

Business Writing Syllabus



Oregon State
University

For general questions about course content and policies, please post inquiries in the Ask Questions Here discussion board on Canvas so that your classmates may also benefit from the question's answer. For personal inquiries, please email your instructor. You can expect a response in the discussion board or by email in 1-2 business days.

Clare Braun studied writing at the University of Arizona and at the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom. She earned her masters in creative writing from Oregon State University, where she has taught since 2012. Her research interests center on the body's role in the process of learning and writing, and she is currently working with OSU's Writing Center to create quantitative tools to better understand the role of peer tutoring in writing development. Outside of higher education, Clare's experience ranges from public relations, to program administration at a private K-8 school, to administrative work in the financial services industry. In her teaching, Clare emphasizes critical thinking and creativity as tools to help students rethink their approach to and relationship with writing.

Course Description

The workforce is driven by new technologies, a rapidly changing economy, and the need to communicate with different audiences from all over the globe. The ability to write clearly and effectively will be a vital skill in your future, regardless of your field of work. Strengthening these writing skills will give you the ability to create and maintain relationships, explain ideas clearly and effectively, and persuade others to take specific actions. This course will develop your understanding of rhetoric, audience, and conventions to improve your communication skills; we will focus on the practical uses of clear and effective writing that can be applied to a variety of fields and disciplines.

Learn how to articulate your thoughts clearly, concisely, and with a style that gets your writing read. Enhance the power of your writing by learning to identify your objective, select appropriate formats, and adjust your writing style accordingly to clearly communicate your purpose. You'll also learn to spot, avoid, and correct the most common writing pitfalls and gain valuable experience analyzing, writing, and revising a complete spectrum of business documents. From a simple inter-office memo to a business proposal, you will have the opportunity to learn how to put good writing to work for you.

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Prerequisites

Class or Knowledge Required Before Taking This Course
None.

Course Sequencing

N/A

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Write effectively and ethically for diverse audiences by making rhetorically informed choices in style, syntax, tone, formatting, and conventions.
- Apply and adapt flexible writing process strategies to produce clear, high-quality deliverables in a multitude of business writing genres.
- Use writing as a mode of thinking to research, innovate, and communicate new ideas, solutions, and policies.
- Use a toolkit of writing skills including word choice, grammar, organization and structure, and document design, that can be adapted to create writing styles for a variety of business writing situations.

Course Material

To succeed in this course, you will need reliable internet access, an up-to-date web browser, speakers/headphones, and word processing software (such as Microsoft Word or Open Office). In lieu of a traditional textbook, we have curated an extensive collection of resources from around the web which will be available to you through Canvas.

Course Outline

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| Week 1 | Topics/Objectives | Key Topics: Business Writing Fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is “business English?”• Sentence grammar and punctuation• Sentence fluency Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this week’s activities, you should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply knowledge of sentence grammar to produce effective, correct, and rhetorically appropriate sentence constructions. (Corresponds with course learning outcomes 1 and 4.)• Identify personal areas for improvement in common grammar, punctuation, and syntax errors. (Corresponds with course learning outcomes 1 and 4.) |
| | Learning Activities | Concept Lesson 1: What is Business English? (short video) |

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| | | Concept Lesson 2: Sentence Grammar and Punctuation: Independent Clauses (pre-recorded mini lecture) Concept Lesson 3: Sentence Fluency: Parallelism, Active/Passive Voice, Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers (collection of online resources) |
| | Assignments Due | Comprehension Check: Self-assessment quiz on common writing errors Deliverable: Rewrite/Rewrite a Memo |
| Week 2 | Topics/Objectives | Key Topics: Genres of Office Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You-attitude and the rhetorical situation Basic document design Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this week's activities, you should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use basic rhetorical analysis within the writing process to write effectively for specific audiences. (Corresponds with course learning outcomes 1 and 2.) Apply basic elements of visual document design to enhance clarity in written communication. (Corresponds with course learning outcomes 1 and 4.) |
| | Learning Activities | Concept Lesson 4: You-attitude and the Rhetorical Situation (pre-recorded mini lecture) Concept Lesson 5: Basic Document Design in Common Business Writing Genres (pre-recorded mini lecture) |
| | Assignments Due | Comprehension Check: Formatting Activity: Group Discussion Comprehension Check: You-attitude Quiz Deliverable: Good News/Bad News Emails |
| Week 3 | Topics/Objectives | Key Topics: Workplace Communication Case Study: Research Set-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals in business writing Ethics in professional research Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this week's activities, you should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a research proposal to investigate the dynamics of workplace communication within a specific organization. (Corresponds with course learning outcomes 2 and 3.) Demonstrate understanding of research ethics. (Corresponds with course learning outcome 1.) |
| | Learning Activities | Concept Lesson 6: Proposals in Business Writing (pre-recorded mini lecture) |

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| | | Concept Lesson 7: Ethics in Professional Research (pre-recorded mini lecture) |
| | Assignments Due | Comprehension Check: Ethics in Research Quiz Deliverable: Research Project Proposal |
| Week 4 | Topics/Objectives | Key Topics: Workplace Communication Case Study: Written Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features, purposes, and design of short reports Learning Objectives: After successfully completing this week's activities, you should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compose a short report to convey and interpret data and to provide recommendations for the improvement of communication within the workplace studied. (Corresponds with course learning outcomes 1-4.) |
| | Learning Activities | Concept Lesson 9: Short Reports: Features, Purposes, and Design (pre-recorded mini lecture) |
| | Assignments Due | Comprehension Check: Report Organization Quiz Deliverable: Workplace Communication Report |

Evaluation and Grading:

All WorkSpace courses are evaluated with the grade option of Pass/No Pass.

A student's final grade will be either P (Pass) or NP (No Pass). Under this grading option, student will receive a final grade of P for work that is clearly passing, i.e., which would earn a letter grade of C or better. For work below this level (i.e., equivalent to D or F), student will receive a grade of NP. Courses which are graded NP earn no credit toward graduation. The grades P and NP both appear on your official transcript, but are not calculated in your GPA.

Evaluation of Student Performance Weighted as Percentages of the Total Grade

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| Comprehension Checks (5) | 25% |
| Deliverable 1: Rewrite a Memo | 10% |
| Deliverable 2: Good News/Bad News Emails | 15% |
| Deliverable 3: Research Project Proposal | 20% |
| Deliverable 4: Workplace Communication Report | 30% |
| | 100% |

Evaluation Scale

P (Pass) = 70% – 100%

NP (No Pass) = 69% or less

Weekly comprehension checks as “Complete” or “Incomplete.” To receive a “complete,” please refer to the instructions for each assignment. Submissions that fail to answer each question on a worksheet, fail to meet the minimum word count indicated, etc., will receive an “incomplete.”

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Canvas

This course will be delivered via [Canvas](#), your online learning community, where you will interact with your classmates and with course instructors. Within the course Blackboard site you will access the learning materials, tutorials, and syllabus, discuss issues, and display your projects. If you are having problems accessing Canvas [check your computer compatibility](#).

Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, instructors and Disability Access Services (DAS) with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

WorkSpace seeks to accommodate the diverse experiences and learning styles of the students, and is open to feedback for improving the course, during this quarter and subsequent quarters. To provide direct feedback please email, WorkSpace@oregonstate.edu.

Expectations for Student Conduct

Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the Office of Student Conduct: information and regulations.

In an academic community, students and faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity and respect. Disruption of teaching, administration, research, and other institutional activities is prohibited by Oregon Administrative Rule 576-015-0015 (1) and (2) and is subject to sanctions under university policies, OSU Office of Student Conduct.

Academic Integrity — Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty, defined as: An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work. For further information, visit Avoiding Academic Dishonesty, or contact the office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

Conduct in this online classroom — Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect, as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors in the course (such as persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention both in and out of the classroom) is unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Oregon Administrative Rules Division 015 Student Conduct Regulations.

Netiquette — In an online classroom, your primary means of communication is written. The written language has many advantages: more opportunity for reasoned thought, more ability to go

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in-depth, and more time to think through an issue before posting a comment. However, written communication also has its disadvantages. This includes a lack of the face-to-face signaling that occurs through body language, intonation, pausing, facial expressions and gestures. As a result, please recognize the possibility of miscommunication and compose your comments in a clear, positive, supportive, and constructive manner. Please be sure to be professional by demonstrating tolerance for diverse points of view and give each other the benefit of the doubt about any unclear intended meanings.