



ENGL 286 - Professional Writing

Course Information:

Semester	: July 6, 2020 - August 7, 2020
Credit	: 4
Teaching Hours	: 50 Hours
Time	: 2 hours/day, Mon-Fri
Professor	: Dr. L. Holloway
Email	: lholloway@framingham.edu
Office Hours	: half hour before and after each class

NOTE CONCERNING SYLLABUS: Students should reread the descriptions of requirements and class policies thoroughly and review deadlines repeatedly over the semester. If there are questions or concerns, please ask. Students will be held responsible for knowing, understanding, and following the policies and course expectations. Loss of syllabus or ignorance of its contents IS NOT a justifiable excuse for missed work or lack of class participation. A copy of the syllabus and other course documents are posted on the companion Blackboard site for this class. Any updates will be shown there, so check site if absent from class.

Course Description:

A career-oriented course introducing students to a wide variety of writing formats used in business, government, and the professions. Assignments may include resumes, employment documents, letters, memos, short proposals, a variety of report formats, public relations and advertising documents, and basic technical writing. This course emphasizes drafting, critiquing, rewriting, and editing, as well as collaborative writing and presentations skills.

Course Details:

Often students are used to being passive learners. They come to class with nothing to say about the assignment because they are afraid of being wrong, have not really thought about the assignment, and/or have little experience being required to discuss assignments in class. Students should instead look at their college career **as preparation for their career in the workforce and pretend that class meetings are like meetings at work.** Bosses expect employees to come to every meeting prepared to contribute. In this class, students should take notes while reading and also be prepared to share any writing assignment (formal and informal) with the rest of the class. I treat students like I treat my colleagues at work and will expect students to come to class prepared to actively engage in what we are learning. It is up to each student to figure out how the course content and skills review can help them with their personal goals.



Learning Outcomes:

In addition to the specific course requirements, by the end of the course, successful students will be able to do the following:

- Adapt their writing to different audience expectations
- Understand how tone can affect reception of different messages depending on the situation
- Understand the relationship between all parts of the rhetorical triangle and how to adapt these to communications in the work place
- Understand the difference between revising and editing
- Be able to choose which kind of writing is most appropriate for different writing expectations at work

Texts and Materials:

Appelman, Jack E. *10 Steps to Successful Business Writing*. 2nd edition. ATD Press. Alexandria, 2018
Brown, Laura. *The Only Business Writing Book You'll Ever Need*. Norton. New York, 2019

Course Schedule:

Week 1 7/6-7/10	M	Course Overview & Introductions; Rhetorical Triangle; Tone
	T	Basics of Professional Writing course topics; “The Seven Steps” to professional writing; when face-to-face is better
	W	Emails; Handling Requests; General Bad News
	R	Instant Messaging like a Professional; Presentation guidelines; Visuals in reports and presentations, Proposals
	F	Deadline for email requests, regular emails, escalated request response; Proposal workshop
Week 2 7/13-7/17	M	Presentations part 2: slide etiquette; Presentations vs. Speeches; Presentation workshop
	T	Building Relationships Through Professional Writing: Communicating to supervisors, subordinates, and clients; introductions and recommendations; Thank You Notes
	W	Bad News: Crisis Management communications; angry customers; reputation management; performance reviews;
	R	Presentations
	F	Presentations
Week 3 7/20-7/24	M	Business Reports and Grant Writing
	T	Business plans and Executive Summaries
	W	Business Promotion part 1: Professional Bios; Web copy; Blogs; Cultural Differences (Internet is global)
	R	Business Promotion: Social Media, Press releases; Speeches and preparation of Speeches due next week



	F	Writing under a quick deadline: emails, press releases, memos, responding to media requests
Week 4 7/27-8/1	M	Speeches: Day one
	T	Speeches: Day Two
	W	Resumes, cover letters, elevator speeches,
	R	Requesting informational interviews, writing a job rejection, responding to a rejection
	F	Resignation letters; termination letters; letters of complaint
Week 5 8/3-8/7	M	Final Portfolio prep
	T	
	W	Individual Conferences
	R	Individual Conferences
	F	Portfolio deadline; Sharing portfolios and critiques

Course Requirements:

Classwork (35%); Participation (15%); Presentation (10%); Speech (10); Final Portfolio (30%)
CLASSWORK—Students will write in the following categories of professional writing and be evaluated on each area of communication: Emails (various types), Relationship Building Communications; Delivering Bad News; Business Plan/Report/Grant (each student will choose one), and Job Application Packet. In connection to the schedule above, students will be expected to either bring drafts to class and/or work on specific categories of writing in class. Each assignment will be evaluated on the specific guidelines for that specific piece of writing.

PARTICIPATION—All Students are expected to come to class each day prepared to participate by reading the assignments giving ahead of the date on which we will be discussing the area, by participating actively in group activities, and submitting their work in the writing under a deadline in-class essay in the prescribed time period.

PRESENTATION—Students will develop a proposal over a topic of their own choosing. This proposal will provide the content of the presentation. Each student will get 8-10 minutes to present to the class and each listener will be expected to participate in evaluating the presentations as audience members.

SPEECH—Students will develop a speech on a topic of their own choosing. Most students pick a topic over which they have written in another assignment already. This is acceptable for this assignment with the exception of the topic chosen for presentation. Students must pick a different topic than the topic of their presentation.

FINAL PORTFOLIO—Students are required to submit a final portfolio that consists of completed revised versions of their resume, cover letter, and four of the six following areas:

- Email packet (including revisions of documents produced during the speed writing exercise—total of ten different categories)
- Relationship Building exercises
- Bad New writing exercises
- Business Plan/Report/Grant
- Speech
- Presentation



Class Policies:

LATE ESSAYS—Remember, all essays are due within the first ten minutes of class. Any time after that, they will be considered late and will lose one letter grade for each day that they are late. Unexcused late papers will receive no written comments, merely a letter grade. Students should not let last minute printing problems keep them from handing in papers; send papers to me in an email attachment if your printer is not working. **IMPORTANT: Even if a paper will be so late it will automatically receive a failing grade, it should still be handed in to receive partial credit. A paper can get up to 55 points for an F.** An F is always better than a zero.

All papers must be received by the last day of class to receive any points.

ABSENCES—Every class is important. Because a great amount of material is covered during class meetings, students are expected to attend class regularly. It is up to each student to make sure they get notes and/or handouts from days that they are absent. Every handout is numbered so that students can check to see what handouts they are missing. I will also post documents on the course blackboard site.

LATENESS—Frequent lateness is disruptive and rude. My courses are almost always morning classes. If you are not a morning person, you should seriously consider whether signing up for such courses is a good idea. If you are unavoidably late, come in quietly so that you do not disrupt class. If you are habitually late, I will issue a warning. After that, every three latenesses will count as an absence.

CELL PHONES—Please put all cell phones and pagers on vibrate before entering the classroom. Students whose cell phones ring during tests, projects, or exams will be asked to turn in work immediately even if the work is not complete. The following quotation sums up my attitude about cell phone interruptions:

“It’s never appropriate. What did we do without a crackberry? We waited that’s what we did! We waited until we got to that big, black heavy phone at our grandmother’s house. We discovered that good news could wait and bad news would find you in the Amazon jungle.”—Rudy Rasmus

The class is only 50 minutes long. Friends, parents, and bosses can wait

Course Expectations

Grading Scale:

A	94% of total points	A-	90-93.99% of total points
B+	87-89.99% of total points	B	84-86.99% of total points
B-	80-83.99% of total points	C+	77-79.99% of total points
C	74-76.99% of total points	C-	70-73.99% of total points
D+	67-69.99% of total points	D	64-66.99% of total points
D-	60-63.99% of total points	F	<60% of total points

Pass/Fail: need 60% or higher to pass.

Any student not fulfilling his/her academic obligations for this course will receive a failing grade for the semester. Incompletes will only be granted under the most extreme of circumstances and only if agreed upon by the instructor before the completion of the semester. Any issues regarding such a situation will be referred to the Dean's office.



Academic Honesty Policy

Framingham State University's policy regarding academic honesty (taken from the [undergraduate catalog](#)):

“Integrity is essential to academic life. Consequently, students who enroll at Framingham State University agree to maintain high standards of academic honesty and scholarly practice. They shall be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the published policies and procedures regarding academic honesty. In addition to the required statement, faculty members shall, at their discretion, include in the course syllabus additional statements relating the definition of academic honesty to their courses. Infractions of the Policy on Academic Honesty include, but are not limited to: 1. Plagiarism: claiming as one's own work the published or unpublished literal or paraphrased work of another. It should be recognized that plagiarism is not only academically dishonest but also illegal; 2. Cheating on exams, tests, quizzes, assignments, and papers, including the giving or acceptance of these materials and other sources of information without the permission of the instructor(s); 3. Unauthorized collaboration with other individuals in the preparation of course assignments; 4. Submitting without authorization the same assignment for credit in more than one course; 5. Use of dishonest procedures in computer, laboratory, studio, or field work; 6. Misuse of the University's technical facilities (computer machinery, laboratories, media equipment, etc.), either maliciously or for personal gain; 7. Falsification of forms used to document the academic record and to conduct the academic business of the University.”

U.S. COPYRIGHT LAW

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