

WRIT 3230B: Writing in the Workplace

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contact info

My office is located in Newton (1119D). The best way to get a hold of me is by e-mail, or to stop by during office hours. Office hours are tentatively scheduled for Monday and Wednesday between 10 to 12 and 1 to 2. Some of these may be virtual office hours, held on-line, and some of these office hours may be designated as group work times. I strongly recommend that you make an appointment if you don't want to wait through various other scheduled student appointments/work times.

texts and other budgetary concerns

I tend to think that you should learn how to find information about the documents you need to create on the web, finding the most recent advice that you can gather because expectations change in part because the technologies change. The main book for this course, the writer's companion, is a resource, one that you can use to gather ideas about how you should write texts, but you should also search for resources on-line, ones that you like, ones that you might refer to in the future. I've also included a book about economics this time, in part because I think we need to have some other perspectives. I want you to read the book, to talk about it, and I'll set up some sort of list or blog so that you can have that opportunity.

- *The Business Writer's Companion* Gerald J. Alred, Charles T. Brusaw, Walter E. Oliu
- *The Silent Takeover* Noreena Hertz.
- *the elements of graphic design* Alex White
- Some way to save information (i.e., a jump drive, a disk, etc). Bring a storage device every time class meets.
- On-line Texts -- I'll give you links to on-line resources from handbooks for writing to how to best collaborate with others. You'll be required to read extensively on-line and from the printed books. If you want other kinds of resources, please don't hesitate to ask; I can sometimes lend you helpful texts, or point you in the direction of texts that may help with your projects.

course objectives (learning outcomes)

When you work in a company, the range of genres you encounter can be quite extensive. We'll overview some of the more general documents, emphasizing the importance of reading rhetorical situations so that you can adapt, in the future, to the demands of local writing/communication situations.

- **Correspondence** – letters, resumes, cover letters, e-mails, etc: We'll cover the general challenges with letters, resumes, and electronic communication. You will learn about genre expectations and increase your ability to meet the expectations for these genres, addressing issues from form to syntax, developing a repertoire of writing strategies for invention, delivery, revision.
- **Reports:** we'll practice a variety of reports—from progress reports to feasibility studies to proposals. In each of these writing opportunities, you'll gain valuable experience that helps you to develop your understanding of genre expectations, as well as improving your ability to bring the right strategies to bear on a rhetorical situation.
- **Visual rhetoric/multimodal/multimedia communication** in the work place: The role of writing/communication changes often in business settings, and we'll focus on the current challenges of IM, blogging, Video, web page design. A writer needs to be savvy about non-alphabetic text, so we'll focus on learning some rudimentary knowledge about visual rhetoric and design elements.
- **Collaboration/team work.** In workplace settings, people rarely write alone. Instead, multiple individuals may be involved in the creation of a document. Because you'll face these kinds of writing situations in the future, you need to develop communication skills for collaboration. You will learn some theories about collaboration in the workplace, and you will gain some valuable hands-on practice as well as assessment/analysis of what you might do differently in the future.

grading

Letter Packet (250 points)

Collaboration Comprehension (100 points)

Visual Rhetoric Project (250 points)

Formal Report Project (250 points)

Revision Workshops, blog participation, and other in-class labs/participation (150 points)

1000 - 900 A; 899 - 800 B; 799 - 700 C; 699 - 600 D

Assessment of course objectives/learning outcomes:

- **Letter Packet:** You will write a letter packet which will be evaluated based on your ability to reflect a range of writing skills (from an awareness of genre expectations to the syntax, to the ability to edit your work)
- **Visual Rhetoric Project:** You will have the opportunity to work in a group on a visual rhetoric project that will be web-based, and which can be multi-modal. Your project will be evaluated based on your ability to (1) work in the group, (2) create genre-appropriate packet of documents, (3) awareness of visual rhetoric concerns, (4) strategies you bring to the writing process (invention, delivery, revision)
- **Formal Report Project:** this project will give you an opportunity to practice yet another set of genres, to develop your repertoire of writing strategies, to collaboratively produce the text(s), and to meet genre expectations. You will be evaluated on how well you meet these expectations.
- **Collaboration:** In addition to the genre work in groups, you will also be exploring the issues around collaboration with in-class activities and you will take a quiz to measure how well you understand rudimentary concepts regarding collaboration.
- **Revision Workshops:** Throughout the semester, you will be expected to read other groups'/other people's writing and to give them constructive criticism that helps them to gather ideas for revision, improving their documents. You will hand in revision critiques,

and the quality of your remarks will be assessed for your revision workshop/class participation grade.

policies

attendance: You must come to class. If you don't, you'll be penalized twice, maybe thrice. First, you probably will have difficulty understanding the assignments/completing tasks which will result in lower grades. Second, you can't earn the points that are assigned to in-class work. Finally, I will deduct points from your final grade if you miss more than 3 class periods. At the end of the semester, when I tally final grades, I will subtract 50 points off your final grade for every class you missed over the three allowed. Don't miss class, and come to class ready to work. If your body is in a chair, but your mind is on vacation (i.e., sleeping or otherwise trying to recover), you will be counted absent. If you don't bring the assignments to class, you will be counted absent (you need to have hard copies of assignments before class starts. If you're interrupting us by using the printer, I'll mark you as absent). In addition, you should be in class on-time. Two lates equals one absence (late = no later than 15 minutes; after 15 minutes you're considered absent).

IM/cell phones, etc: When class starts, I expect your attention. You need to sign out of instant messaging programs, turn off your phones (turning them to vibrating options is not enough), and resist any temptations to turn on games, or games on the internet. If you distract me or others during class with your promiscuous use of the computers/your cell phones, I'll mark you as absent for that day.

Date

Week One

Mon 8/14

Introduce letter writing assignment

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:

Business Writer's Companion on Correspondence and Job Search
Application materials

Wed 8/16

Work with letter writing assignment

Week Two

Mon 8/21

Rhetorical Situation

Wed 8/23

Letter Packet DUE

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:

The Silent Takeover: 1 – 50

Week Three

Mon 8/28

Revision workshops

Introduction to blogs/class discussion venues

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:

The Silent Takeover: 51 – 100

Wed 8/30

Revision workshops

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:

The Silent Takeover: 101 – 150

Week Four

~~Mon 9/4 labor day~~

~~Wed 9/6~~

Letter packet DUE

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
Collaboration links on-line and
The Silent Takeover: 151 – 200

Week Five

Mon 9/11

Collaboration exercises

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
The Silent Takeover: 200 - 250

Wed 9/13

Collaboration exercises / Quiz

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
The Silent Takeover: 250 – end
Visual Rhetoric Assignment (on-line)

Week Six

Mon 9/18

Group Logo Project

Research directions

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
Elements of Graphic Design 1 – 47

Wed 9/20

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
Elements of Graphic Design 51 - 99

Week Seven

Mon 9/25

Visual Rhetoric concepts

Web Page Design

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
Elements of Graphic Design 103-143

Wed 9/27

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
Web design links (on-line)

Week Eight

Mon 10/2

Visual Rhetoric

Web Page Design

Image work

Wed 10/4

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:
Web design/visual rhetoric

Week Nine

Mon 10/9

Group Project DUE

Revision Workshops

Last day to withdraw without academic penalty: Oct 10th!

Wed 10/11

Revision Workshops

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS:

Look up types of reports for business writing in your handbook/companion. (progress reports, feasibility reports, formal reports, etc)

Week Ten

Mon 10/16

Final version of group project DUE

Overview of Report project; working extensively with research

appropriate to business settings.

Wed 10/18

Week Eleven

Mon 10/23

Report proposal DUE

Wed 10/25

Week Twelve

Mon 10/30

Progress Report DUE

Wed 11/1

Week Thirteen

Mon 11/6

Draft of Report DUE

Wed 11/8

Week Fourteen

Mon 11/13

Revised Report DUE

Wed 11/15

Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Oral presentations assignment links.

Week Fifteen

Mon 11/20

Presentations

Week Sixteen

Mon 11/27

Presentations

Wed 11/29

Presentations

Week Seventeen

Mon

Final Dec 4: 3 - 5