Eng 306 Business Writing Fall 2020 Web Course

INSTRUCTOR

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FOR A SUCCESSFUL START OF THE SEMESTER

- First off, I hope you're doing well and staying safe this semester. Be sure to follow the recommendations of our local public health experts, the governor of Kentucky, and the university's COVID-19 guidelines.

- Please read the Syllabus and the Course Guidelines (linked to the Blackboard navigation bar together with the Syllabus) carefully even though both documents might seem long. To be successful in this class, you have to be familiar with course requirements and follow course policies closely. **If, after reading the Syllabus and the Course Guidelines, you feel like you are unable to observe our course rules, I think you'd be better off taking another section of this class.**

- Most importantly, I want you to know that I will do my best to help you succeed in this class! Of course, you need to do your part. Online courses are not for everyone. The **ideal online student** is **self-motivated, autonomous, proactive, resourceful, detail oriented, meticulous, and thorough**. Do you have these qualities? Do you also have excellent **time-management** skills? This class requires students to work on a schedule, to complete assignments by a due date, to work in collaboration with peers, to read large amounts of text, to think a lot, and to write a lot. If you can't work on your own and can't complete a large amount of work without the instructor's constant coaching or immediate feedback, this course might not be a good fit for you.

- Just like your instructor, your future employers and supervisors will expect you to solve problems, formulate intelligent questions, conduct research, find resources, and create useful, well-written, and attractively designed documents in a timely fashion.

WORKLOAD

Accessing the proper information by reading, listening, or viewing course materials and understanding what is required will take time and focused attention. Therefore, a preparation of **8+ hours per week** can be expected depending on your speed of reading.

HELP WITH WEB COURSES

Student Resource Portal → URL: < https://www.wku.edu/online/srp/index.php>
Orientation for Online Learners → URL: <http://www.wku.edu/online/orientation>

HELP WITH TECHNOLOGY

WKU IT Helpdesk → URL: <http://www.wku.edu/it/helpdesk/> For technical problems, call the HelpDesk at (270) 745-7000 and ask the HelpDesk consultant for a "remote" session. S/he will take control of your computer and fix the problem. Your instructor will not be able to help you with technical issues.

Video Tutorials by WKU Information Technology → URL: <https://itweb.wku.edu/training_atech/index.php?fuseaction=view.courses&mode=vt>

Macmillan's Tech Support → URL: <https://macmillan.force.com/macmillanlearning/s/contactsupport>
Questions and problems with *LaunchPad Solo* should be directed to Macmillan's **Tech Support**. They are available at **1-800-936-6899** 7 days a week (hours vary). The *LaunchPad* course site has been set up for us by *LaunchPad* support professionals. Quizzes are graded automatically by the program. Your instructor has no control over how the program works and won't be able to help you if something needs fixing. Please contact Macmillan with any tech or other issue you might have.

In general, if you are experiencing a problem or have a question, please be sure to **contact the person who can help you**. That person is not necessarily your instructor. For example, Blackboard-related tech questions should be directed to the Helpdesk and not to the instructor.

CONTACTING YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Time zone: Central Time USA; Course language: English.

- Could you please post course-related questions, comments, or issues that you believe might affect your peers also (e.g., questions about assignments, course policies or requirements, deadlines, etc.) to the **Questions and Comments** forum under Blackboard's (BB) Discussion Board (DB)? Making your questions and your instructor's answers accessible to **other students** in class is a great way to show that you want to do well and that you want your peers to do well, too. You need to help one another with information to ensure a successful semester. If somebody in class asks a question and you have the answer, feel free to respond to it to enhance your participation grade.

- Please **email your instructor with personal questions or medical emergencies**. Please be aware though that FERPA regulations do not allow instructors to discuss grades via email without students' written permission. If you have grade-related questions, please sign up for a **web conference** under DB's Conference Sign-Up Forum.

- There are **no scheduled office hours** (on-campus or virtual) for this course. **Please take advantage of web conferences** since a couple of minutes with the instructor in BB's conference room can save you a lot of unnecessary frustration.

  Please check out the **Netiquette** guidelines for online communication and interaction.

PREREQUISITE(S) OF THE COURSE: English 100

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Business employers often complain that their employees communicate poorly on the job. These employees often do not receive promotions and do not have a chance to work on interesting projects. They might even be dismissed.

- This course is designed to help you communicate effectively in the world of work by developing further your writing, reading, and critical thinking skills.
- It focuses on documents that are clear, specific, audience-centered, and pragmatic as to the purpose.
- Most importantly, this course will help you get that job you really want since there is a special emphasis on preparing job application materials, such as the résumé, cover letter, and video résumé.
- Additionally, your coursework will include a number of business writing genres, such as emails, memos, business letters, websites, instructions, proposals, and oral presentations.

COURSE PROCEDURES

So how will this course work? What can you expect to do in this class? This course has no scheduled virtual class meetings, so – theoretically - you can be anywhere in the world and complete the course successfully as long as you have reliable internet access. Information about business writing will be gained from reading the course book and other materials posted to the web and/or Blackboard. Every week, you will read several chapters from the textbook, mark them up, and take notes about important points for yourself to remember. You will then complete the following kinds of assignments:

- Chapter quizzes based on the textbook to make sure you understood the reading material
- Chapter-related assignments from the textbook which require the application of theory to practice
- Complex independent projects using the textbook's information combined with the instructor's information
- Grammar exercises from *LaunchPad Solo*

Assignment descriptions with due dates can be found under the **Learning Units** link on BB's navigation bar. Completed assignments have to be posted to one of the following virtual locations:

- BB's SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS link → These assignments go directly to BB's Grade Center. Typically, you will post assignments here as MS Word docx attachments.
- BB's DISCUSSION BOARD → If the assignment involves peer reviews or other collaborative assignments. Typically, you will copy and paste your assignments into the forum's text box.
- *LaunchPad* for grammar exercises → You need to buy access to use the program from within BB.

Please pay special attention to the **deadline, virtual location, manuscript format, word count, and other submission guidelines** for each assignment. If your instructor can't grade an assignment because it is posted incorrectly or is not visible, it will receive a zero. The university standard for submitting assignments is MS Office 365. You can download Office 365 for free using the following link: https://www.wku.edu/its/sms/microsoft_sa.php. Additionally, there is a free version of MS Office called Open Office. Google it. If you are using other programs, please convert assignments to Office/Word before submitting them for a grade.

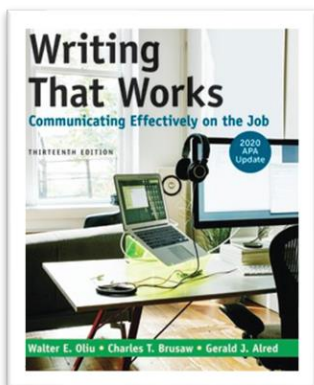## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Required textbook:

We will be using **Walter Oliu's *Writing That Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job*, 13th Edition (2020)** by Bedford/St.Martins.

You have several options to buy a copy of the textbook:

1. [WKU Bookstore](#)
2. Any online store, including the publisher's website: [https://www.macmillanlearning.com/college/us/product/Writing-That-Works-Communicating-Effectively-on-the-Job-with-2020-APA-Update/p/1319361528](#)

Figure 1. Textbook cover page

<u>Additional required course material</u>:

We will also use ***LaunchPad Solo for Readers and Writers*** by Macmillan. It is a web-based program that includes grammar tutorials and grammar post-tests among other materials. To buy your access to the program, your best bet is to wait for the Blackboard course site to open and buy it from within Blackboard. However, if you want to buy access from the WKU Bookstore, this is the ISBN number you need: **9781319010256**. You can also purchase access directly from the log-in page: [www.macmillanhighered.com/launchpadsolo/readwrite](#). If you choose the latter option and need more information about how to register for this particular class in LaunchPad, you need to call *LaunchPad's* Tech Support.

Below is a screenshot of Blackboard's navigation bar link to *LaunchPad*.
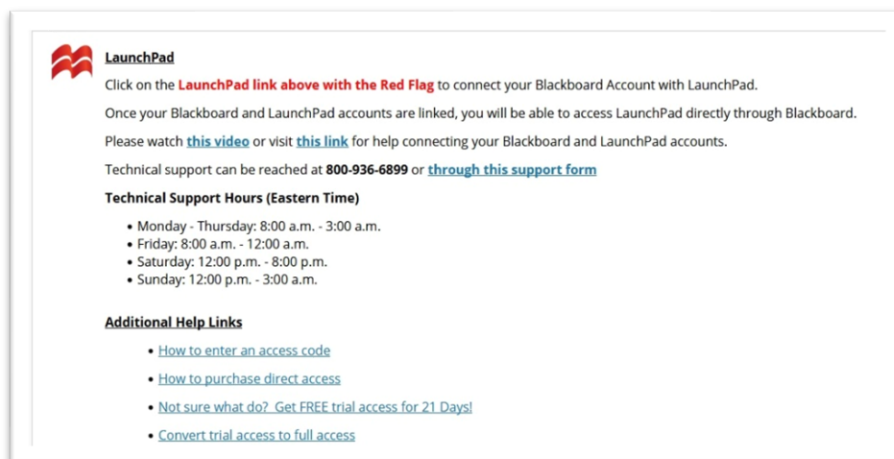

Figure 2. LaunchPad

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

In addition to the information listed under General Course Information above, we are working towards the following goals:

- A professional demeanor in general, and especially in writing tasks
- An ability to convey clearly, cogently and correctly, through written, spoken and visual media, the technical aspects of a field to diverse audiences

- Familiarity with the types of writing most frequently used in business writing and the ability to analyze and apply effective writing and designing techniques for creating documents in various business writing genres (e.g., emails, memos, business letters, proposals, etc.)
- An enhanced general understanding of the rhetorical context of every situation and experience in making appropriate and effective choices regarding the rhetorical and stylistic components of business documents
- The ability to adapt to various audiences and to consider their perspectives, behaviors, value and belief systems; and an understanding of your obligations as prospective practitioners in your chosen field to the layperson affected by your work
- The ability to work collaboratively with peers on a variety of assignments and to give them constructive feedback on their work; the ability to be the reader and critic of your own documents
- A better understanding of the value of using visual aids and document design, from fonts to charts and graphs to pictures and photos, etc. to enhance a document to convey meaning to the audience more effectively
- Enhanced technology skills by learning to use new applications and complete digital projects for the web.

COLLABORATION AND GROUP WORK

Peer reviews are an important aspect of the course. Please make friends with your group members and help them in any way you can. Although several assignments involve collaboration and group work, there are no group assignments which result in one uniform grade for all group members. In other words, you will not be punished for somebody else's lack of contribution. Make sure that your peers consider you a reliable and responsible group member. At the end of the course, your group members will evaluate your performance as a group member, which will affect your final course grade.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

- Checking BB's Announcements, Questions and Comments forum on the Discussion Board, and WKU email messages on a daily basis; keeping up with the conversations under Questions and Comments is mandatory
- Following course guidelines (as described in the Course Guidelines document and the Syllabus) closely
- Interacting with peers on Discussion Board forums and communicating via text, phone, skype, etc., are expected in order to help them with information and suggestions when questions arise about assignments, course requirements, due dates, etc.
- Participating in group work, i.e. reading and commenting on peers' assignments, and giving constructive feedback on peers' projects (peer reviews and group member evaluation will count towards your participation grade)
- Reading all assigned chapters from the textbook and completing chapter quizzes associated with reading assignments
- Completing daily homework assignments
- Submitting Major Project 1: Job Documents
- Submitting Major Project 2 (final project): Video résumé
- Submitting a Self-Evaluation: a reflective-argumentative letter written to the instructor arguing for a grade, evaluating your performance during the course, etc.
- Reviewing grammar items and completing post-tests in *LaunchPad Solo*
- Submitting confidential group member evaluation

There are **no exams** in this course; the final project (i.e. Video résumé) and the Self-Evaluation will take the role of an exam.

Both major projects will go through a workshop cycle, which includes revisions of the assignment based on peer reviews and possible feedback from the Writing Center before the project is posted for a grade.

GRADES

Grades will be based on the **quality** of students' work and **not on effort** or **the time** spent on completing assignments. Assignments/projects will be assessed holistically; however, rubrics posted with the assignment descriptions will help students understand grading criteria.

All assignments receive a score based on a 100% scale and will be weighted in BB's Grade Center. To get a good course grade, you have to be both a **good student** and **a good business writer**. In other words, a student who completes assignments by the due date will not receive a good course grade if his/her writing is not excellent. In a reverse case scenario, a student with brilliant writing skills cannot earn an "A" if s/he posts assignments late or does not contribute to class or group work. While students will not strictly be graded on a bell curve, individual students' performance will be compared when assigning a final course grade.

It is each student's responsibility to keep track of his/her grades and general performance in class. If, at any time during the course, somebody is not clear about where s/he stands in class, a web conference should be requested with the instructor.

Final course grades are based on the following approximate distribution:

Course Grade Distribution Table

Course Components	Percentages
Daily homework assignments including chapter quizzes	20 %
Major Project 1: Job Docs (initial draft + revision after peer feedback)	25%
Major Project 2: Video résumé (final project)	25%
Grammar tutorials and post-tests in *LaunchPad Solo*	10 %
Class participation • Discussion Board posts (group work, peer reviews) • Group member evaluations that you write and evaluations that your peers write about you	10 %
Self-Evaluation at the end of the semester	10 %
Total	100 %

Figure 3. Grade Distribution

This course cannot be audited, and no incompletes will be given as a course grade.

GRADING SCALE

A is excellent; B is good; C is satisfactory; D is poor but passing; F is failure. Assessment is based on **percentages**:
90% to 100% = A; 80% to 89% = B; 70% to 79% = C; 60% to 69% = D; 59% = F

Your final course grade will be based on the following:

- Reading and applying the textbook's principles to assignments
- The results of your textbook's chapter quizzes
- The results of your grammar post-test and exercises and improved grammar skills
- Quality of your assignments throughout the semester
- Quality of your projects
- The thoughtfulness of your self-evaluation based on your performance throughout the semester
- Your willingness and ability to work in peer groups
- Quality, quantity, and promptness of your feedback on peers' projects
- Meeting deadlines
- Your participation and involvement in the course
- Your ability to apply theoretical business writing principles into everyday practice (e.g., if the textbook said you would have to use a salutation in your email messages, are you actually using it when emailing a peer or professor?)
- Demonstrated professionalism during the course

DEADLINES AND LATE WORK

There are strict deadlines for assignments posted under BB's Learning Units. Late assignments will be reduced by 10% of earned credit if turned in within 24 hours of the due date. The highest possible grade on late assignments is a 90%. Assignments turned in after 24 hours receive a zero. Major projects, peer reviews, and the self-evaluation at the end of the semester cannot be late, cannot be made up, and will not be accepted after the deadline. Missed assignments cannot be made up. Extra credit will not be available. Students are expected to notify both their workshop group and the instructor in advance if there is a medical or personal emergency and they need an adjustment.

CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM

This class is held in accordance with the academic integrity policy of WKU. (See Undergraduate Catalogue p. 26.) Violating this policy will result in a failing grade for the course. Additionally, the work that you turn in for credit must be not only your own, but also produced **specifically for this class**.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Disability Services: Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, Room 445, Potter Hall. The OFSDS telephone number is (270) 745-5004 V/TDD. Please do not request accommodations directly from your instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Writing Center Assistance: The Writing Center offers **online consultations** for students. WKU writing tutors have been trained to provide helpful feedback to students at all phases of a writing project. For more information or to make an online or Zoom appointment, please visit their website (www.wku.edu/writingcenter) or call (270) 745-5719 during their operating hours. Non-native speakers of English are encouraged to visit the Writing Center with each assignment to ensure that their

submissions are error free.

IMPORTANT DATES

Classes Begin: Monday, Aug. 24
Last day to add a class or to drop a class without a grade: Aug. 31
Labor Day is a class day: Sept. 7
Last day to drop a class with a W: Nov. 2
60% point: Oct. 31 (Students who stop attending class or participating in online class before this date should be assigned an FN rather than an F.)
Election Day: Nov. 3. No classes, university closed
Thanksgiving break: Nov. 23-27: no classes, university closed. Classes résumé, exclusively online, Nov. 30.
Final examinations: Dec. 7-11
Final Grades Available: The Tuesday after finals week after 12 noon on Topnet

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- If you decide to stay in this course after reading the Syllabus and the Course Guidelines, it is assumed that you agree to its terms, conditions, and requirements.
- Remember that your success in the class as well as your learning satisfaction will depend on the quality of your participation.
- The schedule and procedures in this course are living documents and subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Changes will be announced under BB's Announcements and/or via email.
- Should there be any loopholes in these rules, your instructor will decide the outcome and solution.
- Hope you'll have an enjoyable and rewarding semester. Your instructor will do her best to make this course fun and rewarding for you.
- Good luck with your studies! Be well and stay safe!

Last modified on August 19, 2020.