



ENGL 286 Professional Writing

Course Information:

Semester	: June 28, 2021 – July 30, 2021
Credit	: 4
Teaching Hours	: 50 Hours
Location	: Online
Professor	: Lee Okan (Ashlee)
Email	: aokan@framingham.edu

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. Ignorance of the contents of the syllabus IS NOT a justifiable excuse for missed work or lack of class participation. Any updates or changes to syllabus will be indicated in updated versions of syllabus with changes indicated in red. Also, any changes will be posted as announcements and posted in Blackboard.

Catalog 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.

With this consideration and because this is a course on professional writing, every assignment is something that you might have to do in a job. The disadvantage of summer courses, the compressed time to get things done, is actually an advantage in this scenario because students will actually not only be able to practice course content but will also get to practice the kind of deadlines experienced in the workplace. Thus, when students look at the list of assignments due each day, consider that these could be the kinds of assignment required in any given day by an employer.

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



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- 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

Required Texts:

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

Technology Requirements:

1. email account that is checked daily—after students register for courses, FSU enrolls students in Blackboard using the email address supplied during registration. If this is not the email address checked on a regular basis, students should change the address. Log onto Blackboard, click on the Personal Information button on the left side of the screen, and then click on Edit Personal Information. It is also important that the email account accepts group emails (ones sent to several addresses at once), for when I write to the class, I do so from the group email feature on Blackboard.
2. reliable access—Because this is an online course, students need reliable, daily access to the internet.
3. Chrome or Firefox browser options—most of the video options require one of these browsers to be able to view and record.
4. **Microsoft Word—All assignments must be submitted as Microsoft Word attachments.**

What I expect from students:

Online courses have a distinct environment that requires active engagement. Unlike face-to-face classes in which students can attend but never speak, the primary way to prove attendance in an online course is to participate through writing. Thus students will be expected to do the following:

1. read through the syllabus and all course documents several times, asking for explanation concerning areas not understood. I suggest printing out a hard copy of the syllabus.
2. treat each other and the instructor with civility and respect even in the middle of heated debate just as you would in a work environment.
3. check announcements daily for possible updates to syllabus or changes in course direction.
4. provide the university with a working and accurate email address.
5. go through the Student Tutorial for Blackboard so that they understand how to utilize Blackboard and use their submission of their completed course questionnaire to practice using the Assignment feature.
6. remember that there are deadlines for assignments and that grades are reduced because of missed work and/or late work just as in face-to-face courses.

Summer Courses:

Summer courses are usually intensive sessions, for we cover the same amount of material in 5 weeks as we would in a 15-week semester. Students should anticipate concentrated reading and be ready to participate.



Course Schedule Overview: details are in course site's weekly modules

Week 1 6/28-7/2	M	Course Overview & Introductions; Rhetorical Triangle; Tone; Introduction to "Our Company"
	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; Presentations part one; Visuals in reports and presentations; Proposals
	F	Deadline for email requests, regular emails, escalated request response; Proposal "workshop"
Week 2 7/5-7/9	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 7/12-7/16	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 Part 2: Social Media, Press releases; Speeches and preparation for Speeches due next week
	F	Writing under a quick deadline: emails, press releases again, memos, responding to media requests
Week 4 7/19-7/23	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; writing letters of complaint
Week 5 7/26-7/30	M	Final Portfolio prep
	T	Workshop
	W	Individual Conferences
	R	Individual Conferences
	F	Portfolio deadline; Sharing portfolios and critiques

Course Requirements:

Classwork (35%); Discussion Board (15%); Presentation (12%); Speech (8%); 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



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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. (2-3 pages)

DISCUSSION BOARD—The questions posted in the discussion board will be based on the topics from the texts we are reading, the writing assignments, and the situations that come up in the “company.” These discussion boards are the means by which students will engage with each other as if we were having a team meeting. They should also provide an opportunity for students to think about their own work and how best to respond to the challenge of each type of writing required. (one page) **The deadline for postings is midnight EST on each day a discussion board is posted. No late postings will be accepted will be reviewed for a grade.**

Each student should keep up with the postings just as you would be expected to keep up with conversations between your team members at work. Students should also check the discussion board after they have completed their own comments to make sure they read all comments made about their own posts. Feel free to respond to these comments, for no one is limited to a certain number of postings.

Rules of Engagement and Evaluation of Postings—Students should take the discussion board seriously. We should all work together to create a safe, respectful, and focused working environment. To do this, each student should follow these basic rules:

1. Remember that there is no single right answer to any of the discussion questions, so be respectful of differing opinions and analysis.
2. Remember that discussion boards are public places. Reread possible responses before posting them to avoid embarrassing or incendiary situations.
3. Postings should be relevant to the original question and/or to the work situation. Students should not merely repeat what I or other students have said, so each student will need to read other postings to avoid this problem. Students should make sure that they do not stray off topic. All of this is good practice for team meetings at work.
4. Address any concerns to me immediately.

PRESENTATIONS—Students will need to give a presentation that includes visuals to support the presentation on a proposal of their own choosing for the company. These presentations should be no shorter than 8 minutes and no longer than 15 minutes.

SPEECH—Students will develop a speech on a topic of their own choosing connected to an idea they have that could be connected to the work of the company. This could be a pitch to make a donation to a certain charity, provide specific benefits, hold a certain time of professional development retreat, etc. Most students pick a topic connected to another topic/situation brought up in class. 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. Students will need to film themselves giving the speech and submit their speeches in Blackboard. Speeches should be 3-5 minutes long.

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: (7-10 pages)



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- Email packet
- Relationship Building exercises
- Bad News writing exercises
- Business Plan/Report/Grant
- Speech
- Presentation

Class Policies:

LATE ASSIGNMENTS—Remember, all assignments are due by midnight EST on the date in the syllabus. Any time after that, they will be considered late and will lose one letter grade and then an additional letter grade for each day that they are late after that. Unexcused late papers will receive no written comments, merely a letter grade. **IMPORTANT: Even if an assignment will be so late it will automatically receive a failing grade, it should still be handed in to receive partial credit. An assignment can get up to 55 points for an F.** An F is always better than a zero. All assignments must be received by Monday, August 3, to receive any points.

ACADEMIC HONESTY— 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.

ACCOMODATIONS—Framingham State University offers equal opportunities to all qualified students, including those with disabilities and impairments. The University is committed to making reasonable accommodations as are necessary to ensure that its programs and activities do not discriminate, or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability. The [Disability/Access Services Office](#) serves students with learning and psychiatric disabilities as well as students with visual, mobility and hearing impairments. For further information about this, please contact Dr. LaDonna Bridges, Associate Dean of Academic Success and Dean of CASA (Center for Academic Success and Achievement) at 508-626-4906 or lbridges@framingham.edu.”

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