Professional and Technical Writing

Professor Amy Ellison

- Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
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- Faculty Page: http://www.westga.edu/english/show_bio.php?emp_id=23583

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This writing-intensive course will introduce students to the basics of workplace writing, including the production of job application materials, professional genres, and company presentation. By analyzing real-world business examples and producing rhetorically sound business documents, students will learn to navigate various types of workplace communication. To meet the needs of dynamic workplace environments, the artifacts will employ different types of media and perform various rhetorical functions.
The class is divided into three major units with multiple assignment components in each unit. The first unit allows students to develop their own professional identities and knowledge of ethical communications; the second unit focuses on recognizing, analyzing, and understanding a variety of professional genres; the third emphasizes crafting persuasive communication for targeted audiences.

Course & Program Goals

- Students will develop rhetorical sensitivity, rhetorical acumen and composition skills necessary to prepare a variety of documents required in common business and technical writing contexts.
- Students will learn teamwork and collaborative authorship skills.
- Students will develop real-world problem-solving techniques.
- Students will practice the scrupulous attention to detail necessary in a business and technical writing environment.
- Students will become aware of techniques for adapting their writing to the demands of a highly audience-driven, context-sensitive field.
- Students will develop techniques for making effective business presentations to individuals and groups.
- Students will understand and appreciate internationally and culturally diverse styles of business communication
- This course fulfills one of the departmental requirements for the completion of the English major and the English major with Secondary Education.
- Students will develop the analytical, oral and written skills to pursue graduate study or careers in teaching, writing, business, and a variety of other fields.

COURSE MATERIALS, ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Required Texts

All course texts are free and online! Everything you need is linked to the corresponding assignment within the Content section of CourseDen.

Assignments

- Products (15%) Assignments using a variety of professional and technical writing modes.
- Project Proposal (15%) A research-based proposal identifying a specific problem within your field and proposing a solution.
- Multimodal Group Project (20%) Lots of options, such as podcasts!
- Electronic Portfolio (30%) Your online professional portfolio.
- End-of-Course Review (20%) A self-evaluation of your performance in this course averaged with my evaluation of your professionalism.

Grading

Grade Chart: 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; 50-59 = F; No Work = 0

POLICIES

Submitting Assignments

All assignments must be submitted through CourseDen. There are no waivers for computer, program or user errors. Late submissions lose one letter grade per 24-hour late period. Submissions more than a week late will not be accepted.

Attendance

I take attendance every day. Excessive tardies and absences greatly impact your End-of-Course Review grade (if this sounds harsh, keep in mind that missing four classes is the equivalent of missing two weeks--a half month--of class). I expect you to treat this class as a job in and of itself, for the few hours we are together each week.

Disruptive Behavior and Electronic Devices

Students will be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, checking email or surfing the web, and using personal audio or video devices. Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy.

For the sake of transparency, my biggest pet peeves are off-task electronic usage, sleeping, and class disruption.

Office Hours

See me the *moment* you begin to have a question or concern; do not wait until the day an assignment is due to seek assistance!

Email Policy

The official communication method for this class occurs through campus email & CourseDen. You remain responsible for regularly checking both UWG Email and CourseDen (if class is suddenly cancelled, I will post an announcement via CourseDen). In order to guarantee your privacy, I do not respond in detail to emails sent from alternate email providers.

The Writing Center

The role of the Writing Center is to offer consultation in which tutors question, respond to, offer choices, and encourage revision in student essays. Tutors do not evaluate or prescribe solutions to problematic areas to student essays, and tutors are specifically trained to avoid appropriating the student's work.

1. For more information, visit the Writing Center online: http://www.westga.edu/writing/.
2. To schedule an appointment, call 678-839-6513 or email writing@westga.edu.
3. The UWC is located in TLC 1201.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

The university considers plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty to be a serious breach of academic ethics. Section 207 of the University of West Georgia Faculty Handbook, which defines plagiarism as "Improper academic conduct…the purchase and use of ghost-written papers and reports, or incorporating into a report, term theme, research paper, or project, ideas and information obtained from another person without giving credit to the person from whom such information was obtained."

Excessive Collaboration: By the end of the term in both ENGL 1101 and 1102, students should demonstrate the ability to produce independent writing (writing without collaborative assistance of peers, writing tutors, or professionals in the field) that shows an acceptable level of competence. Although classroom activities and out-of-class assignments may highlight collaborative learning and collaborative research, excessive collaboration (collaboration that results in the loss of a student's voice/style and original claims to course related work) is considered another form of academic dishonesty and therefore will not be permitted.

Each incidence of plagiarism is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of penalties including but not limited to failing the assignment, failing the course, and referral to the disciplinary review board (which may ultimately result in the expulsion, suspension, or disciplinary removal of the student from the university). In order to facilitate the prevention and detection of plagiarism the Department of English and the University of West Georgia will maintain records of plagiarized assignments and those who prepare and/or submit them.

If plagiarism occurs, the student receives an automatic F for the course. If you are struggling with time constraints for any reason, see me before making a poor decision like plagiarizing. For further information: http://www.westga.edu/~engdept/Plagiarism/index.html.

University of West Georgia Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions.

Students with Special Needs/Disability Pledge

Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given.

Any student who has a special need should inform me during the first week of class. We will then set up a conference to discuss the specifics of the official paperwork from Accessibility Services. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services at the University of West Georgia: http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php

Departmental Policy on Severe Weather

The University of West Georgia is committed to the personal safety of its students, faculty, and staff in the event of severe weather. University policy regarding severe weather and emergency closings is posted at http://www.westga.edu/police/index_2277.php and official announcements about class and/or examination cancellations will be made only by the President and/or the Department of Public Relations. Although it is not possible to develop policy to address every weather-related emergency, these guidelines are intended to provide some general direction about such situations. For immediate severe weather situations, especially when classes are in session, faculty, staff and students are advised to follow the emergency procedures identified below:

1. Direct occupants to remain in the building and to seek shelter immediately on the lowest level of the building in interior rooms (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls.
2. Instruct occupants to not leave the building.
3. Evacuate all offices, rooms or hallways with windows and glass or with exterior walls.
4. Provide assistance to persons with disabilities.
5. Accompany occupants to the nearest designated shelter area in the building.
6. Comply with departmental severe weather policies/procedures.
7. Wait for an "all clear" signal" before resuming activity.
8. Occupants will: a) proceed to the nearest designated shelter area in the building by the closest route; b) move quickly but in an orderly manner so that all will arrive safely; c) will not attempt to vacate the premises, drive or seek shelter in cars; d) take a seat in the shelter area; e) remain cooperative with those in charge; and f) wait for an "all clear" signal before resuming activity.

In the event that classes are cancelled or disrupted for less than one calendar week, each professor, at his or her discretion, will make adjustments as needed to cover material missed during those cancelled sessions. This may or may not involve the use of rescheduled or online classes. If the closures exceed a single calendar week, students should contact the Chair of the Department of English and Philosophy at 678-839-6512 or the professor of the class for updated information regarding changes to the schedule in the Department. It is the intention of the Department of English and Philosophy to handle every concern seriously and as effectively as possible.

Reading and Assignments Schedule

All assignments are due *before class* the day they appear.

January

T 1/8　　　　Class introductions, syllabus

Th 1/11 Group exercise

T 1/15 Ethics discussion & activity

Th 1/17 Ethics Part I due on CourseDen

T 1/22 Resume discussion

Th 1/24 Resume due on CourseDen

T 1/29 Complaint, Notification, and Negotiation due on CourseDen

Th 1/31 In-class activity

February

T 2/5 Graphics & Organization discussion

Th 2/7 Graphics & Organization Part I due on CourseDen

T 2/12 Group Project introduction and assignment

Th 2/14 Continued work

T 2/19 Continued work

Th 2/21 Continued work

T 2/26 Group Project Presentations

W 2/27 Last day to withdraw with a W

Th 2/28 Ethics Part II due on CourseDen

March

T 3/5 In-class activity

Th 3/7 Job Instructions due on CourseDen

T 3/12 In-class activity

Th 3/14 Graphics and Organization Part II due on CourseDen

T 3/19 Spring Break

Th 3/21 Spring Break

T 3/26   Project Proposals introduction

Th 3/28   Continued work

April

T 4/2   Continued work

Th 4/4   Project Proposals due on CourseDen

T 4/9   Graphics & Organization Part III discussion

Th 4/11   Graphics & Organization Part III due on CourseDen

T 4/16   Ethics Part III discussion

Th 4/18   Electronic Portfolio introduction

T 4/23   Electronic Portfolio workshop

Th 4/25   Electronic Portfolio due on CourseDen

May

T 5/7   NO CLASS; Self-Evaluation due on CourseDen by 12:00 noon.

Grades will be posted to BanWeb by noon on May 14. No grades will be distributed via phone or email.