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Text and Support Materials

http://COBE.boisestate.edu/COBEwritingGuide/

Course Description

This course will focus on correspondence, reports, audience analysis, the writing process, graphics, document design, and the ethics of business communication. The goals are for students to gain experience writing common kinds of documents and to improve style through continued practice. We will spend class time writing, talking about writing, and creating solutions to the problems you encounter with your writing.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course is ENGL102 or its equivalent. I assume a basic understanding of rhetoric, grammar, punctuation, and usage of standard American English. You are responsible for understanding these aspects of writing and I will hold you accountable for them in your assignments. I also assume basic familiarity with computers and that you have an email account which you know how to use.

Course Objectives and Evaluation

The objectives of this course and the assignments I will use to evaluate your attainment of the objectives are listed in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to use a reader-friendly approach.</td>
<td>Letter and memo assignments, job application assignment, final project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to develop and present an oral presentation using effective visual aids.</td>
<td>Oral Presentation, in-class workshops, class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to employ one or more standard formats for writing each of the following: business letters, memos, and reports.</td>
<td>Letter and memo assignments, job application assignment, final project</td>
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### Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstrate ability to employ, regardless of format, principles relevant to the content, organization, and style of text for the following types of business communication: bad news (negative) messages, persuasive messages, and good news (positive) and/or routine messages.</th>
<th>Letter and memo assignments, job application assignment, final project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to determine, find, and use secondary research, including that available through electronic means such as library holdings databases (such as Voyager), CD-ROM (such as ABI-Inform), and the Internet.</td>
<td>Journal memo, final project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to apply basic editing skills such as those expected of students who have completed freshman composition and who are taking a business communication course.</td>
<td>Revising assignment, letter and memo assignments, job application assignment, final project, in-class workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to design a page of text so that it is graphically easy to read and permits easy information access. Such skills include the use of standard formats, white space, appropriate paragraphing, and (where appropriate) headings and sub-headings, or more standard formats.</td>
<td>Revising assignment, letter and memo assignments, job application assignment, final project, in-class workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to apply persuasive principles regardless of format and depending on such factors as balancing the needs of the audience with the desires of the writer.</td>
<td>Proposal assignment, job application assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate ability to produce ethical communications as a result of knowing and being able to apply certain ethical principles.</td>
<td>Letter and memo assignments, in-class workshops, class discussion</td>
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### Policies

**Attendance:** Attendance is required, participation is mandatory and will count for 20 points toward your final grade. Students who miss two consecutive class meeting without notifying the instructor in advance will be asked to drop the course or will fail the course.

**Homework:** Assignments are distributed by email. Many assignments will be submitted as documents attached to email. Use the subject line buscom lastName assignmentName, where lastName is your last name and assignmentName is the name of the assignment. For example, if I were sending in the revising assignment the subject line for the email would look like this: buscom Henry Revising.

Any email that is infected with a virus or carries a virus-infected attachment will be deleted by Boise State’s email virus protection system and I’ll never see it. Install virus protection on your computer and update the software weekly.
Revision: You can revise any completed assignment completed on time up until the final project and job application materials. The goal of your revisions is to improve your writing. Submitting a revision does not guarantee a higher score; the quality of the assignment must improve. Revisions will be due one week after I return the assignment and the score on the revision will be averaged with the original score. In order to emphasize individual responsibility for revising and editing, the four components of the final project cannot be revised after they have been submitted for grading.

Deadlines: All emailed assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Hard copy assignments are due at class time on the due date. I will not accept late assignments.

Plagiarism / Academic Dishonesty: The use of someone else’s words and ideas in your work without proper acknowledgement will result in an automatic F for the course. Please refer to the Boise State University Academic Honesty Policies as described in the Student Code of Conduct http://www2.boisestate.edu/studentconduct for further detail on this topic.

Grading:

A view of what the letter grades mean:

A (90%-100%)  Manager would be very impressed and remember the work at promotion/ compensation time.
B (80%-89%)  Manager would be satisfied with the job but not impressed.
C (70%-79%)  Manager would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing those outside of the department to see it.
D (60%-69%)  Manager would be troubled by the poor quality of work.
F (< 59%)  Manager would start looking for your replacement

(Courtesy of Professor Gerald Alred via Professor Mohan Limaye)

A total of 260 points is possible. The value for each assignment is defined in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email Assignment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Biography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Memo</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentations</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FinalReport</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Application Materials</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicant Rejection Letter</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
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</table>

Total 260
Modification of Syllabus: I reserve the right to change the syllabus with one class period notice.

**Week 1 Jan. 22 - 25**
Topic: Introduction; Overview of Business Communication  
Reading: *Essentials of Business Communication* Unit 1  
Assignment: Professional Biography  
Due: Friday 11:59 pm: Email Assignment

**Week 2 Jan. 28 - Feb. 1**
Topic: The Business Communication Process  
Reading: *Essentials of Business Communication* Unit 2  
Due: Professional Biography is due by email at 11:59 pm, Friday

**Week 3 Feb.4 - 8 Note: Wednesday, Feb. 6 No Class Meeting**
Topic: Mini-Presentations in class Monday & Friday

**Week 4 Feb. 11 - 15**
Topic: Clarity, Style, and Page Design  
Reading: In class handouts  
Assignment: Revising

**Week 5 Feb. 18 - 22 Note: Monday, Feb. 18 No Class Meeting President’s Day**
Topic: Instructions  
Reading: In Class Handouts  
Assignment: Instructions  
Due: Revising Assignment is due by email at 11:59 pm, Friday

**Week 6 Feb. 25 - 29**
Topic: Email, Letters & Memos—Requests and Good News  
Reading: *Essentials of Business Communication* Chs. 5-6  
Assignment: Memos  
Due: Instructions Assignment is due in class Friday

**Week 7 Mar. 3 - 7 Note: Wednesday, Mar. 5 No Class Meeting**
Topic: Email, Letters & Memos—Logic and Persuasion  
Reading: *Essentials of Business Communication* Chs. 7-8  
Assignment: Letters  
Due: Memos due by email 11:59 pm, Friday

**Week 8 Mar. 10 - 14**
Topic: Research, Documentation & The Big Research Project Assignment  
Reading: *Essentials of Business Communication* Unit 4 & *COBE Writing Style Guide*  
Assignment: Documentation Exercise (from Hell)  
Assignment: Journal Memo  
Due: Letters due in class Friday

**Week 9 Mar. 17 - 21**
Topic: Reports & Proposals  
Reading: *Essentials of Business Communication* Unit 4 & In class handouts  
Assignment: Proposal (25 Points)  
Due: Journal Memo Due Wednesday  
Due: Documentation Exercise due in class Friday

**Week 10 Mar. 23 – 28 Spring Break**

**Week 11 Mar. 31 – Apr. 4 Note: Research Week - - No Class Meetings**

**Week 12 Apr. 7 – 11**
Topic: Oral Presentations  
Reading: *Essentials of Business Communication* Unit 5  
Due: Draft of Proposal due for Workshop Friday (10% of Proposal Grade)
Week 13 Apr. 14 - 18
Topic: Oral presentations in Class
Due: Final Draft of Proposal due Wednesday
Assignment: Final Report

Week 14 Apr. 21 - 25
Topic: Oral presentations in Class

Week 15 Apr. 28 – May 2
Topic: Job Application Materials
Reading: Essentials of Business Communication  Unit 6
Assignment: Job Application Materials
Due: Final Report Due Friday

Week 16 May 5 – 9
Topic: Job Application Materials
Assignment: Applicant Rejection Letter
Due: Job Application Materials due in class Wednesday

Week 17 Finals Week May 12 - 16
Due: Applicant Rejection Letter
Final Exam 8:00 Wednesday May 14
Period:

Research Project Assignment:

- Research a business or technical subject which interests you and which has real world applications.
- Use journals, real life sources, and other reference tools to learn about the subject.
- Use a real life context--identify a problem and the context for the problem, research and evaluate possible solutions and report on your findings to a superior on the job. For example, you could be an engineer whose company is considering purchasing new construction equipment; you could be a tech writer whose company is considering adopting a new publishing program; you could be developing a marketing plan for a new product.
- The result of your research and thinking will be a report to a supervisor recommending action based on the information you present.

The final project will entail the following steps:

Proposal (25 Points). Write a proposal to your (real or imagined) supervisor requesting authorization to investigate the project described above.

Oral Presentation (20 Points). This will be a brief (no shorter than 5 minutes, no longer than 7 minutes) presentation of the results of your work to your supervisor and co-workers including appropriate visual aids.

Final Report (50 Points). The final report will be an approximately 10 page written presentation describing the results of your work and recommending action to your superiors on the job. It will include all formal elements of a report as well as appropriate graphics.

Grading Criteria for All Components of the Research Project: Documents and the Oral Presentation will use appropriate graphics, be clear, concise, comprehensive, accessible, documented, and correct.
**Professional Biography**

Due via email 11:59 pm Friday, Feb. 1

Imagine you are a finalist for an entry-level job in the profession you are training for in college. After reviewing your résumé and cover letter, your potential employer has asked you to write a one page professional biography describing your goals, your accomplishments, and why you are the best choice for the position.

Your assignment is to write your Professional Biography for the prospective employer.

You can review an example of a Professional Biography on page xxvii of *Essentials of Business Communication* under the heading, “About the Author.”

**Grading Criteria:** Your professional biography will address the three areas the prospective employer has asked for. It will be clear, concise, and correct.

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**Email Assignment**

Buscom 201
Due 11:59 pm Friday, Jan. 25

Answer the following questions about the course syllabus in the text of an email message addressed to me using the subject line defined in the syllabus. Remember to document your source with an APA style citation if you research the answer to any question in this assignment using a source other than the syllabus.

Is attendance required?
What is the point value of class participation?
When are emailed assignments typically due?
What happens if an emailed assignment has a virus?
Does revising an assignment guarantee a better grade?
What is the definition of plagiarism?
How much notice do I have to give you if I decide to change the syllabus?
What is the topic for class on March 5th?
Will there be a final exam in this class?
What should be the subject line for this assignment?

**Bonus Question for Extra Credit:**

Why are sewer service covers round?