

English 331: Business Communications

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Course Description

The analysis, interpretation, presentation, and effective writing of letters, memos, reports, and other types of business documents.

Course Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

- Understand and apply principles of rhetoric and document design to a variety of communication situations, including written, oral, and visual ones.
- Apply critical thinking, reading, listening, and writing skills to specific communication tasks or problems.
- Demonstrate a consideration for purpose, audience, and context in communicating and create documents that are 'user-friendly' in content, structure, and design.
- Demonstrate an ethical sensitivity to language, including its inflammatory and persuasive aspects.
- Make use of credible, reliable, and relevant source material (both primary and secondary) in a manner that is appropriate for specific communication situations.
- Write documents in a variety of electronic environments.
- Manage large projects effectively by allowing adequate time to write, complete research, revise, and receive feedback.
- Produce a variety of documents that are grammatically and technically correct.

Materials

Thill, John V. and Courtland L. Bovee. *Excellence in Business Communication*. 10th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2013.

Policies

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the theft of intellectual material, including but not limited to:

- Turning in your work for more than one class without advance written consent of the instructor of each class
- Paraphrasing poorly
- Citing incorrectly
- Copying the work of others

Plagiarism is more thoroughly defined in the Student Handbook (see handbook for further explanation).

Plagiarism will result in at least one of the following (and may engender further consequences depending on the instance):

- Failure of assignment
- Failure of class
- Expulsion of student from university

I report instances of plagiarism to the dean regardless of intent or severity.

Late Work

I do not accept late work. Individual exceptions *might* be made to this policy if you consult with the instructor at least 72 hours prior to the assignment's due date and the instructor agrees to the exception. Missing class is not an excuse for turning in an assignment late. Computer problems are also not an acceptable excuse—plan ahead. Keep multiple copies of your work in different places.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed **three** absences for this course. Absences exceeding that amount result in failure of the course. I **ONLY** excuse absences related to SMSU extracurricular events (e.g., club activities, sporting activities, attending conferences, etc.) and military training. For this type of absence to be excused, you need to provide written documentation in advance. Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for the learning the material you missed. *In-class writing and quizzes cannot be made up.* Tardiness may result in being marked absent.

If class is canceled at least two hours in advance, I will email students to inform them. For instance, if bad weather causes your professor to cancel a class meeting, she will email you at your official SMSU email address. You are responsible for checking your email.

Disability

If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please inform me as soon as possible so we can discuss methods of accommodation.

Contacting the instructor

The best way to contact your instructor is through email:

amanda.bemer@smsu.edu. I *usually* check my email several times a day and try to respond in a timely manner; however, if you do not receive an answer within 24 hours, I may not have received your email. Also, be sure to specify in your email if you require a response. Feel free to contact me again. I will communicate with you through email as well. You are responsible for checking your email and providing me with a current email address. Please add me to your address book so that you can receive my messages safely.

Expectations

Students are expected to come to each class session fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. All written assignments are due at the beginning of the class hour on the day listed. If you believe you should be exempt from this policy at any time, please submit your reason in writing to the instructor. Computer crashes, accidentally erased files, and printer problems are not legitimate excuses. Be sure to digitally back up all of your work in at least two locations to prevent lost files in the event of computer or flash drive failure.

While I will cover some grammar issues in class as is appropriate, I expect that you have mastered English grammar by this point in your college career. Grammar mistakes will likely annoy your classmates and me as much as they will a future employer. These mistakes will also likely hurt your grade and potentially your future in your selected career. If you have issues with grammar, please consult the appendix in our course text and review the rules with which you have difficulty. Often a few hours of study can allow you to clear up these problems. If you find yourself having issues with your writing (be it grammar, brainstorming, etc.) I suggest going to the Writing Center for assistance. Everyone benefits from an outside eye looking at his or her writing.

Discrimination

Harassment on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or sexual orientation is prohibited. See page 43 of your Student Handbook for further information. The instructor reserves the right to ask students in violation of the discrimination policy to leave. Repeated offenses may result in (at the minimum) failure of the course. Don't be a jerk.

Miscellaneous

I expect students to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the classroom. This means that you should be polite to one another. Avoid cell phone use except for emergencies. Follow the golden rule. You are not allowed to record anything during class without the instructor's written permission.

Major Assignments

Individual:

Business Correspondence Assignment
20%
Job Assignment 20%
Chapter Summaries (Five chapters)
10%

Team Projects:

Social Media Presentation 10%
& Annotated Bibliography 5%

Memo Report 20%
& Annotated Bibliography 10%

Other:

Participation & various exercises 5%

Grading

I grade individual assignments using the following letter system:

Letter	%
A	95%
A-	90%
B+	88%
B	85%
B-	80%
C+	78%
C	75%
C-	70%
D+	68%
D	65%
D-	60%
F	59% or lower

End-of-semester overall grades use the following system:

%	Letter
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
0-59	F