



BRIDGEWATER

STATE UNIVERSITY

**ENGL 202: Business Communication**

**SUMMER 2021**

**6/14/21-7/9/21**

**Instructor:** TBD

**Location:** TBD

**Course Credits:** 3

### **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

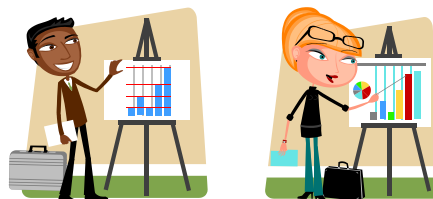
- Understand the business communication activities in your chosen field.
- Understand the concepts of rhetorical situation, discourse community, tacit knowledge, specialized discourse, register, genre system, and visual rhetoric.
- Analyze the rhetorical situation of a business communication task.
- 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



**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 in class, 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. In class 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 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.

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

Be sure to send me a copy of your handout via email prior to your presentation, and bring enough copies of your handout for everyone in the class. Or if you email your handout to me two days before your presentation, I will print copies for you.

**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.

Active class participation includes participating actively in class through discussion and questions, providing effective feedback to peers, bringing proper materials to class, demonstrating engagement with the class without outside distractions (cell phones, etc), and contributing to a class atmosphere that makes learning possible for all.

## 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. You must come to class on time. While things happen such as illness, car troubles, unplanned events, try to make every class. After four missed classes, your grade will be affected; miss six classes and do not expect to pass the course. If you are habitually late or you are not taking the class seriously, your grade will be affected.
3. **Use of Electronic Devices:** Sometimes it seems we must be available to others 24/7, which leaves no time for anything else. Yet this “on-call status” does not allow for us to be attentive to other things. While I may not say anything to you, I (and other students) do take note of your attentiveness in class. In this class cell phone use is only for emergencies—put them on a silent mode and keep them out of sight. Likewise, while you may bring laptops or other devices to class, they should be used only for class-related tasks. Websurfing, viewing Facebook or checking email are not part of the work at hand. Finally, earphones, unless they are for purposes of hearing-impaired students, are not to be in your ears. I do not care to waste my time and the time of the class monitoring your use of electronic devices. Your inappropriate use of such devices is disrespectful to me and to your peers; violation of this policy will result in your being marked absent for the class.
4. Please let me know if you have a preferred name or preferred pronouns. I expect the class to be respectful of anyone’s preferences.
5. 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>
6. 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.

7. Talk to me—I can always be available. Let me know if there are any issues before they grow.
8. Have a sense of humor.
9. 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. **Blackboard contains more information with readings to supplement your assignments.**

**Please note:**

**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.**

<b>Week 1 June 14 (Materials have been sent prior to start)</b>
Class Introductions Project 1—job ad analysis and draft of résumé due Reading Job Ads -what is an employer looking for? Articles on résumés and samples to be handed out Homework: Begin revisions and draft cover letter (see chapters 1 and 9) Business Communications in the News presentations (Chapter 18)
<b>June 16</b>
Résumé and cover letters due for feedback Homework: Create Business Plan (chapter 9)
<b>Week 2 June 21</b>
Business Communications in the News Presentation Your Business-- Examples Homework: Letters and Memos (Chapter 9.1 and 9.2; also Chapter 10)
<b>June 23</b>
Business Plan due for feedback Homework: Continue writing letters and memos; develop logos and marketing tools
<b>Week 3 June 28</b>
Memos and letters due for feedback Logos and Marketing Business Revise Logos and Marketing
<b>June 30</b>
What is effective communication? Chapter 14 Logos and marketing due for feedback
<b>Week 4 July 5</b>
Intercultural Communication and Collaboration—Chapters 18 and 19. Homework: Continue revising assignments for your portfolio
<b>July 7</b>
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 July 9 <sup>th</sup> ). Grades will be posted by July 12th.