



Effective Business Writing

Course

MBA 621

Summer 2019

Asynchronous Online

Instructor

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By Skype appointment only

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Course Description

Any individual who has spent any amount of time in a business setting knows how important written communication is to the functioning of a successful organization. More than just the oil that keeps the engine running smoothly, effective business writing helps create, maintain, and sustain positive workplace cultures in areas of public relations, interoffice communication, and employee morale—to name just a few. On an individual level, being an effective writer in the workplace allows you to advance in your career in more dynamic and beneficial ways.

The difficult part of this conversation is the fact that many of us have strong feelings of stress, anxiety, and insecurity when it comes to writing. The reasons for these feelings are varied and to put it bluntly unimportant. What is important at this stage in your life and career is that you start taking personal responsibility for your writing by reading, studying, and practicing the art. People are not born good writers—good writers work hard and diligently at their art and treat it like any other. This short class represents a step in that direction.

This course is designed to provide students not only with an understanding of communication, specifically written, in business and management settings but also with an open space to cultivate the finer skills associated with becoming an effective business writer. These objectives will be accomplished through (i) exploring rhetorical theory that helps situate our work and (ii) producing and revising documents that fall within common business writing genres.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze written and verbal communications through the lens of rhetorical theory
- Think critically about rhetoric and audience awareness
- Prepare clear messages using logical arguments and effective organization
- Apply principles of design, style, and tone to workplace writing documents

Methods of Teaching

This course is offered during Spring and Summer semesters as an online asynchronous course. The instructor will provide video content, assignment descriptions, and reading links through Blackboard, and it is the responsibility of each student to view and read the course content in a timely manner. All work will be submitted in the respective weekly folders.

Textbook

Bovee, C. & Thill, J. (2012). *Business communication essentials: A skills-based approach to vital business English*. (5th ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Email Policy

Given the nature of the course, professional email correspondence is of utmost importance. All emails sent to the instructor must have the following characteristics: pertinent title, appropriate greeting, clear sentences, concise paragraphs, and a signature indicating your full name. I reserve the right to not respond to any email that does not fulfill the above characteristics or that asks questions about the timeliness of grading and/or information presented clearly presented in the syllabus (you may ask for further clarification). Below are some basic do's and don't's:

Do

Check your email every weekday
Expect response within 48 hours
Think of professor as an academic
Write about concerns of learning

Do Not

Check it once a week
Expect response outside of the 8am-5pm block
Think of professor as a customer service agent
Write about grading timelines

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment and possibly the failure of the course. Students cannot use work completed for credit in previous courses to count towards this course nor can they lift ideas or content from any source without proper APA citation.

Accommodations¹

In accordance with university policy, a student who wishes to receive some instructional accommodation, because of a documented sensory and/or learning disability, should contact the instructor to discuss this accommodation. The instructor must be notified in the first two weeks of the course of any students requiring accommodations.

Withdrawal

A syllabus constitutes a contract between the student and the course instructor. Participation in this course indicates your acceptance of its content, requirements, and policies. If you believe that the nature of this course does not meet your interests, needs, or expectations (amount of work involved, class meetings, assignment deadlines, course policies, etc.), you should drop the class by the drop/add deadline, indicated in the ODU Schedule of Classes.

Weighting Scale

Late assignments will receive a penalty of one letter grade per day, including weekends (i.e., a B+ grade would after one day late would be reduced to a C+). Letter grades for assignments are determined according to the following scale (%):

A	95-100	B+	87.5-89.9	C+	77.5-79.9	D+	67.5-69.9	F	<59.9
A-	90-94.9	B	82.5-87.4	C	72.5-77.4	D	62.5-67.4		
		B-	80-82.4	C-	70-72.4	D-	60-62.4		

Each week's assignment will be broken up into smaller components. One week, for example, students might need to complete a survey, an activity, and a small assignment. All smaller components are included in the week's weighting. The weighting is indicated below in the course schedule, as the course is divided up into eight connected but discrete weeks of assignments.

¹ If you have questions about assistance, please contact the Office of Educational Accessibility at 757-683-4655 or visit odu.edu/educationalaccessibility.

Course Schedule and Assignments

Follow Blackboard and course website announcements for changes and also check email for any updates. Assignments are due at 11:59pm on the final day of the week as outlined below (i.e., assignment for week one is due May 25th at 11:59pm).

Week One May 20—May 25	Topic: Perceptions of Writing	Weight: 10%
Week Two May 26—June 1	Topic: Rhetorical Situations & “The Writing Process”	Weight: 20%
Week Three June 2—June 8	Topic: Planning Business Messages	Weight: 20%
Week Four June 9—June 15	Topic: Writing Business Messages	Weight: 20%
Week Five June 16—June 22	Topic: Completing Business Messages	Weight: 20%
Week Six June 23—June 29	Topic: Emails & Résumé Writing	Weight: 10%