

**2111F: Introduction to Professional Writing  
Fall 2017**

**Section: #001**  
**Time/Room: M 9:30-12:30, AHB-3R07**  
**Instructor: David Barrick**

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**Office: Lawson Hall 3270**  
**Office hours: M & Th 12:30-1:30**

**Course Description and Objectives**

This course aims to introduce you to the basic grammatical and stylistic principles of good, clear, written English within a specific context. That context is professional writing. You will be introduced as well to basic theories and concepts in professional writing, given opportunities to develop skills applicable to writing in a professional context, and encouraged to read about and apply findings from research in professional writing. Generally, the course aims to help you develop “the 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). More specifically, upon successful completion of this course, you will have demonstrated the ability to

1. identify and define rhetorical contexts for professional communication;
2. identify, define, and understand ‘purpose for writing’ within those rhetorical contexts;
3. understand the relationship between context, purpose and audience and how that relationship should shape a message;
4. use that understanding to develop a persuasive argument;
5. generate ideas for a variety of communicative purposes, such as communicating a negative message with positive emphasis;
6. understand basic principles of cross-cultural communication and their significance;
7. understand basic principles of document design and apply them;
8. write cohesive and coherent prose using the grammar and conventions of Standard Written English;
9. identify and correct errors in composition, grammar, and mechanics; and
10. incorporate feedback into revisions.

To provide the context for the course assignments, this course makes use of case studies. You will read a chapter about concepts of professional writing in the textbook and then read a case study in which those concepts are operational. You will be asked to complete a written assignment that incorporates those principles (see ‘**Final Course Grades**’ below).

**Required Texts**

Locker, Kitty O. and Isobel Findlay. *Business Communication Now*. Third Canadian edition. McGraw-Hill Ryerson: Toronto, 2015.

**Create CasePack** for Western Writing 2111F/G (McGraw-Hill Ryerson). Note: this may be sold either bundled with the textbook (Locker/Findlay) or separately. Check with the Bookstore.

Messenger, de Bruyn et al. *The Canadian Writer’s Handbook. Second Essentials Edition*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

**Final Course Grades:** your final grade in the course will be based on your performance in the required work, weighted as shown below.

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|---|-----|
| ■ In-class quizzes on sentence structure/grammar issues   | 15% |
| ■ Diagnostic Paper: Audience Analysis; ungraded (up to 500 words)   | --  |
| ■ Assignment 1: Negative Message with positive emphasis (up to 1000 words)  | 20% |
| ■ Assignment 2: Persuasive Message with visual (up to 1200 words)   | 25% |
| ■ Assignment 3 (Formal Report; research-based) (up to 1250 words, excluding front and back matter)  | 40% |
| ■ <b>Note:</b> each of Assignments 1, 2 and 3 includes a preliminary peer-reviewed draft stage. In each week a peer-review session is scheduled, you must bring to class a copy (paper or electronic) of a preliminary draft of the assignment in question. This draft should be sufficiently complete (in my judgment) to allow you to obtain meaningful comment on it from one or more of your peers. I will ask you to show me your draft in class, during the peer-review session. Failure to attend class with a sufficiently complete draft, and/or to participate by reviewing at least one other student's draft <b>will result in the earned mark for that assignment being reduced by 10%</b> . So for example what would have been an earned mark of 78 for Assignment #3 will have a mark of 70 recorded. <b>Note</b> that this penalty will be applied <i>in addition</i> to any other applicable penalties, e.g. for late submission. |     |

## Course Policies

### Attendance policies

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but *excused provided you don't miss any more*.
- However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).
- If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68).

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons 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. See also: ‘**Medical Accommodation Policy**’ below.

**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 Writing class in order to write such a test in another class, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

**Attendance also extends to tardiness.** If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance.

### **Classroom Policies**

You will be expected to read all the chapters assigned from your textbook before coming to class. Your instructor will not summarize the reading, but will instead focus on salient issues arising from a particular chapter. In turn, you must participate in class and contribute your observations to the discussion. This is an active learning environment, so be prepared to engage with your instructor and your peers.

### **E-mail Policy**

I respond to e-mails within 24 hours. If you have not heard from me in 48 hours, please resend your message. I do not check e-mail on the weekend.

### **Late Assignments Policy**

All written assignments are due in class as stipulated in the course schedule. Late papers **will be penalized 5% per day (including weekends)**, unless you negotiate a new deadline with me **prior to the original due date** by making a request **in writing for a new deadline in either a memo or an email which clearly states your reason(s) for requesting an extension** (see also ‘**Medical Accommodation Policy**’ below).

### **Medical Accommodation Policy**

For Western’s Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate [SMC]:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf) 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 Writing Studies, and Writing Studies 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 I do 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.

### **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/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.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). Plagiarized work will receive an 'F' (ranging from 0 to 49) and may result in failure in the course as a whole.

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 Western and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

***Note: In this course, the final versions of your assignments must be submitted electronically to turnitin.com through your section's Sakai HomePage. Your instructor will provide you with further information and instructions on this procedure.***

### **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."

**Schedule** (*subject to minor changes*)

- Week One**     **Introduction: Writing and Rhetoric in a Professional Context**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapters 1
- Week Two**     **Rhetoric: The Concept of Audience**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapter 2; “Toyota,” “Globe Airlines” (CasePack)
- Introduce Case and Diagnostic Paper: (Audience Analysis; up to 500 words/ungraded) due Week Three**
- Week Three**   **Introduction to the Conventions/Grammar of Standard Written English; Writing Clearly**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapter 3 and Appendix ‘A’  
*Diagnostic Paper (Audience Analysis) due.*
- Week Four**     **Writing Informative, Positive and Negative Messages**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapters 7 & 8; “Cancer Society,” “Globe Airlines” (CasePack)  
*Quiz #1*
- Introduce Assignment #1: (Negative Message with positive emphasis; up to 1000 words/20%) due Week Six (draft due in-class Week Five)**
- ~Fall Term Reading Week October 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>~
- Week Five**     **Writing Informative, Positive and Negative Messages**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapters 7 and 8  
*Assignment #1 Draft due; peer review*
- Week Six**     **Document Design and Visuals**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapter 4; “Just Clean Your Hands,” CasePack  
*Assignment 1 (Negative Message with positive emphasis) Final draft due.*
- Introduce Case and Assignment #2: (Persuasive Message w/ visual; up to 1200 words/25%) due Week Nine (draft due in-class Week Eight)**
- Week Seven**   **Writing Persuasive Messages**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapter 9; “Just Clean Your Hands,” CasePack  
*Quiz #2*
- Week Eight**   **Writing Persuasive Messages**  
Locker/Findlay, Chapter 9  
*Assignment #2 Draft due; peer review*
- Introduce Case and Assignment #3: (Formal report exercise; approximately 1250 words [excluding front and back matter]/40%) due end of classes (draft due in-class Week 11)**

**Week Nine**     **Communicating Across Cultures Overview (Locker/Findlay, Chapter 5)**  
**Writing Proposals and Reports: Introduction to Assignment #4**  
**Locker/Findlay, Chapters 10, 11 and 12; “Cross-cultural Negotiation” (CasePack)**

*Assignment 2 (Persuasive Message w/visual) Final draft due.*  
*Quiz #3*

**Week Ten**     **Writing Proposals and Reports**  
**Locker/Findlay, Chapters 10, 11 and 12**

**Week Eleven**   **Employment Communications Overview (Locker/Findlay, Chapter 13)**  
*Assignment 3 Draft due; peer review*

**Week Twelve**   **Continue Work on Assignment #3; Conclusions**  
**Locker/Findlay, Chapters 10, 11 and 12**  
*Assignment 3 Final Draft due in class*