

WRIT 3029-001: Business and Professional Writing, Spring 2012

Instructor: Trent M Kays
Classroom: 320 Lind Hall
Meeting Time: Tu, Th 1115am-1230pm

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Course Overview

From the course catalogue: Practice writing for various professional purposes/audiences, using appropriate styles, tones, and organizational elements. Potential genres include proposals, reports, web content, email, executive summaries, job search portfolios. Attention to workplace collaboration and broader issues of professional literacy.

In this course, we will explore issues and concepts of business and professional communication or workplace writing. We will use a textbook, course website, blogs, and Twitter to encourage and aid our discussions of workplace writing. It is important to make use of both print texts and digital tools, as you will encounter both of these in a workplace environment.

Textbooks

Searles, George J. *Workplace Communication: The Basics*. 5th ed. Boston, MA: Longman, 2010. Print.
Williams, Joseph M. and Gregory G. Colomb. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 10th ed. Boston, MA: Logman, 2010. Print.

Supplemental Resources

Course Website: <http://3029s12.posterous.com/>
Course Twitter Hashtag: #3029w
Other readings will be provided by instructor

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

Week 1

01/17	Introduction to Course: What is business and professional writing? Context of business and professional writing. Main issues in business and professional writing. Twitter. Blogging.
01/19	Topic: Writing and Style Need to Have Read: <i>Workplace</i> , p. 2-14; <i>Style</i> , p. 2-9; "Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell (Available online: http://j.mp/pzcM5B)

Week 2

01/24	Topic: Writing and Correctness Need to Have Read: <i>Style</i> , p. 10-26
01/26	Topic: Writing as Genre; Emails and Memos Need to Have Read: <i>Workplace</i> , p. 28-35

Week 3

01/31	Topic: Writing as Action Need to Have Read: <i>Style</i> , p. 28-45
02/02	Topic: Characters in a Sentence Need to Have Read: <i>Style</i> , p. 46-65

Week 4

02/07	Topic: Document Design Need to Have Read: <i>Workplace</i> , p. 82-113
02/09	Topic: Coherent Writing Need to Have Read: <i>Style</i> , p. 66-81 Assignment(s) Due: Progress Report (see assignment sheet)

Week 5

02/14 **Topic:** Summaries
Need to Have Read: *Workplace*, p. 120-128; p. 134-142

02/16 **Topic:** Concision in Writing
Need to Have Read: *Style*, p. 82-117

Week 6

02/21 **Topic:** Job Applications and Resumes
Need to Have Read: *Workplace*, p. 156-175

02/23 **Topic:** Shaping Your Writing
Need to Have Read: *Style*, p. 118-139

Week 7

02/28 **Topic:** Rhetorical Analysis in Business Contexts
Need to Have Read: "Understanding Misunderstandings: How to do a rhetorical analysis" by Trish Roberts-Miller (Available Online: <http://j.mp/oaO5DK>); "Basic Questions for Rhetorical Analysis" by Silva Rhetoricae (Available Online: <http://j.mp/r8OgDR>)
Assignment(s) Due: Job Cover Letter and Resume (see assignment sheet); Mid-Semester Survey

03/01 **Individual Meetings with Students**

Week 8

03/06 **Topic:** Digital Writing
Need to Have Read: Ch. 1: "The Landscape of Digital Writing" and Ch. 2: "Revising the Writing Process" from *Because Digital Writing Matters* by National Writing Project, et al. (instructor handout)

03/08 **Topic:** New Media Literacy
Need to Have Read: "What Wikipedia Can Teach Us About the New Media Literacies, Part 1 and 2 (Available Online: <http://j.mp/nafiAm> and <http://j.mp/oevjZw>, respectively)

Week 9

03/13 **Spring Break (No Class)**

03/15 **Spring Break (No Class)**

Week 10

03/20 **No Class: Digital Communication Project Workday** (Instructor will be available in his office for help)

03/22 **No Class: Digital Communication Project Workday** (Instructor will be available in his office for help)

Week 11

03/27 **Topic:** Proposals
Need to Have Read: *Workplace*, p. 206-228

03/29 **Topic:** Rhetorical Moves and Global Issues
Need to Have Read: *Style*, p. 164-188
Assignment(s) Due: Digital Communication Project (see assignment sheet)

Week 12

04/03 **Topic:** Ethics in Writing
Need to Have Read: *Style*, p. 192-208

04/05 **Topic:** Visuals
Need to Have Read: *Workplace*, p. 60-77

Week 13

04/10 **Topic:** Reports
Need to Have Read: *Workplace*, p. 232-260

04/12 **Topic:** Professional Ethos
Need to Have Read:

Week 14

04/17 **Topic:** Putting Together a Business Presentation
Need to Have Read: *Workplace*, p. 190-202

04/19 **Topic:** Presentation Tools
Need to Have Read: "PowerPoint is Evil" by Edward Tufte (Available Online: <http://j.mp/pxWi58>); "Challenging the Presentation Paradigm (in 6 minutes, 40 seconds): Pecha Kucha" by Jason B Jones (Available Online: <http://j.mp/qkevFo>)

Week 15

04/24	No Class: Proposal and Presentation Workday Assignment(s): Proposal and Presentation Update Survey
04/26	No Class: Proposal and Presentation Workday

Week 16

05/01	Proposal Presentations
05/03	Proposal Presentations

*All outstanding work and revisions are due by **Midnight on 05/12/2012.***

Grading

- Twitter: 200 points (At least one post every weekday)
- Blogging: 200 points (At least one post a week)
- Progress Report: 50 points
- Job Cover Letter and Resume: 100 points
- Digital Communication Project: 150 points
- Proposal and Oral Presentations: 200 points
- Reflection: 50 points

- Total: 950 points

Assignments

You must turn in all required drafts and revisions. If you do not, you are likely to receive a lower grade for the course. Late assignments may receive a lower grade. Keep copies of all your work in a folder dedicated exclusively to this course; back up your work on your computer in case assignments get lost. See attached assignment sheets for detailed information for each assignment.

Absence Policy

Excused absences include illness as verified by a doctor's note, death in the immediate family, jury duty, military service, religious observances, and participation in officially scheduled university student organization events (e.g., inter-collegiate athletics, ROTC, school sports events; see the CLA policy at <http://www.cla.umn.edu/cgep/3.html>). Excused absences do not include vacations, transportation problems, or employment. In case of an excused absence, you must notify your instructor of your excuse preferably before you miss class, but no later than 24 hours after the absence.

Missing the equivalent of one week or more of class with unexcused absences may result in a lower grade. Missing the equivalent of three weeks or more with unexcused absences may result in failing the course. In some cases, an excessive number of absences, even if they are excused, may result in a lower grade. A student who is absent for any reason is responsible for all material and activities missed in class. Students must check with the instructor to find out what was missed. Students are responsible for coming to class on time. Tardiness may be considered equivalent to unexcused absences. In addition, a student who is unable to function adequately in class (e.g., falling asleep or attending without appropriate materials or assignments) may be considered to have unexcused absences.

Students with Disability

Any student with a documented disability condition (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, systemic, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations should contact the instructor and Disability Services (626-1333) at the beginning of the semester.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code governs all activities in the University, including this course. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for others may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code. This includes any behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities. Students responsible for such behavior may be asked to cancel their registration (or have their registration canceled).

Student Writing Support

Students can get one-to-one consultations on any course paper or writing project at Student Writing Support. Student Writing Support has several campus locations, including the main location in 15 Nicholson Hall. See <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.htm> for details about locations, appointments, and online consultations.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

“Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.”

<http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/studentconduct.html>

Plagiarism, representing someone else's intellectual work as your own, can result in a grade of **F** for the assignment, and may result in a grade of **F** for the course. Plagiarism can include submitting a paper:

- written by means of inappropriate collaboration
- written by you for another course, submitted without the permission of both instructors
- purchased, downloaded, or cut and pasted from the Internet
- or that fails to properly acknowledge its sources through standard citations

Instructor Prerogative

Everything listed and outlined on this syllabus is subject to change by the instructor. The instructor will notify students of any and all changes and provide explanations for said changes.

Assignment Descriptions

Progress Report

For this assignment, you will need to write a progress report outlining your progress toward your degree. You should follow the standard progress report format outlined in your textbook (*Workplace*, p. 101; 104-108). Remember your audience! For this assignment, your instructor is your exclusive audience. You're writing this progress report to inform the instructor as to your progress with coursework toward your degree. While you should follow the headings outlined in your textbook (*Workplace*, p. 104), these are only suggested headings. If you feel there is a more appropriate or clearer way to present your information, then please do so.

Suggested Reference: *Workplace*, p. 82-113

Grading: You will be graded on how clearly you present your information, the coherency of your writing, and, to a lesser extent, the proper use of grammar.

Length and Details: 2-3 pages (not including a title page and/or title memo); 12-point font, single-space

Point Value: 50 points

Cover Letter and Resume

This assignment will allow you to practice two essential writing genres that will help you secure employment and highlight your academic and practical work experiences. You will write a resume and accompanying cover letter for a fictional employment opportunity. You'll explore both genres and look at different ways in which you can construct these documents.

Suggested Reference: *Workplace*, p. 157-171

Grading: *Cover Letter*—You will be graded on how well you outline your objectives, articulate your interest in the job for which you're applying, coherency, and, to a lesser extent, the proper use of grammar; *Resume*—You will be graded especially on document design. Your information should be clear, concise, and easy to follow.

Length and Details: *Cover Letter*—1-2 pages; *Resume*—1-2 pages; 12-point font, single-space

Point Value: 100 points (50 points for the Cover Letter; 50 points for the Resume)

Digital Communication Project

This assignment will allow you to practice professional communication in a digital environment. You will be required to conduct a rhetorical analysis of a digital or online identity for the first part of this assignment. Working from what you learned from your rhetorical analysis, you will then be required to create a website for the second part, which will serve as your professional online identity.

Suggested Reference: "Understanding Misunderstandings: How to do a rhetorical analysis" by Trish Roberts-Miller (Available Online: <http://j.mp/oa05DK>); "Basic Questions for Rhetorical Analysis" by Silva Rhetoricae (Available Online: <http://j.mp/r8OgDR>); "Web Design Principles Checklist" from George Mason University (Available Online: <http://j.mp/n42qwl>)

Grading: *Rhetorical Analysis*—You will be graded on how and why you selected the online identity on which you are conducting your analysis, how well you articulate your analysis and the rhetorical motives of the identity creator, coherency, and, to a lesser extent, the proper use of grammar.

Website—You will be graded on the type of website you created, presentation of your persona, and how you integrate the required sections: About, Resume, Portfolio (optional), Work Experience, References, and Contact. You can include other sections or information, but you will be required to have these basic sections.

Length and Details: *Rhetorical Analysis*—2-3 pages; 12-point font, single-space; *Website*—N/A

Point Value: 150 points (50 points for the Rhetorical Analysis; 100 points for the Website)

Proposal and Oral Presentation

This assignment will place you in the role of an external consultant. You have been hired to consult on a company's social and new media use. The company has never used social or new media before, but they would like to begin using it in order to reach their customer base and enhance their internal organization. You will be required to work collaboratively on this assignment with another classmate. You will need to choose one social or new media tool for this company, outline how the tool will enhance the company, your suggestions for implementation, the procedure for implementation, and the pros and cons of implementation. You should give a brief background history of your chosen tool in your introduction, and you should reiterate the importance of the tool and your suggestions in your conclusion. You should feel free to cite other material in this proposal and include a Works Cited page. A cover memo to place it in context should front your proposal. You will be required to give an oral presentation about your proposal where you advocate for its adoption by your employers.

Suggested Reference: Workplace, p. 206-228

Grading: You will be graded on how well you present the information outlined in the description, coherency, clarity, context, collaboration, and cited works. This assignment makes use of part of almost every other assignment we've done, so you will be responsible for outlining all the pertinent information related to how you will persuade your client to adopt your recommendations. You will also be graded on your oral presentation and how you present your information in your oral presentation.

Length and Details: 7-10 pages; 12-point font, single-space

Point Value: 200 points (100 points for the Proposal; 100 points for the Oral Presentation)