BUSINESS ENGLISH 94-701
Fall 2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seven-week course focuses on fundamentals of effective writing: focus and meaning, content and development, organization, language use, voice and style, and conventions of English. Assignments include employment letters, sales and public relations letters, business reports and proposals, and interoffice correspondence. Since writing is a cumulative skill, emphasis is placed on revision as an important part of the writing process. In this course, students learn how to communicate professionally and convey their message succinctly using appropriate business formats.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (using Bloom’s revised taxonomy of learning)

Students will be able to…

Remember: Identify elements requisite for effective writing: focus and content, logic and organization, format, tone and style, and conventions of English.

Understand: Identify appropriate business formats.

Apply: Compare effective and ineffective writing samples.

Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter through business concepts and terms.

Demonstrate a unified structure, logical connections, and transitional devices.

Demonstrate professional language, defined voice, appropriate style, and concise writing.

Demonstrate appropriate use of English conventions.

Analyze: Examine peer writing during writing workshops.

Examine your own writing to make appropriate revisions.

Evaluate: Complete a self-evaluation to document learning objectives.

Create: Envision how effective writing skills are relevant in a professional career.

OPTIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATION: If a student provides evidence of learning for a specific topic, demonstrating an advanced level of proficiency (see Writing Rubric), a different assignment will be provided. This approach to instruction enables me to meet the diverse academic needs of all students in the course.

OPTIONS ASSIGNMENTS: At times, students will be provided options to complete assignments. From a specific list, they may select an assignment that correlates with their field of study or personal interest.
SEMMESTER OVERVIEW

NOTE
I do not post specific assignments in the syllabus to avoid opportunities for students to write papers in advance and/or seek help from outside sources (see Academic Integrity Policy). As an overview, weeks 1 and 7 focus on analyzing your writing (strengths and weaknesses). Weeks 2-6 focus on elements from the rubric (see Writing Rubric).

WEEK 1

TOPIC: What does your writing say about you?
Note: Grammar/Mechanics are integrated into weekly content. By week 6, students are expected to demonstrate a higher level of proficiency.

WEEK 2

RUBRIC ELEMENT: FOCUS and CONTENT
The extent to which the document demonstrates knowledge of the audience, the purpose of the message, and the subject matter.

WEEK 3

RUBRIC ELEMENT: FORMAT
The extent to which the document reflects the established format. It reflects norms for the type and medium of communication, font size, and font styles.

WEEK 4

RUBRIC ELEMENT: LOGIC and ORGANIZATION
The extent to which the document uses logical sequencing and transitional devices to convey a coherent, organized message.

WEEK 5

RUBRIC ELEMENT: STYLE and TONE
The extent to which the document demonstrates effective word choice, concise writing, active voice, varied phrasing, and professional language.

WEEK 6

RUBRIC ELEMENT: CONVENTIONS OF ENGLISH
The extent to which the document demonstrates the conventions of English.
• Grammar • Punctuation • Capitalization • Spelling • Citations • Format

WEEK 7

TOPIC: REVISION

REQUIRED TEXT / TECHNOLOGY

MindTap (by Cengage) includes a text, interactive videos, activities, and a writing tool designed to guide you through the course. One specific software tool, Write Experience, is an artificial intelligence (AI) program. It serves as an online tutor and editor while you’re writing. For validity purposes, this software is utilized to grade the essay portion of the GMAT® exam. Write Experience also translates into seven languages for non-native English speakers.

- Login to Canvas to purchase MindTap (See MODULES tab). I cannot post the link on the syllabus, since it is a special pricing code that only students in my class can use. (Note: This syllabus is posted online for others to view.)
- Follow the prompts to register for MindTap.
- Review the “How To” guide for using MindTap (posted on Canvas).
- Review the “How To” guide for using Write Experience (posted on Canvas)
CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: If you plagiarize, you are in violation of academic integrity. Violations of this nature are subject to disciplinary action. An automatic failing grade is assigned for the course and the incident is reported to program administrators. All work goes through the plagiarism detector via Write Experience. See Plagiarism.org for additional information or contact me for questions.

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING POLICY: Each week an assignment folder is released (videos, readings, and writing assignments). I will not release all folders at the beginning of the semester. The following explanation provides my rationale for this decision.

- Enthusiastic CMU students want to work ahead. Instead of spending quality time “revising” weekly writing assignments, students are eager to start the next assignment “just to get it done.” Since the revision process is a valuable part of learning, I do not want students to rush through their work.

- Advanced notice of work provides students (in a negative way) more opportunities for someone else to “do the work.” I’m not stating that students shouldn’t have writing assistance (the professor, the TA, and/or the Global Communications Center at CMU are wonderful resources); however, we guide you through the revision process, not “do the work” for you. Allowing another person to write your paper is considered a violation of academic integrity. Please submit your own work!

For each assignment, students are provided with a rubric that outlines levels of proficiency for each writing element. If you want to discuss your grade for a specific paper, please contact me the week that you receive feedback. After a week, the assigned grade will NOT be changed for any reason. Do not wait until the end of the semester to dispute a specific grade due to how it impacts your overall grade. Each weekly paper has the same weight, 30 points (see Writing Rubric).

GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Score / 30 Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98 - 100</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 - 97</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 92</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 - 89</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 87</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78 - 79</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 - 77</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 72</td>
<td>Minimal Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 20</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>69 - below</td>
<td>Failing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WRITING RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS AND CONTENT</th>
<th>LOGIC AND ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>FORMAT</th>
<th>STYLE AND TONE</th>
<th>CONVENTIONS OF ENGLISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The extent to which the document demonstrates knowledge of the audience, the purpose of the message, and the subject matter.</td>
<td>The extent to which the document uses logical sequencing and transitional devices to convey a coherent, organized message.</td>
<td>The extent to which the document reflects the established format. It reflects norms for the type and medium of communication, font size, and font styles.</td>
<td>The extent to which the document demonstrates effective word choice, concise writing, active voice, varied phrasing, and professional language.</td>
<td>The extent to which the document demonstrates the conventions of English: grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and citations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Demonstrates advanced knowledge of the audience and the purpose of the message. The reader’s needs are prioritized. Content is strategically presented, professional, and effective.</td>
<td>Demonstrates advanced use of logical sequencing and transitional devices.</td>
<td>Demonstrates advanced use of effective word choice, concise writing, active voice, varied phrasing, and professional language.</td>
<td>Demonstrates advanced control of English conventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional; ready to distribute</td>
<td></td>
<td>It is professional.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Range</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective knowledge of the audience and the purpose of the message. Content is thorough; it is likely to achieve the objective.</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective use of logical sequencing and transitional devices.</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective word choice, concise writing, active voice, varied phrasing, and professional language.</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective control of English conventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional; minor revisions recommended prior to distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td>It is professional.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Range</td>
<td>Demonstrates adequate knowledge of the audience and the purpose of the message. Content details could be improved.</td>
<td>Demonstrates adequate use of logical sequencing and transitional devices.</td>
<td>Demonstrates adequate use of effective word choice, concise writing, active voice, varied phrasing, and professional language.</td>
<td>Demonstrates adequate control of English conventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-professional; revisions required prior to distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td>Readability, consistency, or professionalism, could be improved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Range</td>
<td>Document lacks knowledge of the audience, the purpose of the message, and/or content details.</td>
<td>Document lacks use of the established format. It detracts from the readability and/or professionalism.</td>
<td>Document lacks effective word choice, concise writing, active voice, varied phrasing, and/or professional language.</td>
<td>Document lacks control of English conventions. Errors distract from the clarity of the message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprofessional; unsuitable for distribution</td>
<td>Document lacks logical sequencing, transitional devices and/or too many topics are addressed.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrasing is often vague, repetitive, casual, negative, patronizing, and/or exaggerated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 = R</td>
<td>Does not meet the minimal course standards for “Focus and Content.”</td>
<td>Does not meet the minimal course standards for “Format.”</td>
<td>Does not meet the minimal course standards for “Tone and Style.”</td>
<td>Does not meet the minimal course standards for “Conventions of English.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score / 6


_______ / 30 points
ATTENDANCE POLICY

- This course is highly interactive due to writing workshops and in-class conferences. Therefore, your attendance is required. You cannot improve your writing skills if you do not attend class. The attendance is recorded by the TA at the beginning of every session. Arriving late to class is not acceptable; it is a disruption to the learning environment. Plus, peer work is assigned as soon as class starts. If you’re late for class, it is your responsibility to sign-in with the TA (immediately) or it counts as an absence. If you’re late for two or more sessions, and your grade is on the borderline at the end of the mini, it will not be increased.

- Missing two sessions reduces your grade by a ½ letter (i.e. “A” becomes an “A-”). Missing three sessions reduces your grade by a whole letter (i.e. “A” becomes a “B”). Missing four sessions is an automatic failing grade. Legitimate excuses, provided in advance via email, will be considered.

EXEMPTION POLICY: We believe that effective communication skills are an integral part of personal and professional growth; therefore, students are not permitted to exempt writing. However, if you feel that you were incorrectly placed in this class, please see me before add/drop is over.

LATE WORK POLICY: Late work is not acceptable! If work is not submitted by the designated time and day, it is late. The highest grade assigned for late work is a “C”. For poor quality work, a failing grade may be assigned if it does not meet expected levels of proficiency (see rubric). Please do not email to ask for an extension due to other obligations and/or assignments. I highly recommend completing your work as soon as it is posted. Then, you can revise it throughout the week. For extenuating circumstances, please contact me. Missing class does not warrant additional time to complete an assignment.

OFFICE HOURS

Mini 1: Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 AM – 10:15 AM and 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM
Mini 2: Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 AM – 10:15 AM and 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM

NOTE: Evening and weekend appointments are readily available via webinar. I’ll send you a GoTo Meeting link, so that we can review and discuss your paper.

PARTICIPATION POLICY and MANDATORY TA SESSIONS

- Due to in-class writing assignments, a charged laptop is required for all sessions. Computer usage is expected for in-class work; however, checking email and/or working on another assignment is not acceptable.

- Students are expected to schedule a minimum of two TA sessions (15 - 30 minutes each) during the semester with their assigned TA. Each session is worth 5 points. TA information is listed on Canvas.

The TA will assign the following points for each session:

0 = you missed your scheduled appointment without notification
1 = you’re late for the session and not prepared
2 = you’re not prepared
3 = you’re late for the session, yet are prepared with a draft
4 = you’re on time and adequately prepared for the session
5 = you’re on time and fully prepared

*Prepared = You must have a PRINTED copy of your DRAFT for the session so the TA can provide feedback. The TA will not type comments or revise your document on your computer.
In addition to TA’s, students may utilize the **Global Communication Center (GCC)** for additional writing support. Schedule an appointment directly on the website, or drop by the GCC desk on the first floor of the Hunt library for a walk-in appointment. See [http://www.cmu.edu/gcc](http://www.cmu.edu/gcc) for information.

**RECOMMENDED TECHNOLOGY** (not required): If you’re looking for additional support with grammar/mechanics and vocabulary, you may want to use the FREE or paid version of [www.grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com) for personal or professional use.

- **Instant proofreading**: Find and correct over 250 types of grammatical mistakes.
- **Context-optimized vocabulary suggestions**: Improve word choice with vocabulary suggestions.
- **Plagiarism detector**: Avoid plagiarism by checking your texts against 8 billion documents.

**WAITLIST POLICY**: Each section of Business English is limited to twenty students. Students are not permitted to drop the class without permission from their advisor. However, if there is an opening, students will be added (in sequential order) from the waitlist.

**WELLNESS STATEMENT** (see link below): Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is available to help you: call **412-268-2922** and/or visit their website at [http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/](http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/). Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:

**CaPS**: 412-268-2922

**Re:solve Crisis Network**: 888-796-8226

If the situation is life threatening, call the Police: On campus: CMU Police: **412-268-2323** / Off campus: **911**

For additional information, see [http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/syllabus/checklist/studentwellness.html](http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/syllabus/checklist/studentwellness.html).
BUSINESS ENGLISH
CONFERENCE SHEET

Type of Evaluation: Self ________  TA ________  Professor ________

Name _________________________________________________________________________________

Class: Business English  Class Time ________________  Conference Day/Time ____________________

Did you meet the following learning objectives?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Improving</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify elements requisite for effective writing: focus and content, logic and organization, format, tone and style, and conventions of English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify appropriate business formats.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare effective and ineffective writing samples.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish and maintain a controlling idea, as well as demonstrate an understanding of the audience, the purpose, and the message.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate a unified structure, logical connections, and transitional devices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate professional language, defined voice, appropriate style, and concise writing.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate appropriate use of English conventions.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine peer writing during writing workshops.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Examine your own writing to make appropriate revisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envision how effective writing skills will be relevant in a professional career.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance and Participation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>If so, how many times?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you miss class?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you late for class?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you submit any of your work late?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you miss any TA sessions?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Responses:

1. What do you feel are your writing strengths (reference the rubric)?

2. What writing areas do you feel need to be improved (reference the rubric)?

3. What grade best describes your overall performance?

   A+   A   A-   B+   B   B-   C+   C   C-   Other ________

Additional Comments: