

2111F: Introduction to Professional Writing

Fall 2023

Section: # 001

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,” December, 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 the 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.

Required Texts

Rentz, Kathryn, Paula Lentz, and Marco Campagna. *Business Communication: A Problem-Solving Approach*. First Canadian edition. Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 2021.

Messenger, de Bruyn, et al. *The Canadian Writer’s Handbook: Third Essentials Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2023.

Final Course Grades

Your final grade in the course will be based on your performance in the required work, weighted as shown below.

- Quizzes on sentence structure/grammar issues 3 x 5% = 15%
- Assignment 1: Negative Message with positive emphasis (up to 750 words) 20%

- Assignment 2: Proposal with visual (up to 1200 words) 25%
- Assignment 3: Formal Report with visual (1200-1400 words, excluding front and back matter) 40%
- **Note:** 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 judgement) 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 **will result in the earned mark for that assignment being reduced by 10%**. So, for example, what would have been an earned mark of 78 for Assignment #3 will have a mark of 70 recorded. **Note** that this penalty will be applied *in addition* to any other applicable penalties (e.g., for late submission).

Assignment Format

All assignments are to be typed and must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page. Do not use a cover page; these are particularly unnecessary for online submissions. When using sources in a paper, you will be expected to follow MLA, APA, or Chicago citation practice. See Rentz, Lentz, and Campagna, Reference Chapter B, and *The Canadian Writer's Handbook: Third Essentials Edition*, Sections 36a and 36c.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. **Late papers will be penalized at 2.5% per day unless I have permitted an extension of the due date.** You must contact me ahead of time for an extension and provide a suitable reason (see also **Medical Accommodation Policy**, below). Important: you are responsible for keeping a copy of all assignments you submit.

Procedure for Assignment Submission

Under policies adopted by Writing Studies, final drafts of all assignments in 2100-level writing courses must be submitted through Turnitin.com (see **Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism**, below). Consequently, you will find Turnitin submission links for each assignment. You will upload your final version of each assignment through its link, as a single Word (.doc or .docx extension) file,* titled to identify you as author. Your graded assignment, with comments, will be returned to you in the same format, through Sakai.

***Note:** PDF or other read-only formats and compressed/zipped files are not acceptable. Please note also that Turnitin will not accept more than a single file submission. In other words, do not try to submit an assignment twice or in parts as two or more files. Also note that I access your original uploaded Word file; typically any formatting errors (etc.) which show in the Turnitin preview function will not appear on your uploaded file.

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.

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.

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 the University of Western Ontario **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.

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

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>).

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools for information gathering and preliminary research purposes only (unless otherwise indicated in the assignment instructions). These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. It is essential, however, that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize, develop, and articulate their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism in any form. Note that for all assignments completed outside of class, the instructor can require you to attend an in-person interview to discuss your work before a mark is finalized. Assignments should always reflect students' own thoughts and constitute independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, supports independent inquiry, and encourages original written contributions.

Antirequisites

The antirequisite for this course is WRIT 1031F/G. You cannot take this course if you have taken WRIT 1031F/G.

Academic Accommodation

Senate language requires all requests for accommodation for a grade component of 10% or more to go to academic counselling. That same section, however, allows for (and encourages) instructors to deal directly with accommodation requests for grade components less than 10%. Here's the relevant Senate language:

“Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course: Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgement and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc. Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf), instructors may not collect medical documentation.”

In this course, quizzes are the only assignments that are weighted under 10%. Because they are scheduled during class, they cannot be rescheduled without academic consideration. See the Medical Accommodation policy below.

Medical Accommodation Policy

“The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic

accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.”

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Documentation from Student Health Services

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.”

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 with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Other Student Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Intellectual Property and Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.