Building
Email: sdb222@psu.edu
Office Hours: TBA

REQUIRED TEXTS


All other required readings will be made available online, through photocopy, or at the regular reserve desk in Pattee library.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The number-one skill U.S. employers look for in potential future employees, across all disciplines and job types, is the ability to communicate effectively. This course will introduce you to the strategies that you as a business professional will need in order to communicate successfully on the job. It is designed in a way that will allow you to integrate your own skills, knowledge, and areas of specialization into the final assignments and projects. By the end of the semester, you will have not only the ability to produce and revise a variety of different business communication documents, but also a grasp on the key rhetorical situations involved in generating such documents.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Class attendance/preparation is mandatory. While it is understood that emergencies and University-sanctioned activities may arise which result in your missing one or more classes, frequent absences will negatively affect your final grade. As a rule, once you exceed two unexcused absences you will lose 10% of your attendance grade per additional absence. If you have a 0% attendance grade at the end of the semester, you cannot pass the class.

Please remember you are expected to participate enthusiastically when you are in class and realize you are responsible for all material covered during the missed class(es). In the event that your attendance becomes a problem, I will ask you to meet with me to discuss our options.

Class Participation: In addition to regular attendance and active class participation it is particularly important for you to participate in draft workshops and mock interview workshops. You are responsible for making high-quality comments on your classmates’ documents and interview performance, and for considering classmates’ comments in revising your own work. On draft days, your document drafts must be complete and presented in a formal manner. If you must miss a workshop, you are responsible for making arrangements with classmates to review your draft outside of class.

Assignments: You are responsible for all writing assignments, including supplemental assignments that are not yet listed on the syllabus and that may be assigned periodically throughout the semester. If you miss class, you are responsible for any additional homework assigned. I am not responsible for filling you in on work missed due to unexcused absences. Please also note the following additional requirements:

Promptness: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one letter grade per day unless you have made other arrangements with me in advance. All major projects must be completed in order for you to pass English 202D.

Appearance: All work must be completed in a professional manner, using formats appropriate to the particular type of document assigned. Please refer to the Handbook for general guidelines for routine document design. Assignments must also be free of spelling, grammar, and proofreading errors. The Handbook also provides guidelines for grammar, style, and punctuation.

Conferences: Think of my office hours as an extension of class time, and feel free to drop by. Please see me when you have questions about an assignment, when you would like to try out some ideas before a paper is due, or when you have questions about a comment on a draft. You can also contact me by email, sdb222@psu.edu. Keep in mind that while email is the most reliable way to reach me, I may not always be able to answer an email immediately.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. In addition to being subject to university sanctions, students caught plagiarizing will receive a zero for the assignments in which the infraction occurred. Any appeals to these grades must be handled by the students at the departmental level.

Students with Disabilities: It is Penn State’s policy to not discriminate against qualified students with documented disabilities in its educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for modifications in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services at University Park (located in 116 Boucke Building) at 863-1867 or the Disability Contact Liaison at your Penn State location. Instructors must be notified as early in the semester as possible. You may refer to the Non-discrimination Policy in the Student Guide to University Policies and Rules 1997.

GRADING AND DISTRIBUTION

Your final grade will be determined by the grades you receive on written assignments and class participation, according to the following weighting:

1. Proposal 20 points
2. Mock Interview 30 points
3. Job Application Packet 40 points
4. Progress Report 20 points
5. Business Letter Packet 30 points
6. Final Project 50 points
7. Participation 20 points
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>1/14</td>
<td>Welcome to 202D – Introduction to Course and Assignments</td>
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<td>1/16</td>
<td>Rhetorical Situation</td>
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|  | 1/18 | Proposal Writing  
Review of Assignment One  
Thill Chapter 1 |
| Week 2 | 1/21 | Style, Tone, and the Writing Process  
Alfred xv–xxii, Thill Chapters 4–6 |
|  | 1/23 | Problem Statements and Proposal Writing  
Proposal Examples  
Alfred ‘Proposals’, Thill Chapters 10+11 |
|  | 1/25 | Ethos, Logos, and Pathos |
| Week 3 | 1/28 | Proposal Draft Workshop  
**Due:** Draft of Proposal |
|  | 1/30 | Getting a Job: Resumes, Cover Letters, and Job Interviews  
Review of Assignments Two and Three  
**Due:** Final Proposal Memo |
|  | 2/1 | The Job Hunt: Knowing Your Market and Your Resources  
Alfred ‘Interview for a Job’, Thill Chapter 14 |
| Week 4 | 2/4 | Writing Effective Resumes  
Alfred ‘Resumes’, Thill Chapter 14 |
|  | 2/6 | Resume Examples  
**Mock Interview** |
|  | 2/8 | Writing Effective Cover Letters  
Alfred ‘Application Letters’ |
| Week 5 | 2/11 | Cover Letter Examples  
**Mock Interview** |
|  | 2/13 | Resume Workshop 1  
**Mock Interview** |
|  | 2/15 | Resume Workshop 2  
**Mock Interview** |
| Week 6 | 2/18 | Cover Letter Workshop 1  
**Mock Interview** |
| Week 7 | 2/20 | Cover Letter Workshop 2  
**Mock Interview** |
|  | 2/22 | Additional Workshops for Application Packet  
Style and Effective Sentence Structure  
**Due:** Draft of Job Application Packet |
| Week 8 | 2/25 | Fallacies |
|  | 2/27 | Introduction to Progress Reports: Format and Layout  
Review of Assignment Four  
Alfred ‘Progress Reports’  
**Due:** Job Application Packet |
|  | 2/29 | Business Library Visit |
| Week 9 | 3/3 | Progress Report ‘From The Earth to the Moon’ |
|  | 3/5 | Discussion: From the Earth to the Moon  
**Mock Interviews** |
|  | 3/7 | Progress Report Workshop 1  
**Mock Interviews** |
| Week 10 | 3/17 | Progress Report Workshop 2  
**Mock Interviews** |
|  | 3/19 | International Business: Japan  
**Mock Interviews**  
**Due:** Final Progress Report |
|  | 3/21 | International Business: France  
**Mock Interviews** |
| Week 11 | 3/24 | International Business: TBA  
**Mock Interviews** |
|  | 3/26 | Introduction to Business Letters  
Review of Assignment Five |
|  | 3/28 | Company Groups Assigned  
Presentation of Companies’ Mission Statements |
| Week 12 | 3/31 | Business Letter Formats and Exigence  
Letter Pairings Assigned  
Alfred ‘Correspondence’ |
|  | 4/2 | Writing Routine and Good News Messages  
Thill Chapter 7  
**Due:** Letter of Request |
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<tr>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Writing Bad News and Persuasive Letters</td>
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<td>Thill Chapter 8+9</td>
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<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
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<td>4/7</td>
<td>Business Letters Continued</td>
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<td><strong>Mock Interview</strong></td>
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<td>4/9</td>
<td>Business Letter Workshop 1</td>
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<td><strong>Mock Interview</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Due: Complete Drafts of Business Letter Packets</strong></td>
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<td>4/11</td>
<td>Business Letter Workshop 2</td>
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<td><strong>Mock Interviews</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
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<td>4/14</td>
<td><strong>Due: Final Business Letter Packet</strong></td>
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<td>Introduction to Formal Recommendation Reports</td>
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<td>Format Review for Assignment Six</td>
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<td>4/18</td>
<td>Recommendation Reports</td>
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<td>Thill Chapter 2</td>
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<td><strong>Mock Interview</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
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<td>4/21</td>
<td>Executive Summary and Letter of Transmittal</td>
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<td><strong>Mock Interview</strong></td>
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<td>4/23</td>
<td>Report Writing Workshop (computer lab)</td>
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<td>4/25</td>
<td>Draft Workshop 1 (computer lab)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
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<td>4/28</td>
<td>Draft Workshop 2 (computer lab)</td>
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<td>4/30</td>
<td>Draft Workshop 3 (computer lab)</td>
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<td>5/2</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up and Evaluations</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Final Recommendation Report</strong></td>
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*I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as I see fit*