# University of Washington
# Department of English

ENGL **289**: Business Writing |

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**Course Description**

ENGL289 provides instruction in the theory and practice of written, visual, and digital writing within business contexts. It satisfies the university general education requirement for a writing intensive course (C) English Composition and (W) Additional Writing.

**What is this Course About?**

In ENGL289 Business Writing, we focus on the practice and study of selected types of discourse used in professional business situations to help prepare students for the different kinds of writing they will encounter in their professional lives. This aim is predicated on the understanding that business ideas and written documents are often intertwined. Through writing, students form complex ideas and build relationships in ways that render their ideas a reality. Think proposals, sales pitch, innovative, resumes ideas, slide decks, etc. To think critically about these business communication practices, we'll explore specific business writing techniques and strategies through

- in-class lectures and exercises
- individual writing assignments
- workshops and peer review
- teamwork and collaboration

**Why Should I Take this Course?**

The workforce is driven by new technologies, a rapidly changing economy, and the need to communicate with different audiences from all over the globe. Your ability to write clearly and effectively will be a vital skill in your future, regardless of your field of work. Strengthening these writing skills will give you the ability to create and maintain relationships, explain ideas clearly and effectively, and persuade others to take specific actions. We will examine how your understanding of rhetoric, audience, and conventions improve your communication skills; we will focus on the practical uses of

clear and effective writing. Learning how to articulate your thoughts clearly, concisely, and with a style that gets your writing read; enhancing the power of your writing by learning to identify your objective, selecting appropriate formats, and adjusting your writing style accordingly to clearly communicate your purpose are all excellent skills to acquire. You'll also learn to spot, avoid, and correct the most common writing pitfalls and gain valuable experience analyzing, writing, and revising a complete spectrum of business documents.

## What Will I learn?
- Identify and apply communication theories and principles to achieve communication goals by evaluating purpose (of message), conducting audience analysis, and selecting the appropriate communication channel in various business contexts.
- Recognize, explain, and use the rhetorical strategies and formal elements of business communication genres (memos, letters, emails, research, and career documents).
- Participate actively in writing activities (individually and in collaboration) that model effective business communication in the workplace.
- Collect, analyze, document, and report research clearly, concisely, logically, and ethically within business communication.
- Recognize and develop professional format features in print and multimedia modes, as well as use appropriate nonverbal cues and visual aids.
- Develop an understanding and awareness of ethical principles and intercultural and diversity factors that impact the communication process by analyzing and explaining ethical challenges and incidents in their cultural and organizational contexts
- Develop professional work habits, including those necessary for effective collaboration and cooperation with other students, instructors, and service

## Resources
- Heather Graves; Roger GravesBusiness Communication: Rhetorical Situations [required]
- Cardon, Peter W. *Business Communication: Developing Leaders for a Networked World*, 3rd edition (McGraw-Hill 2018) [recommended]
- Supplemental readings provided in Canvas
- http://nytimesineducation.com/

**Using Canvas**

Canvas is the University's learning management system. You will use Canvas to access course material and participate in online activities and to progress through the course. login there with your university supplied NETID username and password.

**What are the Course Policies?**

**Canvas.** All coursework will be completed via the course canvas page. Please plan to log into Canvas daily.

**Communicating with the instructor** Please reach out to me via Canvas or UW email. Avoid using your personal mail for coursework purposes.

**Collaboration**. Working with others is a hallmark of professional & technical writing. Learn and apply strategies for successful teamwork and collaboration, such as:

- responding constructively to peers' work
- soliciting and using peer feedback effectively
- managing team goals and conflicts constructively

**Research**. Understand and use various research methods and sources to produce quality documents, including:

- analyzing historical and contemporary contexts
- locating, evaluating, and using print and online information selectively for particular audiences and purposes
- triangulating sources of evidence

**Document Design**. Make rhetorical design decisions about documents (and other compositions), including:

- understanding and adapting to genre conventions and audience expectations
- understanding and implementing design principles of format and layout
- interpreting and arguing with design
- drafting, researching, testing, and revising visual designs and information architecture

**Writing in Context**. Analyze cultures, social contexts, and audiences to determine how they shape the various purposes and forms of writing, such as persuasion, organizational communication, and public discourse, with an emphasis on:

- writing for a range of defined audiences and stakeholders
- negotiating the ethical dimensions of rhetorical action
- **Identity**. If you do not identify with the name that is listed with the registrar, please notify me so that I may appropriately amend my records. In addition, if you prefer to go by a different pronoun, please inform me.

## Asynchronous Online Learning Activities

You are expected to participate in asynchronous activities, such as online discussions, web assignments, or quizzes. These are activities which don't require the entire class to "meet" in the traditional sense – instead, you are expected to participate anytime within a specific window of time. In this class, you will be expected to contribute to an online discussion every week.

For information about specific asynchronous activities, please login to Canvas, or refer to the schedule at the end of this syllabus.

## Technical Assistance

If you have general questions about the course (such as due dates, content, etc.), please contact the instructor using any of the contact methods described in the instructor section at the beginning of this document. For technical issues that you cannot resolve on your own, please contact IT Connect:

- ✉ Email: help@uw.edu
  ☏ Phone: 206-221-5000
  💻 Online: Send us a question
- 👤 In-person: Walk-in locations
- ⊛ Service Status

If you have any trouble accessing any of the content in this course, please contact the instructor.

## What are the Student and Teacher Expectations?

Students are expected to:

- Complete all reading assignments before each class
- Post in ALL Discussion Forums as directed
- Follow the calendar of events and complete all assignments by their deadline
- Respond to emails within 2 days
- Participate in a thoughtful manner

- Respect rules of netiquette
  - Respect your peers and their privacy
  - Use constructive criticism
  - Refrain from engaging in inflammatory comments.

The teacher is expected to:
- Moderate and respond to discussion posts and email within 2 days
- Grade assignments within 5 days of the assignment deadline

## Assignments

There will be four major categories of assignments in this class, listed below, which are due on the dates listed in Canvas. The assignments are as follows:

1. Fundamentals of Business Communication 20%
2. Genres of Business Communication 20%
3. Workplace Research 35%
4. Employment Communication 15%

NOTE: All assignments without exception are to be submitted in Canvas.

### How will my Work be Assessed?

Assessment will mostly be based on general completion of the course assignments; your ability to apply the concepts we discuss in class; and engage with in the readings. You will also be assessed on overall progress and a thorough final report. Because writing is a process, your first writing assignment will give me (and you) insight into the skills you possess as an experienced writer (yes, you) and, thus, set a goal for yourself to develop Business Writing skills.

The starting grade in this course is a 2.0. This grade requires completion of all assignments by meeting the minimum requirements for each. For each assignment in which you demonstrate exceptional awareness of Business Writing concepts and skills beyond the minimum requirements and expectations, this percentage will increase. Conversely, for assignments that you fail to meet the minimum requirements and expectations, this percentage will decrease. Therefore, if the expectations for an assignment are unclear, please email me or bring this up in class so we can work together to ensure your success. There will be rubrics and points attached to each assignment to help you earn your desired grade.

You will track your progress by posting a weekly log of all the work you completed and how well you completed that work based on the assignment guidelines. That log will inform your final grade.

Refer to this grading chart   .

Grades are posted in Canvas within a week of submission and no later than TWO weeks.

## Is there a Revision Policy

You have the option to revise any assignment with a grade of less than 3.0. Revision does not mean correcting typos, grammatical errors, and mechanical errors, or else your grade will not improve much at all. Moreover, I reserve to cap the revised grade at 3.0. This course is not graded on a curve.

**\*Late submissions will not be accorded this privilege.**

## Academic Integrity

The University of Washington Student Conduct Code (WAC 478-121) defines prohibited academic and behavioral conduct and describes how the University holds students accountable as they pursue their academic goals. Allegations of misconduct by students may be referred to the appropriate campus office for investigation and resolution. More information can be found online at https://www.washington.edu/studentconduct/

Here's what you can do to cover yourself against plagiarism or collusion:

- At any stage of your writing, keep your drafts, notes, papers, and research materials. If a question of plagiarism arises, you'll have a paper trail ( paper trails protect you in a variety of academic, public, and work-related contexts)
- Don't use editing services. Don't ask anyone, even family or friends, to edit your paper or help you write it. You need to do that work yourself.
- If you need additional help with your writing, contact the University Writing Center, UW Writes where trained professionals are there to help you without colluding in plagiarism.
- Last but not least, ask me if you have any questions about honesty.

Notice to Students - Use of Plagiarism Detection Software

Notice: The University has a license agreement with SimCheck, an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism from Internet resources. Your instructor may use the service in this class by requiring that assignments are submitted electronically to be checked by SimCheck. The SimCheck Report will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether all material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced.

## Access and Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu.

DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions.  Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS.  It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

## Religious Accommodations

 "Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form.

## PWAC's Anti-Racist Pedagogy

The Program in Writing Across Campus (PWAC) is committed to engaging with anti-racist pedagogies. These pedagogies may take various forms, such as curricular attention to voices, communities, and perspectives that have been historically marginalized inside and beyond academic disciplines; inclusive

classroom practices; discussions of racism; and consideration of other forms of prejudice and exclusion. We believe that countering the cultures and practices of racism in an academic institution is fundamental to developing a vibrant intellectual community. The PWAC is happy to talk with you about your questions as well as to support student-led initiatives around anti-racist work, and we invite you to contact PWAC Program Director Megan Callow. If you're interested in how teachers of English as a professional community have taken up anti-racist work, check out the National Council of Teachers of English Statement on Anti-Racism to Support Teaching and Learning.