

**2111F: Introduction to Professional Writing
Fall 2025****Section:** # 002**Time/Room:** TU 9:30-12:30 UC 1220**Instructor:** Marielle Aylen**Email:** maylen@uwo.ca**Office:** UC 1425**Office hours:** TU 12:30-2:30

I post announcements on Brightspace (updates, scheduling changes, etc.), so be sure to set notifications on your devices.

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, Marco Campagna, and Carleigh Brady. *Business Communication: A Problem-solving Approach*. Second Canadian edition. Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 2024. **This textbook costs between \$69.00 (180-day rental) and \$122.55 (paperback). This edition is required.**

Messenger, de Bruyn, et al. *The Canadian Writer’s Handbook: Third Essentials Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2023. This textbook costs between \$20.00 (180-day rental) and \$46.95 (paperback). **This edition is preferred, but earlier editions will work for reference, even though page numbers won’t line up with the course materials.**

Course Requirements and Grade Allocations (the schedule appears below)

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| Assignment #1: Negative messages with positive emphasis (up to 750 words for both documents) | 20% |
| Assignment #2: Proposal with visual (900-1000 words) | 25% |
| Assignment #3: Formal report with visual (1000-1200 words, excluding front and back matter) | 40% |
| Grammar Quizzes (in Brightspace; <u>best two of three</u>) | 15% |

Note: Assignments 1, 2, and 3 include a preliminary peer-reviewed draft stage. In the weeks of scheduled peer-review sessions, you must bring to class a paper or electronic draft of the assignment. I will ask you to show it to me during the peer-review session. It must be sufficiently complete (in my judgement) to allow you to obtain meaningful comment from your peers. ***Be sure to submit electronic drafts in Brightspace in a format that I can access. Failure to attend class with a sufficiently complete draft and/or to participate by reviewing at least one or more students' draft will result in the earned mark for that assignment being reduced by 10% (i.e., submitting without attending and vice versa results in the deduction).*** So, for example, what would have been an earned mark of 78 for Assignment #3 will receive a mark of 70. **Note** that this penalty will be applied *in addition* to other applicable penalties (e.g., for late submission).

OWL and Tech Support

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. It is the primary method for disseminating information, ***so be sure to set notification on your devices***. If you need assistance with OWL, see the OWL Brightspace Help page or contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800. Also, tickets can be submitted through the Tech Support link on the course homepage.

Assignment Format

All assignments must be electronic (typed) and 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 citation practice. See Rentz, Lentz, Campagna, and Brady, 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 below). Late papers will be penalized 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 **Academic Accommodation**, below). All term work must be completed by the last day of classes. Any term work not submitted by the last day of classes will receive a grade of zero without official academic accommodation. 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 on OWL. 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 Brightspace.

***Note:** *PDF or other read-only formats and compressed/zipped files are not acceptable. Note: 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.

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.

Attendance also extends to tardiness. **If you are more than 20 minutes late or leave early,** you will be penalized for one 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 it **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 assignment at times that 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 to write such a test, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

Appointments and Email Policies

I generally respond to email within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on weekends and during breaks/holidays. I am happy to answer short questions through email – office hours and after class are more efficient for longer conversations – but be sure to consult the information in course documents first (e.g., links to tech support and citation guides appear on the course homepage, and assignment deadlines are listed below. The attendance record is updated every 7-10 days under Assessments/Assignments. Finally, since I am on campus Monday through Thursday this semester, office hours (see page 1) and appointments are in-person.

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, which can be found here: 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.

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 Western and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.”

AI Policy

In this course, the use of AI (such as automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited, unless there has been discussion with and agreement by the instructor before beginning an assignment. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and/or other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

Antirequisites

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

Academic Accommodation

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests through the Student Absence Portal, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage: https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline. All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation, which may include a Student Medical Certificate. Recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, [the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request without supporting documentation in](#)

this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

In this course, because not all elements of the quizzes (only two of three quizzes get counted) are required in the calculation of the final course grade, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for missed quizzes.

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 University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:
<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. 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.

Schedule

- *Assignments 1-3 must be submitted to Turnitin.com on Brightspace. They cannot be submitted under other tabs or through email.*

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| Week One Sept. 09 | An introduction to professional communication RLCB, Chapter 1, “Solving Communication Problems in the Workplace” CWH, Sections 3-4 |
| Week Two Sept. 16 | Audience, purpose, medium RLCB, Chapter 4, “Designing the Right Type of Message” RLCB, Chapter 6, pp. 191-4 RLCB, Reference Chapter A, pp. A-17 to A-27 CWH, Section 5 |
| Week Three Sept. 23 | Building positive relationships through communication: goodwill RLCB, Chapter 2, “Getting Positive Responses to Your Communication” RLCB, Reference Chapter A, pp. A-7 to A-17 CWH, Section 15 <i>Grammar Quiz #1 (online: flexible due date Sept. 22 until 11:55 pm Sept. 28)</i> |
| Week Four Sept. 30 | ♦ <i>National Day of Truth and Reconciliation: Class Cancelled</i> ♦ Good-news, neutral, and bad-news messages RLCB, Chapter 7, “Writing Good-News and Neutral Messages” RLCB, Chapter 8, “Writing Bad-News Messages” RLCB, Reference Chapter A, pp. A-7 to A-17 CWH, Sections 16-25 |
| Week Five Oct. 07 | Good-news, neutral, and bad-news messages (continued) RLCB, Chapter 7, “Writing Good-News and Neutral Messages” RLCB, Chapter 8, “Writing Bad-News Messages” RLCB, Chapter 6, pp. 176-84 <i>Assignment 1 draft due; peer review</i> |
| Week Six Oct. 14 | Persuasive messages and proposals RLCB, Chapter 9, “Writing Persuasive Messages and Proposals” RLCB, Chapter 6, pp. 181-4 RLCB, Reference Chapter A, pp. A-17 to A-18 CWH, Section 8 <i>Assignment #1 due 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Grammar Quiz #2 (online: flexible due date Oct. 14 until 11:55 p.m. Oct. 19)</i> |
| Week Seven Oct. 21 | Visual rhetoric: document design RLCB, Chapter 5, “Communicating Your Messages Visually” (pp. 123-40) RLCB, Chapter 6, pp. 194-201 CWH, Section 2 |

Week Eight **Visual rhetoric: visuals**
Oct. 28 **RLCB, Chapter 5, “Communicating Your Messages Visually” (pp. 140-73)**
Assignment 2 draft due; peer review
Grammar Quiz #3 (online: flexible due date Oct. 27 until 11:55 p.m. Oct. 31)

{Reading Week: Friday, Oct. 31 5:00 pm to Sunday Nov. 09}

Week Nine **Cross-cultural communication**
Nov. 11 **RLCB, Chapter 3, “Communicating Across Cultures”**
RLCB, Chapter 10, pp. 382-92 (secondary research)
Assignment #2 due 11:55 p.m.

Week Ten **Research and writing (the right type of) reports**
Nov. 18 **RLCB, Chapter 10, “Researching and Writing Reports”**
RLCB, Chapter 11, “Creating the Right Type of Report”

Week Eleven **Employment Communications**
Nov. 25 **RLCB, Chapter 14, “Communicating in the Job Search”**
Assignment 3 draft due; peer review

Week Twelve **Reports: executive summaries; and final comments**
Dec. 02 **RLCB, Chapter 10, “Researching and Writing Reports”**
RLCB, Chapter 11, “Creating the Right Type of Report”

Dec. 09 *Assignment #3 11:55 p.m. on the last day of classes*