



ENGL 202: Business Communication
WINTER 2020
12/28/20-1/22/21

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Welcome to Business Communication!

English 202 Business Communication focuses on the analysis and creation of documents that rely on a critical understanding of reader-text relationships, rhetorical contexts, and visual rhetoric. In this course, you will gain experience with genres that are used in a variety of disciplines and workplaces, such as letters, memos, proposals, instructions, brochures, final reports with executive summaries, presentations and webpages.

During the four weeks of the course, we will cover the basics of business communication: readability, using effective visual elements, analyzing audience, analyzing how a text is used, effective organization, ethics and writing, and usability testing. Each of you will create your own “business” through writing a business plan, creating promotional materials (letterhead, logo, marketing tools, etc.). This “business” will be the focus of your internal and external communication. Expect to produce, revise and edit at minimum 20-25 pages of writing over several projects.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this semester, you should be able to

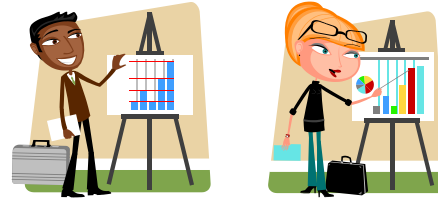
- Understand the business communication activities in your chosen field.
- Understand the concepts of rhetorical situation, discourse community, tacit knowledge, specialized discourse, register, genre system, and visual rhetoric.
- Analyze the rhetorical situation of a business communication task.
- Analyze the effectiveness of a business-related document in relation to the rhetorical situation, content, organization, and overall design.
- Design effective business-related documents in a variety of genres.
- Plan and conduct effective oral presentations, making use of visual aids.
- Use technology to compose, design, and send documents.
- Conduct usability testing to test the effectiveness of a document with the target audience.
- Collaborate effectively with a team to successfully complete projects.

Required Texts and Materials:

Business Communication for Success: open source book available here
<https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/>

Other readings on Blackboard

Blackboard and email accounts



OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS (Note: Assignments 3 and 5 may be done as individual or group projects. If you chose to work with another, you need to divide the work appropriately and are responsible for all the work.)

1. RÉSUMÉ AND LETTER OF APPLICATION, ELEVATOR SPEECH

This project allows you to apply knowledge about visual design and audience analysis while creating your résumé. The project will include locating an advertisement and writing a cover letter and résumé, peer editing and revision as well as interviewing someone in that profession.

Part A: Locate and Analyze a Job Ad

Find a job ad for a position you will be qualified for by the end of your studies, or for an internship that you are currently qualified for. You may find this ad in a newspaper or online. Post your ad to the discussion board where we will analyze for key terms and references to business communication.

Part B: Write First Drafts of the Resume and Letter of Application

Write first drafts of the résumé and letter of application. During in-class workshops, give feedback to your peers' drafts, focusing both on global and local features of the texts. Share on Blackboard in group.

Revise and Revise Again

During this revision, focus on organization, development, and overall design, paying attention to the impression you want to leave your reader with, as well as editing.

Part C: Write Cover Letter and Hand in Project

Write a cover letter, answering the following questions: How did you revise based on peer feedback? How does your document meet the needs of your target audience? What would you revise further if you had more time? In one document include the cover letter, the final draft, and the paper trail (the first draft, the second draft, and the copy of the job ad). Submit through Blackboard.

Part D: Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is an opportunity for you explain your qualifications for a job in five minutes (as if you are riding in an elevator with a potential employer). Prepare your speech and record it. Post to Blackboard.

2. BUSINESS PLAN, MEMOS, LETTERS

This assignment allows you to imagine a business and to consider the communication within that business. Each of you will develop a simple Business Plan using a guide I will distribute you will summarize and outline all the aspects of and criteria for your business. You will also design letterhead and business cards, create an advertisement for employment, design a brochure and conduct internal and external communication such as letters, reports, memos, and so on. You will present your plan in class to your group.

Part A

1. Using the template for creating a business plan, create your own plan to be used throughout the semester. You should complete all sections, and a general budget of costs. Your

"business" will be used as a heading for letters, memos and other communications and assignments. Be sure to be precise and use clear language in your plan. We will share these on Blackboard, give feedback, and you will have an opportunity to revise your plan

2. Create a logo for your business; use this log to create letterhead and business cards. You can create with text and/or visuals (use Wordart or clipart or your own designs). Keep in mind your audience as you create these markers of your business. Write a brief explanation (a paragraph) of why you chose this particular design and how you chose to set up the letterhead and business cards. On Blackboard we will share your designs and get feedback on the "readability" of your design; in other words, what message are you conveying? Will your design help your business? You will have an opportunity to revise these.

Part B:

Memos: Using the following scenarios, or an approved scenario of your own, write two memos—one to an individual and one to a group.

1. Write a memo to your employees which announces a staff meeting about work ethics. This meeting can include training on sexual harassment, dress code, use of company equipment or resources, or professional conduct.
2. Write a memo to your employees about work-place education programs.
3. Write a memo to your employees regarding an incident which took place (a theft or hate crime for examples) where the perpetrator is unknown. Explain the incident and how your company responds to such incidents.
4. Write a memo to a colleague about a project with which you are jointly involved. You can choose if there is a conflict or agreement on a matter associated with the project.
5. Write a memo to a colleague regarding the results of a meeting for which he/she could not attend due to another commitment.
6. Write a memo to a colleague or supervisor suggesting a new project or initiative which will benefit the company.

Part C:

Letters: Using the following scenarios, or an approved scenario of your own, write two letters—one for a positive situation and one for a negative situation.

1. You have just opened a new company and are looking for customers. Write a letter to potential consumers to announce your company, its service or product, and what consumers will benefit from.
2. A customer has notified you with a complaint about your product or service. The customer is irate and demands reparations. Write a letter addressing the complaints and what your company will do to rectify the situation.
3. Your company has not been doing well lately due to the fluctuating stock market, high gasoline prices or other recession-related issues. You now find yourself having to down-size which may mean laying off employees or reducing benefits among other things. Write a

letter in which you discuss the financial stress and the possible solutions as you try to allay the fears of the employees.

4. An employee has been injured, and the recovery process has taken up most of his/her benefits. Write a letter to address the problem of the termination of benefits and offer some alternatives.
5. An employee is being recognized for some kind of service to the company (20 years, outstanding sales, going above and beyond, etc.). Write a letter to the employee which applauds this service.
6. An employee has been terminated for a reason of your choice. Write a letter in which you discuss the reasons for and terms of the dismissal.

3. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE NEWS (ongoing recorded presentations)

In this project, you will locate a newspaper or magazine article related to business communication, and then share information from the article with your classmates during a brief (10- minute) presentation. We will use Flip-Grid as a means to record your presentation.

Look for an article that either focuses on an aspect of business communication, such as posting resumes electronically, communicating across languages and cultures, or writing a specific type of document, or can focus on a story that involves business communication, such as a story on how documentation played into a business's success or demise, or a story on how a business has decided to change its image through its logo and document design. Consider how the message is being communicated.

Good places to find an article:

- Newspapers, (particularly in the business section)
- Popular business magazines, such as *Business Week*
- Magazines focusing on specific professions

After completing your research, create a handout to use during your presentation. The handout should include the following components:

- A bibliographic entry on the source, using either MLA or APA format
- A brief summary of the article
- Two or three key quotes from the article
- A reflection on how this article adds to our overall class discussion
- Two or three discussion questions

Post your handout on the discussion board along with a link to your video.

4 REFLECTION ON CLASS each of you will write a reflection on the class (details to come).

GRADING

Each project has a value of 100 points and counts for 70% of your final grade.
Homework and being prepared for class counts for 30% of your final grade

Homework and being prepared for class means you have completed any assigned work before coming to class. This includes reading and writing activities as well as any other preparation for assignments or projects. This also includes providing effective feedback and sharing in our Blackboard discussions.

Active class participation includes participating actively in class through discussion and questions,

Attendance, Plagiarism and Other Suggestions

1. In Native communities, we talk about the four Rs: Reverence, Reciprocity, Respect, and Responsibility. I make every attempt to conduct my personal and professional life under these four Rs. I hold great admiration for each of you and for the work we will do together. We are in a space of sharing gifts of learning with one another. As with any endeavor, there are responsibilities that we take on and expectations that need to be fulfilled. It goes without saying that respectful behavior is expected from all of us. Respecting one another includes being prepared and engaging in deep listening as well as contributing.
2. Our class is asynchronous which means we will not be online with one another. Rather the work will be shared through Blackboard. When you are assigned to share work with each other, you should be respectful of each other's time and prepare in advance. Try to give useful feedback that will help your peer improve on their work.
3. Please let me know if you have a preferred name or preferred pronouns. I expect the class to be respectful of anyone's preferences.
4. Plagiarism—we all know that this is intellectual theft. Bottom line, don't do it. It's a serious offense that could not only jeopardize your grade, but has other serious consequences. This is a link to BSU's Academic Integrity Policy:
<http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=970>
5. Feel challenged—one of the great things about this work is that we are still breaking some new ground. While the reading load is very heavy, there is still so much more. If you find something that looks interesting, bring it in or discuss it in your responses. Enjoy the learning, work hard at it, and open yourself to thinking in challenging ways.
6. Talk to me—I can always be available. Let me know if there are any issues before they grow.
7. Have a sense of humor.
8. Take risks

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (This is by no means set in stone and may change with advanced notice to the class.) All your assignments are contained in the syllabus. The schedule contains the dates due. Since we are a virtual class, the discussion board and Blackboard groups will be our formats for talking with each other. You will also be producing some videos and other ways of sharing work. **Blackboard contains more information with readings to supplement your assignments.**

Please note: Each of us will record and post a video introduction

All assignments are due to hand in at specific times. However, everything will be collected into a portfolio at the end of class. This gives you opportunity to revise any of your work to present the best work possible.

Over the course, there will be questions and readings that we will discuss on Blackboard. I will post the questions there two times per week.

Week 1 December 28 (Materials have been sent prior to start)
Class Introductions via video—please have yours posted and watch mine Project 1—job ad analysis and draft of résumé due Reading Job Ads –what is an employer looking for? Post to discussion board. Articles on résumés and samples to be handed out Homework: Begin revisions and draft cover letter (see chapters 1 and 9) Start recording Business Communications in the News presentations (Chapter 18)
December 30
Résumé and cover letters due for feedback Homework: Create Business Plan (chapter 9)
Week 2 January 4
Business Communications in the News watch videos as they are posted and give feedback Your Business-- Examples Homework: Letters and Memos (Chapter 9.1 and 9.2; also Chapter 10)
January 6
Business Plan due for feedback Homework: Continue writing letters and memos; develop logos and marketing tools
Week 3 January 11
Memos and letters due for feedback Logos and Marketing Business Revise Logos and Marketing
January 13
What is effective communication? Chapter 14—read and post to discussion board Logos and marketing due for feedback
Week 4 January 18
Intercultural Communication and Collaboration—Chapters 18 and 19. Read and post to discussion board. Be sure to post both points and questions. Homework: Continue revising assignments for your portfolio
January 20
Portfolios: Put all your work in a portfolio and submit with a reflection. REFLECTION: What did you get from this course? What did you find useful to learn? What more would you like to know? How did you revise each assignment? All your work is due at the end of this week (by January 22 nd). Grades will be posted by January 26.