ENGL 210F:

Genres of Business Communication

Instructor: Elizabeth Kuntz
Hagey Hall 254, Office hours: Mondays 2:30-3:30 PM, Wednesdays 9:30-10:30 AM

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Welcome to English 210F, Genres of Business Communication. This syllabus provides a guide to the course: it contains important information about meeting times and locations, due dates, instructor contact information, general guidelines, and references to other resources to help you.

Please do not hesitate to contact the course director or your tutorial leader about any concerns or questions you may have about the class, the readings, or the assignments.

Course Description:

This course explores the various genres of workplace writing. Learning to write and speak well in one’s professional life is a ticket to advancement and success in business. Good communicators become leaders, managers and executives. This course will provide you with an opportunity to learn and practice the most common workplace writing assignments, such as, memos, reports, summaries and a variety of letters, and will incorporate perspectives on professionalism and law in business communications. You will learn to choose the appropriate tone, perspective, content and format for your intended audience and purpose.

This course has both a theoretical and practical approach. You will learn how the various business communication genres serve their purpose and will practice using them in a variety of situations. This is not a grammar or remedial writing course, but you will have an opportunity to polish your business writing in a low-risk environment, prior to entering the workplace.

Course lectures and assignments will include information on how to use the media to send a company’s message and how to manage the media in times of crisis. You will practice oral presentation skills and learn to manage the communication processes involved in business meetings.

Course Meeting Times

The course meets twice weekly: once in an hour-long large-section lecture introducing concepts and practices, and once in a two-hour small-group tutorial section emphasizing practical skills development and the further understanding of concepts. Attendance at both the lecture and the tutorial is mandatory.

Lecture Monday 4:00–4:50, MC 4020

In addition to the lecture, you will be registered to attend one of the following small-group tutorials. All tutorial groups meet on Wednesdays.
Required and Suggested Texts

The following text is required for this course. It is available for purchase at the University Bookstore. The book is lightweight and (relatively) compact so please bring it to every class:


Recommended:

A good Canadian dictionary, and a style and usage reference such as:


Grading and Mark Distribution

Your tutorial leader will grade your work: bring any concerns about grading to him or her. The course director will not intervene in any grade until you have first discussed the matter with your tutorial leader.

Assignments

Please do not use the English department drop box to submit assignments, unless your TA instructs you to do so. Assignments are due in class, to your tutorial instructor, at the beginning of the tutorial section on the date noted. If you come to class late, your assignment is considered late as well. Deviation from a due date requires advance permission from your tutorial leader: extensions are granted only in rare circumstances. Late assignments for which no prior arrangement has been made will be penalized by 10 percentages points per day for the first two days. After two days, late assignments get a grade of '0'.

If an in-class assignment or test is missed due to absence or illness, the student must contact the instructor by email, in advance of the absence or as soon thereafter as possible. The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations state that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/menu/Health_Services/verification.html.

- If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.

The above provisions apply to assignments which are to be written in class.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>(ongoing)</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing &amp; Fax Cover Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletter Article</td>
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<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>35 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Report</td>
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The graded components of this course are intended to allow both instructor and student to measure progress and identify areas that need more work. Because we are learning genres of workplace communication, the writing load is steady: be sure to keep up.

**Participation:** Your participation grade is based on your attendance and level of preparedness and engagement in lectures and tutorials. Each unexcused absence from tutorial will result in the loss of one point from this grade; obvious lack of preparedness for tutorial (no textbook, unfamiliar with assigned readings or with content of lecture) or inattentiveness (falling asleep, reading a newspaper) may result in the loss of grades as well. Obviously incomplete homework will also result in a percentage point grade loss. Business communication is about professional behaviour. Consider this class a professional space and conduct yourself accordingly.

**Editing & Fax Cover Assignment:** This short assignment asks you to rewrite a muddled, unclear and generally poor example of business writing. Your rewrite will be clearer, shorter, and more grammatically correct than the original. You will create a fax cover for this assignment.

**Summary:** You will be asked to prepare and submit a one-page summary, on an assigned topic, which conforms to the standard practices identified in class, and which reflects the needs of the specified target audience.

**Newsletter Article:** You will write a brief article suitable for a company newsletter, appropriate for a specific audience, explaining a difficult concept from your major area of study.

**Midterm Exam:** This will be an in-class assignment, during which you will be presented with hypothetical scenarios requiring you to devise and implement a communication strategy. Examples of this sort of thing are found at the back of the textbook. This assignment requires you to use your writing and business judgment to assess what kind of communication needs to be written, as well as your skill to write it.

**Oral Presentation:** This assignment asks you to demonstrate, in a very brief (4 minute) oral presentation, your competence at professional self-presentation.

**Short Report:** You will be asked to prepare a short report, on an assigned topic, which conforms to the standard practices identified in class, and which manifests clarity, conciseness, and an appropriate focus.
Rights and Responsibilities

You are responsible for the following in order to ensure a pleasant and productive experience for everyone. We are all governed by University policies pertaining to ethical behaviour (Policy 33) and academic integrity (Policy 71), as well as to those outlining grievance or dispute procedures (Policy 70). Please ensure that you:

- know the university policies that govern your behaviour
- attend all scheduled lectures and tutorials
- arrive prepared: with assigned reading and writing completed, and with the textbook in hand
- participate actively in your own learning, and respect the rights of others to learn
- consider carefully instructor feedback on written and oral work
- submit work done by you alone; no collaborative work or work done by others may be submitted
- meet with your instructor within one week following the return of a graded assignment or test, if you wish to discuss the appropriateness of a particular grade.

Instructors will make themselves available for consultation in person and over email as per stated policies and do their best to provide helpful and respectful feedback on student work and return short assignments within one week (\( \leq 1p \)), and longer assignments (\( >1p \)) within 2 weeks.

The Faculty of Arts, which administers this course and is responsible to ensure adherence to codes of academic conduct, requires that the following paragraphs appear in this syllabus:

Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; on the Web at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA or course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.

Students seeking guidance on academic honesty are urged to discuss the issue with their tutorial leader, or to consult the following page of the Arts Faculty Web site, “How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors” (http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html)

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.