

**2111G: Introduction to Professional Writing  
W 2020****Section: #003****Time/: Wednesday 9:30am - 12:30pm****Room: UC-1220****Instructor: Dr. Andrew Wenaus****Email: awenaus@uwo.ca****Office: UC 1421****Office hours: 4:00pm - 5:00pm****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*. Fourth Canadian edition. McGraw-Hill Ryerson: Toronto, 2018.

**Custom Course Book** (The BookStore, Western) for Writing 2111F/G. Book No. M11883 (Note: this is print-on-demand. If not on shelves, obtain voucher.)

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.

#### **Late Assignments Policy**

Assignments are due on the dates specified in the syllabus.

Late papers **will be penalized 5% per day – including weekends and holidays – unless** I have granted you an extension of the due date. For example, an Assignment submitted one day late without permission that would have earned a grade of 80 will instead receive a grade of 76.

You must contact me ahead of time to request an extension and must provide a suitable reason. *See also the section 'Medical Accommodation Policy' below.*

**Important: you are responsible for keeping a copy of all assignments you submit.**

#### **Medical Accommodation Policy**

Western has a comprehensive policy covering requests for accommodation by students who are not registered with Student Accessibility Services. All students should review this policy here, under the heading 'Accommodation for Illness – Undergraduate Students', noting the procedures, restrictions, and notice requirements:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_12](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12)

In Writing courses, students covered by this policy who are seeking academic consideration must proceed as follows.

**Writing Studies' Basic Policy:** students seeking academic consideration **on medical or any other grounds** for any missed tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments must either initiate a Self-Reported Absence (**for a grade component worth up to 30% of their final grade, but excluding final exams scheduled during the exam period**) or apply in person to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of their home Faculty and provide a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or other supporting documentation as required in accordance with official Western policy (linked above).

Students seeking academic consideration **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either:

- i. A Self-Reported Absence, or
- ii. Academic consideration supported by the Academic Counselling Office.

**Exception:** in Writing Studies courses, a student seeking academic accommodation **on non-medical grounds** for any missed in-class tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments **worth less than 10% of a final grade** *may* first consult directly with her or his instructor, who will – in his or her discretion – elect either to make a decision on the request directly or instruct the student to follow the procedures set out in **Writing Studies’ Basic Policy**.

**Please note** that individual instructors will **not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related 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 or Undergraduate office of a student’s home Faculty.

**Students who are or who feel they should be covered under Student Accessibility Services** should review Western policy here:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_10](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10)

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:** (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) 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

<b>Week One</b> Jan. 8	<b>Introduction: Writing and Rhetoric in a Professional Context</b> Locker/Findlay, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and Appendix ‘A’
<b>Week Two</b> Jan. 15	<b>Rhetoric: The Concept of Audience</b> Locker/Findlay, Chapter 2  <b>Introduce and Assign Case and Diagnostic Paper: (Audience Analysis; up to 500 words/ungraded) due Week Three</b>
<b>Week Three</b> Jan. 22	<b>Introduction to the Conventions/Grammar of Standard Written English; Writing Clearly</b> Locker/Findlay, Chapter 3 and Appendix ‘A’ <i>Diagnostic Paper (Audience Analysis) due.</i>
<b>Week Four</b> Jan. 29	<b>Writing Informative, Positive and Negative Messages</b> Locker/Findlay, Chapters 7 and 8  <b>Introduce and Assign Case and Assignment #1: (Negative Message with positive emphasis; up to 1000 words/20%) due Week Six (draft due in-class Week Five)</b>
<b>Week Five</b> Feb. 5	<b>Writing Informative, Positive and Negative Messages</b> Locker/Findlay, Chapters 7 and 8 <i>Assignment #1 Draft due; peer review</i>
<b>Week Six</b> Feb. 12	<b>Document Design and Visuals</b> Locker/Findlay, Chapter 4 <i>Assignment 1 (Negative Message with positive emphasis) Final draft due.</i>

**Introduce and Assign Case and Assignment #2: (Persuasive Message w/ visual; up to 1200 words/25%) due Week Nine (draft due in-class Week Eight)**

**\*Winter Term Reading Week: 5 p.m. Friday February 14<sup>th</sup> to Midnight Sunday February 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Week Seven** Writing Persuasive Messages  
Feb. 26 Locker/Findlay, Chapter 9

**Week Eight** Writing Persuasive Messages  
Mar. 4 Locker/Findlay, Chapter 9  
*Assignment #2 Draft due; peer review*

**Introduce and Assign 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)  
Mar. 11 Writing Proposals and Reports: Introduction to Assignment #4  
Locker/Findlay, Chapters 10, 11 and 12

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

**Week Ten** Writing Proposals and Reports  
Mar. 18 Locker/Findlay, Chapters 10, 11 and 12

**Week Eleven** Employment Communications Overview (Locker/Findlay, Chapter 13)  
Mar. 25 *Assignment 3 Draft due; peer review*

**Week Twelve** Writing Proposals and Reports; Locker/Findlay, Chapters 10, 11 and 12  
Apr. 1

*Assignment 3 Final draft due either in class Week 12 or no later than the last day of classes: midnight Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup>.*