

# ENGL 420 BUSINESS WRITING



CRN 18970  Section 013  Spring 2019

TR 4:30-5:45pm  lhibbard@purdue.edu

Mr. Lee Hibbard  Office Hours W 1:00-3:00pm

## INTRODUCTION

This class will focus on the rhetorical principles and best writing practices for participating in a 21st-century workplace. As part of this course, we will learn the conventions of various professional genres including resumes, business letters, memos, reports, and digital marketing materials. We will also be placing a heavy emphasis on identifying the rhetorical situations that necessitate these various forms of business communication. This class is held in a computer classroom that will act as a site for in-depth discussions and a workshop environment for collaborative documents.

Course goals include...

### Writing in Context:

analyzing professional cultures, social contexts, and audiences to determine how they shape the various purposes and forms of workplace writing - such as persuasion, organizational communication, and public discourse.

### Project Management:

developing and deploying strategies for planning, researching, drafting, revising, and editing documents, both individually and collaboratively.

### Document Design:

understanding and implementing design principles such as formatting and layout, through testing and revising information architecture.

### Teamwork:

managing distributed teams online, delivering and implementing effective feedback.

### Research:

locating, evaluating, and using print and online information selectively for particular audiences and purposes; triangulating sources of evidence.

### Technology:

using and evaluating writing technologies used frequently in the workplace, such as emailing, IM, photo and video editing, presentation design, content management and desktop publishing.

# TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- *Excellence in Business Communication*, 12th or 11th Edition, by John V. Thill and Courtland L. Bovée ISBN 0134319502 or 0133544176

Other course texts (readings, reports, images, and other artifacts) will be available as PDFs or links from our class Blackboard site, and are indicated on the course schedule. All other class materials (slideshows, videos, handouts etc.) will also be available on Blackboard.

# TECHNOLOGIES

In order to participate in course activities, the following technologies are required:

- Mac OS X, Windows XP or higher, or your favorite distribution of Linux
- Microsoft Office, Apple's Office suite, or open source equivalents
- Your favorite web browser (Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Tor, etc.)
- Access to email
- A program that can open and annotate PDFs (Adobe Acrobat or Preview)
- Cloud Storage (Google Drive, Dropbox, Box, etc.) or a flash drive

# ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

*Note that these are just brief descriptions; each project has several required components, and full assignments will be provided in class. See the Class Schedule for due dates.*

All major assignments will be graded on the standard plus-minus letter-grade scale, as listed below:

1000-930	929-900	899-870	869-830	829-800	799-770	769-730	729-700	699-670	669-630	629-600	590-0
93%	90%	87%	83%	80%	77%	73%	70%	67%	63%	60%	0%
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F

## Course Units and Grading

Unit 1: Job Documents	250 points	Week 01 - Week 04
Unit 2: Backgrounder/White Paper	250 points	Week 05 - Week 10
Unit 3: Crowdfunding Project	250 points	Week 11 - Week 16
Reading Responses, Short Assignments, and Professional Ethos	250 points	Ongoing Throughout the Semester
Course Total	1000 points	

## Unit 1: Job Documents

Our first unit focuses on skillfully crafting a set of documents to secure employment or further educational opportunities post-graduation. We will begin with researching the expectations for job documents for your given field and finding a specific job posting to which you will respond. We will then move on to crafting, editing, and revising your resume/CV, application letter, etc. This is fantastic preparation for the Industrial Round Table and other job fairs on campus.

## Unit 2: Backgrounder/White Paper

We will begin Unit 2 by having everyone give a short elevator pitch for a project that helps solve a social problem or helps market a certain product. We will then form teams based on the most popular pitches and each team member will be responsible for producing a white paper that presents research for a specific part of that project in an easily digestible and neutral manner. This project will provide a solid foundation of research that allows us to move forward with Unit 3.

## Unit 3: Crowdfunding Project

Our teams from Unit 2 will continue to work together in Unit 3 to produce the necessary documents to begin a crowdfunding campaign. The necessary documentation for this project will include an informational/promotional website, promotional materials (video, posters, infographics, etc.), and social media campaign.

## Reading Responses, Short Assignments, and Professional Ethos

Throughout the semester, you will be prompted to respond to our larger reading responses on our Blackboard forum. These serve a dual purpose of proving to me that you are critically engaging with the course material while also giving you a place to make connections between the reading and your life. All reading responses/short assignments together will account for 150 points. The remaining 100 points in this category deal with maintaining a professional ethos in this course. We will review class expectations that will go into your professional ethos assessment on our first day.

*A note on group-based work: At least 25% of the points for group-based projects is determined by group work. You must collaborate with your colleagues as you would in the workplace.*

## Grading Policy

Grades will be posted for all course assignments within one week (7 calendar days) of their due dates.

## Late Work

I do not accept late work unless arrangements have been made at least 48 hours prior to the due date. Final drafts of all assignments must be uploaded to their corresponding Blackboard dropboxes by 11:59pm on the assignment due date, unless otherwise specified on the syllabus.

## ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Writing is a dynamic and interactive subject: to learn how to be a better writer, you must participate in discussions and hands-on activities. For this course to be a success, everyone's participation is necessary. For that reason, attendance is required. You will be allowed four (4) absences, regardless of documentation or excuse (with the exception of university-sponsored activities). It is up to you to follow up with me and/or a classmate regarding missed course content from day(s) you miss. If you have five (5) absences, I will lower your final grade by one full letter grade. If you have six (6) or more absences, I will lower your final grade by two full letter grades. In-class activities cannot be made up.

Please be on time for class and remain for the whole class period. If you are more than ten (10) minutes late to class, or if you leave class more than five (5) minutes early, you will be counted absent for that class period. Three (3) tardies will count as one absence. Please respect me and your colleagues: arrive on time for class and do not leave until you are dismissed, and participate fully in discussions and activities.

## CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Please refrain from any unauthorized uses of technology during our class sessions. In this case, "unauthorized" means unrelated to the learning activities taking place during the class period. I will expect computers and laptops to be used for classroom activities only. Failure to abide by these guidelines may have a negative impact on a student's participation grade. Repeat offenders may be asked to leave the class.

Since folks may need emergency access to cell phones, you may receive calls during the class period - but please minimize distraction for other students in the class and take only necessary calls.

## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

College is a time for the exploration and sharing of ideas. It's also often the first time students have spent an extended amount of time away from home and therefore the first occasion that they are truly able to experience new perspectives that challenge the way that they see and interact with the world. This can be a difficult experience, but also a beneficial and productive one.

In this course, we will sometimes discuss topics that are sensitive or personal. These could be about any number of things - our backgrounds, our experiences, our identities that uniquely incorporate race, ethnicity, social class, gender identity and expression, sexuality, religion, (dis)ability, etc. Please enter these discussions mindfully and kindly, and do not belittle or insult your fellow students who may think differently than you do. *As your ENGL 420 instructor, I reserve the right to ask you to leave class if you are behaving in a way that is patently offensive, or that disrupts or distracts your fellow students from the work at hand. You can review Purdue's nondiscrimination policy [here](#).*

# DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATION

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. It is best to schedule a meeting or stop by my office hours early in the semester. You are also encouraged to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) at: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247.

# MENTAL HEALTH NOTE

Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONOR PLEDGE

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing [integrity@purdue.edu](mailto:integrity@purdue.edu) or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information that is submitted provides the greatest opportunity for the university to investigate the concern.

*As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do.  
Accountable together - we are Purdue.*

*All icons and images in this Syllabus are depicted under the [Creative Commons License](#) and were made available on the [Noun Project](#).*

# EMERGENCIES

*Adapted from the emergency preparedness materials provided by Purdue University.*

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES are based on a simple concept - if you hear a fire alarm inside, proceed outside. If you hear a siren outside, proceed inside.

Indoor Fire Alarms mean to stop class or research and immediately evacuate the building.

- Proceed to your Emergency Assembly Area away from building doors. Remain outside until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

All Hazards Outdoor Emergency Warning Sirens mean to immediately seek shelter (Shelter in Place) in a safe location within the closest building.

- “Shelter in place” means seeking immediate shelter inside a building or University residence. This course of action may need to be taken during a tornado, an active threat including a shooting or release of hazardous materials in the outside air. Once safely inside, find out more details about the emergency\*. Remain in place until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

\*In both cases, you should seek additional clarifying information by all means possible...Purdue Emergency Status page, text message, Twitter, Desktop Alert, Albertus Beacon, digital signs, email alert, TV, radio, etc....review the Purdue Emergency Warning Notification System multi-communication layers at

[http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency\\_preparedness/warning-system.html](http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/warning-system.html)

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Review the Emergency Procedures Guidelines:

[https://www.purdue.edu/emergency\\_preparedness/flipchart/index.html](https://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/flipchart/index.html)

Review the Building Emergency Plan (available on the Emergency Preparedness website or from the building deputy) for:

- evacuation routes, exit points, and emergency assembly area
- when and how to evacuate the building.
- shelter in place procedures and locations
- additional building specific procedures and requirements.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AWARENESS VIDEOS

"Run. Hide. Fight.®" is a 6-minute active shooter awareness video that illustrates what to look for and how to prepare and react to this type of incident. See:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mzl\\_5aj4Vs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mzl_5aj4Vs) (Link is also located on the EP website)

## MORE INFORMATION

Reference the Emergency Preparedness web site for additional information:

[https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency\\_preparedness/](https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/)