

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
Fall 2013
English 100WB, Written Communication: Business
Section 3
T/TR 10:30 – 11:45

BBC 125

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R 5:30 – 6:00

and by appt.

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Course Description:

This is a participatory course that offers a practical approach to business communication, emphasizing situations that require both oral and written communication. During the course of the semester, students will develop a rhetorically sophisticated writing style appropriate to upper-division university discourse.

Required Texts and Materials:

The Business Writer's Handbook, tenth edition, Alred et al

The Everyday Writer, fifth edition, Lunsford, Andrea

Course Reader -- available at Maple Press (San Carlos and 10th)

A full-volume dictionary

Blank paper/notebook for notes and in-class writing assignments

Canvas:

All students are required to regularly check the class Canvas group. Announcements and assignment reminders will be posted in Canvas and students may exchange information, post articles, and share ideas through the system. The syllabus and a course calendar will also be available on the site.

Twitter:

All students are encouraged to tweet (only positive things) about the class. Instructor will occasionally tweet supplemental information regarding reading, writing, or business.

Prerequisites: Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST), upper-division standing (56 units), and completion of CORE GE.

This course satisfies the upper division, GE writing requirement.

Communication and Research Objectives: Students will develop

- the ability to analyze and interpret communication scenarios and to respond to them using the 4 Cs of effective communication: clear, concise, cohesive, and content rich
- advanced proficiency in both traditional and contemporary research strategies and methodologies necessary for research-informed writing and oral presentations that communicate complex ideas effectively and appropriately to both general and specialized audiences;

English 100WB Learning Objectives:

Student Learning Objective 1: Students shall be able to refine the competencies established in Written Communication IA and IB (as summarized below).

IA Student Learning:

- Students should be able to perform effectively the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing).
- Students should be able to express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively.
- Students should be able to use correct grammar (syntax, mechanics, and citation of sources) at a college level of sophistication.
- Students should be able to write for different audiences (both specialized and general)

IB Student Learning:

- Students should be able to use (locate, analyze, and evaluate) supporting materials, including independent library research.
- Students should be able to synthesize ideas encountered in multiple readings.
- Students should be able to construct effective arguments.

Student Learning Objective 2: Students shall be able to express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse.

Student Learning Objective 3: Students shall be able to organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences, including appropriate editorial standards for citing primary and secondary sources.

English 100WB Content Objectives:

English 100WB students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to

- * format, compose, and revise written documents for a variety of organizational situations;
- * identify and articulate the audience “take-away” message in every communication;
- * utilize a variety of communication tools, techniques, and modes;
- * communicate numerical and statistical data appropriately and effectively in both written and oral formats;
- * employ advanced research strategies and methodologies and incorporate research appropriately and effectively into both written and oral communications for a variety of organizational and rhetorical situations;
- * appreciate the importance of timely communication in organizational settings;
- * recognize a variety of organizational communication needs and constraints and employ appropriate communication strategies to meet those needs and/or constraints in a variety of business situations;
- * analyze various audiences and compile appropriate options and strategies to communicate effectively with those audiences;
- * evaluate and critique communication strategies and techniques for their effectiveness, including the strategies and techniques of their classmates;
- * make common-sense communication decisions and use logic to defend those decisions;
- * recognize when imagination and “vision” are appropriate to business communications;
- * communicate appropriately and effectively in cross-cultural situations;
- * create documents and make oral presentations that are ethically and legally defensible.

Diversity: Assignments (both reading and writing) shall address issues of race, class, age, and gender when appropriate, and the perspectives of women and diverse cultural groups shall be incorporated into course instruction and materials in an inclusive and comprehensive manner whenever appropriate. At

least one graded assignment, oral or written, shall address cross- or inter-cultural, -generational, or -gender communications.

Writing: Assignments shall emphasize those analytical and interpretive skills and activities in writing and thinking that produce types of writing useful in business communications, which include but are not limited to the following: both formal and informal correspondence for various purposes and audiences (email, memos, letters); employment application materials (resumes, cover letters, follow-up letters); formal and informal reports; white papers; abstracts, summaries, annotated bibliographies; proposals. Graded writing assignments will be appropriately sequenced throughout the semester and will total a minimum of 8,000 words; at least one of those assignments will be significantly informed by research.

Students shall receive frequent evaluations of their writing from their instructor. In evaluating student writing, instructors shall comment on specific features of individual assignments. Comments shall encourage and acknowledge student success as well as note errors and suggest ways to correct them.

- **Reading:** Assigned reading will address issues of business communications. Instructors may choose from several department-approved Business Communication textbooks that contain models of effective business communication and from several department-approved comprehensive writing handbooks; instructors may also create a short course reader that contains journalistic and/or scholarly writing in the field of business. Other appropriate reading may include texts that address the global marketplace, online communication, visual communication, and collections of business scenarios.
- **Research:** English 100WB shall provide advanced instruction in both traditional and contemporary research strategies and methodologies, including locating and evaluating materials, using them effectively (e.g., quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing), and citing them properly. At least one substantial writing assignment shall be informed by research. As part of this requirement, at least one class session of English 100WB shall include a presentation by a university librarian.
- **Active Learning:** Class sessions shall provide ample opportunities for active student learning in the following ways: formal and/or informal large- and small-group discussion and collaborative writing and thinking activities designed to develop and provide repeated student practice in exercising those rhetorical, analytical, and interpretive skills that produce stylistically appropriate, intelligent, and critical written and oral responses to business-communication scenarios; both formal and informal oral presentations; organizational role-playing and interviewing simulations.

Information available online

Students are responsible for reading the following information online at

<http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html>

- Course guidelines

- Academic policies (academic integrity, plagiarism, ADA and DRC policies)
- Adding and dropping classes

Grading Procedure:

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU *Catalog* (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

The grading for this course is A – F.

Grades will be assigned according to the following rubric :

A: Message is clear, i.e. writing demonstrates clear understanding and appropriate response to the assignment. Paragraphs are well organized and sentences show syntactic complexity and precise word choice. Tone is professional and appropriate. The piece is free of grammatical errors, superfluous language, and redundancy.

B: Message is clear – no details are missing. Tone is appropriate to the message. Paragraphs may be slightly choppy. Language is professional but not as sophisticated or as varied as the language in an A paper. Grammatical errors and redundancy are minimal. Sentences may need tightening.

C: Message is weak but exists. Language and/or ideas may be repetitive and not always suited to professional discourse. Writing is clear but lacks energy and variety. Paragraphs likely have organizational issues. Sentences lack variety. Grammar needs work but does not distract the reader from the message.

D: Message is severely weakened by grammatical or syntactical errors that distract the reader and cause ‘noise’ or ‘clutter.’ Details may be missing and paragraphs may need fixing. Language is not rhetorically sophisticated and does not demonstrate an understanding of professional discourse. Syntax is not varied.

F: Errors in grammar or word choice make the piece very difficult to understand.

Grading scale:

Written assignments (totally 3500 words)	180 pts*
3 Blog entries (totaling 1500 words)	80 pts
Group discussion lead	20 pts
Presentation	50 pts
Formal Report (3000 words)	120 pts
Final Exam	50 pts

***In-class assignments are valued at 15 points while out-of-class assignments are worth 20 points.**

Late work: Students must be in attendance to complete in-class assignments. Written assignments cannot be handed in late without prior consent of the instructor; any assignment arriving after the class period has ended is considered late.

Success: To succeed in this course, students must participate in class activities, complete assignments both in and out of class, ask questions, and commit themselves to improving the effectiveness of their written and oral communication.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1		
8/22	Course overview. Syllabus, expectations, success.	
Week 2		
8/27	What it means to be a writer 4 Cs, 5 Rs Rhetorical Triangle Effective, ineffective writing	SLO 1, 2, 3

8/29	Grammar review, EW Letters, TBWH *Intro letter assigned	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 3		
9/3	Communicating in a group Meetings, TBWH Listening, TBW *Groups assigned	SLO 1, 2
9/5	Blogs, social media, TBWH *Blogs assigned *Intro letter DUE	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 4		
9/10	Summary, analysis, critical thinking "Change the World," CR *In-class assignment	SLO 1, 2, 3
9/12	Clarity and conciseness, EW Handouts	SLO 1
Week 5		
9/17	E-mail, memos *In-class assignment	SLO 1, 2, 3
9/19	Good news/Bad news *Bad news e-mail assigned	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 6		
9/24	Press releases *Bad news e-mail DUE *Press release assigned	SLO 1, 2, 3
9/26	Blog discussion, Groups 1 and 2 leading *Blogs DUE	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 7		
10/1	Job search Cover letters, TBWH *In-class assignment *Press release DUE	SLO 1, 2, 3
10/3	Resumes Interviewing, TBWH *Resume assigned	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 8		
10/8	Resume workshop	SLO 1, 2
10/9	Reading and responding "The Pay is Too Damn Low," CR "Worker Wages," CR	SLO 1, 2, 3

	*In-class assignment *Resume DUE	
Week 9		
10/15	Formal reports, TBWH Executive summary Design and Visuals *Topic e-mail assigned	SLO 1, 2, 3
10/17	Preparing and giving presentations, TBWH	SLO 1, 2
Week 10		
10/22	Library session *Topic e-mail DUE	SLO 1, 2, 3
10/24	Research review, EW APA Annotations	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 11		
10/29	Blog discussion, Groups 3 and 4 leading *In-class assignment *Blogs DUE	SLO 1, 2, 3
10/31	Proposals, TBWH *Proposal assigned	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 12		
11/5	Presentations	SLO 1, 2
11/7	Presentations *Proposal DUE	SLO 1, 2
Week 13		
11/12	Presentations	SLO 1, 2
11/14	Presentations	SLO 1, 2
Week 14		
11/19	Presentations (cont. if necessary) Progress Reports, TBWH *Progress Report assigned	SLO 1, 2
11/21	Reading "Gusher," CR *In-class assignment	SLO 1, 2, 3
Week 15		
11/26	Blog discussion, Groups 5 and 6 leading *In-class assignment * Blogs DUE *Progress Report DUE	SLO 1, 2, 3
11/28	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS	

Week 16

12/3 Formal Report workshop

SLO 1, 2

12/5 Preparation for final
*FORMAL REPORT DUE

SLO 1, 2, 3

12/7 Saturday**FINAL EXAM 12 – 2**

*Note: Assignments, but not due dates, are subject to change.