

English 202-001: Business Communication
Summer 2022 (7/11-8/5) asynchronous via Blackboard
Credits: 3

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ENGL 202 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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, email, memos, proposals, instructions, brochures, presentations, webpages, blogs, and social media.

During the course, we will cover the basics of business communication: readability, using effective visual and digital 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.

With only four weeks, this is a fast-paced course. You will need to work quickly and efficiently—much like a business environment. Don’t hesitate to reach out should you need extra guidance. I am always available to provide feedback on any parts of your assignments as you are completing them. I can meet with you over Zoom if that is your preference or communicate through email.

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/>

Non-Designers Design Book Excerpts (useful for considering layouts for your projects (This text will be posted to Blackboard)

Other readings on Blackboard (posted with assignments or on the Discussion Board)

Blackboard and email accounts



OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS

Note 1: Please notice that there are multiple parts to some projects. These will sometimes be due on different dates.

Note 2: You must also watch the Discussion Board for homework that is not included in the Projects here. Sometimes there will be questions to answer or short readings to respond to. Also you must respond to your peers. You may also use the discussion board to post drafts of assignments so your peers and I can provide feedback before you formally submit them.

Note 3: All the major assignments will be submitted via the ASSIGNMENTS section on Blackboard by 11:59 EST on the date they are due. This allows for them to be graded. All projects can be revised if you are not satisfied with your grade. The INTRODUCTORY ASSIGNMENT is to be posted to the DISCUSSION BOARD so class members can respond. PROJECT 4 should also be posted to the DISCUSSION BOARD so peers can comment before it is submitted through assignments.

Note 4: Please let me know if you want to discuss any assignment at any time during the process. If you want feedback, please try to get the assignment to me or arrange a meeting two days before it is formally due.

INTRODUCTORY ASSIGNMENT: Since we are not face-to-face, it is harder to get to know one another, so each of you should do two things: (1) Introduce yourself in writing on the Blackboard discussion under this topic, and (2) create and attach a short video that also serves as an introduction. I will also introduce myself and create a video. This serves for us to get to know one another in a virtual environment. You may also respond to one another. Please complete this introduction and post it by July 11 so that we can start out knowing a bit about each other.

1. RÉSUMÉ AND LETTER OF APPLICATION, ELEVATOR SPEECH (Complete all parts and submit by July 16)

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, and an elevator speech (Parts A-D).

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. What key terms should you pay attention to when applying? What is this employer seeking in an applicant? Post your ad and your responses to the discussion board.

Part B: Write First Drafts of the Résumé and Letter of Application

Read the articles on résumés and cover letters for job applications. Post your responses or questions to these articles on the discussion forum. Using this advice, write first drafts of your résumé and letter of application. Note that your letter can provide a potential employer with more insights as to why you are a strong candidate. Post your drafts to Blackboard discussion forum where you will give feedback to your peers' drafts focusing both on global and local features of the texts.

NEXT: Revise and Revise Again (Chapter 7 in *Business Communication for Success* provides advice for revision)

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: 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. Submit this with your project.

Part D: Write a Reflection of your work and submit your complete Project for grading by July 16

Write a reflection of your work 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.

2. ETHICAL DILEMMAS (Submit by July 21)

This assignment asks you to problem-solve issues that may arise in the workplace. Sometimes these are straight-forward because they have violated the law, but others are not so easy. The following article provides a framework for resolving issues. The framework may also help with writing the memos and letters in the next Project 3, so this quick assignment will build toward the next.

<https://www.icaew.com/technical/ethics/framework-for-resolving-ethical-problems>

For this Project 2 you are given some ethical dilemmas to resolve. Please write how you would solve the dilemma and why you chose this approach. Submit all the answers in one document via Blackboard by July 19 for feedback then revise. Submit for grading under Assignments by July 21.

3. BUSINESS PLAN, MEMOS, LETTERS (Submit Part A1 and A2 by July 23 for feedback; by July 26 for grading)

This assignment allows you to imagine a business you would like to open and to consider the communication within that business. Each of you will develop a simple Business Plan using a guide I will post. 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 create a video to present your plan in class to your group and post it on the discussion forum..

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 on Blackboard, 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 (*The Non-Designers Design Book* is a useful resource here). Write a brief explanation (a paragraph) of why you chose this particular design, what message it conveys, and how you chose to set up the letterhead and business cards. On Blackboard 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: (Submit all of Part B by July 28 for feedback and August 1 for grading) Be sure to use your letterhead for all correspondence and set up your letters and memos in the appropriate format. (Chapter 9 in *Business Communication for Success* provides advice for types of business writing.)

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 colleagues or supervisors 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. Remember letters are more detailed than memos.

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 and/or pandemic 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 their 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.

4. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE NEWS (recorded presentations posted to the DISCUSSION BOARD by August 1 for feedback; submit to ASSIGNMENTS by August 3 for grading)

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. We will use any video program as a means to record your presentation.

Look for a current article that either focuses on an aspect of business communication, such as posting resumes electronically, cryptocurrency, 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 or Online News (particularly in the business section)
- Popular business magazines, such as *Business Week*, *Entrepreneur*, or *Wired*
- 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

Post your handout on the discussion board along with a link to your video. In addition submit through assignments for grading by June 27.

5. REFLECTION ON CLASS each of you will write a reflection on the class. In this reflection, describe what worked for you during this class, which assignments you found useful, and what you would have liked to be done differently. Also mention anything else you would like to in your reflection. (Submit in ASSIGNMENTS by August 5)

GRADING

As long as all your work is submitted by August 7 at 11:59 EST, you will get credit for it.

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 for the discussion board and you have responded with effective feedback to peers. This includes reading and writing activities as well as any other preparation for assignments or projects. This also means you are asking questions and responding in the Blackboard discussions.

Attendance, Plagiarism and Other Suggestions

1. In Indigenous communities, we talk about the four Rs: Reverence, Reciprocity, Respect, and Responsibility. As a Native American woman, 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. Our class is asynchronous which means we will not be online with one another. Rather the work will be shared through Blackboard. When you are assigned to share work with each other, you should be respectful of each other's time and prepare in advance. Try to give useful feedback that will help your peer improve on their work. However, if you want to have a virtual meeting with me or your peer mentor, we can arrange that.
3. Please let me know if you have a preferred name or preferred pronouns. I expect the class to be respectful of anyone's preferences.
4. 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>
5. 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.
6. Talk to me—I can always be available. Let me know if there are any issues before they grow.
7. Have a sense of humor.
8. Take risks—try new things.



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. Since we are a virtual class, the discussion board and Blackboard groups will be our formats for talking with each other. You will also be producing some videos and other ways of sharing work. **Blackboard contains more information with readings to supplement your assignments.**

Please note: Each of us will record and post a video introduction

All assignments are due to hand in at specific times. However, you have multiple opportunities to revise any of your work to present the best work possible.

Assignments are posted to the DISCUSSION BOARD for feedback and under ASSIGNMENTS for grading. Dates in schedule reflect the two submissions.

Over the course, there will be questions and readings that we will discuss on Blackboard. I will post the questions there during each week. You are expected to respond to your classmates and give feedback to their work. This counts as homework along with your other assignments.

Week 1 July 11-15
Class Introductions via video—please have yours posted by July 11 and watch mine. Respond to one another. Project 1: RÉSUMÉ AND LETTER OF APPLICATION, ELEVATOR SPEECH Reading Job Ads –what is an employer looking for? Post to discussion board. July 12 Articles on résumés and samples to be posted Job ad analysis, résumé, and letter of application due July 14-16
Week 2 July 18-22
Project 2: Ethical Dilemmas –Submit by July 19-21 Project 3 Part A: Creating a Business—Examples and template Logos and Marketing Business Creating a Business Plan (chapter 9) Business Plan due for feedback on discussion board Develop logos and marketing tools Business Plan, logo and card design due July 23-26
Week 3 July 25-29
Project 3; Parts B and C: Letters and Memos (Chapter 9.1 and 9.2; also Chapter 10) Memos and letters due for feedback July 26 Letters and Memos due July 28 Project 4 Preview: Directions for Business Communications in the News presentations (Chapter 18) Post your video and handout on the Discussion Board for feedback by August 1 Project 4. Business Communications in the News watch videos as they are posted and give feedback.
Week 4 August 1-5
Business Communications in the News Project due in Assignments on August 3 Project 5. Work on course reflections and demonstrate communication skills 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? Due in Assignments on August 5
August 7 Last Day to Submit Work by 11:59 EST
All your work is due today. Grades will be done by August 10