

2121F/G: Writing for MIT

Fall 2013

Section: 005
Time/Room: Mon., 1:30-3:30, UCC 60
Wed., 1:30-2:30, UCC 60

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Instructor: Sonia Halpern

Office hours: Tues., 11-1

Course Objectives

“This course will improve the writing skills of MIT students, many of whom will find themselves developing written content for a variety of media formats in their professional lives. The focus on the basic principles of grammar and their relation to techniques of good expository writing in professional communication will aid students in developing precise and elegant prose.” You will spend much of your time in this course writing, responding to the writing of others, and revising your work in light of the responses you receive to it. Consequently, in this course you will not only produce written texts, but also develop a critical eye for examining the written texts of others, both professionally-written and written by others in your class.

The calendar course description also points to the development of writing skills in “a variety of media formats.” While it would simply not be possible to study and write in all the media that are available to us today, you will be asked to write in and for more than one medium. When you do so, pay attention to the rules/constraints of that medium and study how those rules give you clues to what is regarded as “good writing” for the medium in which you are writing. Try to develop a conscious awareness (metaknowledge) about the rules for writing well and how they shift depending on the context for writing.

More generally, the course aims to contribute to your development of an “ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences” (Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents’ statement on ‘University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations,’ 24 October 2005).

Required Texts

Messenger, William E., Jan de Bruyn, Judy Brown, and Ramona Montagnes. *The Canadian Writer’s Handbook*. Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, 2012.

Course Requirements

In-class work, quizzes, other marked work	10%
Assignment #1 (maximum 500 words)	10%
Assignment #2 (maximum 750 words)	20%
Assignment #3 (maximum 1000 words)	25%
Assignment #4 (maximum 1250 words)	35%

In addition to submitting final drafts on the due date for each assignment, you are required to bring a draft of each assignment to class for each of the scheduled peer-review sessions. Failure to attend a scheduled peer-review session with a draft sufficiently complete (in your instructor’s opinion) to permit meaningful

review, or to participate actively in the peer-review session, **will** result in the earned mark for that assignment being reduced by 10%. In other words, an assignment that would have earned a 78, for example, will receive instead a recorded grade of 70. This penalty will be applied in addition to any other penalties incurred (e.g., for late submission).

Assignment Format

If essays are submitted on paper, they are to be typed, double-spaced, and stapled.

All assignments must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page.

When using sources in a paper, you will be expected to follow MLA, APA, or CMS standards for documentation, detailed in *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*, sections 37a, 37b, and 37c.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due in-class on the date specified on the schedule. Late essays will be penalized a full letter grade unless your instructor has emailed you to grant an extension. You must apply for extensions ahead of the due date; they are not automatic.

Your instructor will advise you at the beginning of term of her/his preferences as to assignment submission (paper, electronic, or both) for grading purposes. ***Note, however, that in this course you will be required to submit the final version of each of your essays electronically, through Sakai, to turnitin.com.***

If necessary, please submit essays to the Writing Studies Drop Box outside Lawson Hall Room 3270, making sure you include your instructor's name and your section number. However, do not

- fax assignments
- e-mail assignments

Keep copies of all assignments submitted.

Attendance policies

Attendance is required to improve as a writer. If you miss more than six hours of class meetings (the equivalent of two weeks of class meetings), your final grade will be penalized a full letter grade (e.g., an earned grade of 80% would be reported as a 70%); if you miss more than nine hours of class meetings, you will not be given a passing grade for the course.

This policy will only be waived for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting, discuss these with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course **will** count as non-attendance, and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at Western University ***shall not require*** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is ***your*** choice; your absence will not be excused.

See also: '**Medical Accommodation Policy**' below.

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Note: In this course, you will be required to submit an electronic copy of the final version of each of your essays to turnitin.com through your section’s Sakai HomePage.

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

Medical Accommodation Policy

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e., non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g., to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the "Information for All Students in a Writing Course" for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean's office of your home faculty.

SCHEDULE

Date	Meeting focus	Readings
Week 1: Sept. 9 & 11	-Introduction to the Course -Review Syllabus	The Communication Process: Audience, Credibility, and Purpose
Week 2: Sept. 16 & 18	-Assign: Assignment 1 (Analysis of a Text with both Visual and Verbal Elements)	-Chapter 1: The Writing Process (1a-1g) -Chapter 2: Paragraphs -Images and Graphics
Week 3: Sept. 23 & 25	-First Draft Due: Assignment 1 -Peer-Review Workshop -Quiz 1 (Wed. Sept. 25)	-Chapter 1: Revising, Editing, and Preparing Final Draft (1h-1i) -Chapter 8: Verbs -Chapter 15: Commas -Writing Effectively: Verb Choice, Agents, Characters, and Variation
Week 4: Sept. 30 & Oct. 2	-Final Draft Due: Assignment 1 (10%) -Assign: Assignment 2 (Rhetorical Analysis of an Advertisement)	-Critical Reading and Viewing -Rhetorical Analysis -Concision
Week 5: Oct. 7 & 9	-First Draft Due: Assignment 2 -Peer-Review Workshop	-Emphasis: Main Ideas in Main Clauses, Sentence Cohesion, and Parallel Structures -Chapter 5: Fragments, Comma Splices, and Run-on Sentences (5a-5c) -Chapters 16-17: Semicolons and Colons
Week 6: Oct. 14 & 16	No Class on Monday, Oct. 14	-Writing to Inform
Week 7: Oct. 21 & 23	Final Draft Due: Assignment 2 (20%) Assign: Assignment 3 (Writing to Inform or Persuade) Quiz 2 (Wed. Oct. 23)	-Writing to Persuade -Chapter 5: Modifier Problems (5d-5e)
Week 8: Oct. 28 & 30 (No class on 28th)	First Draft Due: Assignment 3 Peer-Review Workshop	-Chapter 14: Diction -Writing to be Inclusive (Stereotypes, Gender Bias, Race and Ethnicity, etc.)

Week 9: Nov. 4 & 6	Writing and Design: How Visuals can Improve the Effectiveness of your Writing	-Chapter 5: Mixed Constructions; Shifts (5f-5g) -Design and Presentation -Faulty Predication
Week 10: Nov. 11 & 13	Final Draft Due: Assignment 3 (25%) Assign: Assignment 4 (Writing the Research Project) Quiz 3 (Wed., Nov. 13)	-Chapter 33: The Research Plan
Week 11: Nov. 18 & 20	Library/Computer Lab Research Session (2 hour class)	-Chapter 33: Identifying and Evaluating Sources (33c) -Chapters 35-36: Acknowledging and Incorporating Sources
Week 12: Nov. 25 & 27	-Documentation Systems Overview -First Draft Due: Assignment 4	-Write and Revise the Research Project -Chapter 37: Documentation
Week 13: Dec. 2 & 4	-Peer-Review Workshop (Both Classes) Final Draft Due: Assignment 4 (35%)	

