

# Course Syllabus: Editing Yourself and Others

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### Course Description

In a professional or business setting, writing is not only a main means of communicating but also a tool for getting things done. It is through writing that an organization demonstrates its worth and achieves its goals. Anyone with good writing skills is at an advantage in the workplace. Unfortunately, when people lack good writing skills, their overall abilities and performance may be questioned.

It is not surprising that many professionals, no matter how accomplished they are in their area of expertise, are anxious when they have to write. And, writing often becomes a point of contention when people on the job don't agree on whether a piece of writing is effective or how to go about improving it. Those who delegate responsibility for writing to others often feel frustrated that they end up having to do the work themselves – a situation that invariably leads to their employees feeling criticized and insecure in their job. Needless to say, the duplication of work effort, the loss of productivity, and the inevitable bad feelings undermine the work environment, often leading to individuals resigning or being dismissed. In fact, according to a recent survey of Fortune 500 executives, poor reading and writing skills is the most frequent reason for dismissal of first-year employees.

Writing does not have to be a source of stress and conflict. It can be a more collaborative process where there is the expectation of success.

### Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Apply a "problem-solving" approach to writing in the workplace that improves writing and empowers all involved.
- Interact effectively with others to obtain and provide useful feedback at different stages of the writing process.
- Apply principles of good writing to evaluating your own writing and that of others.
- Apply different approaches to team writing and the roles and responsibilities of individuals in a team writing project
- Employ a particular model for team writing and collaborate effectively at various stages of a project.

### Course Resources

To buy your books, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net>.

Hint: type DePaul for name of the school.

[Click here for help buying your books](#)

### Required textbook:

Kolin, Philip: (2006) Successful Writing at Work, Concise Edition. Houghton Mifflin Co. ISBN: 0-618-48111-7

## Course Competences

In this course, you will develop the following competences:

Competence	Competence Statement
L-7	Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge and values that contribute to such learning.
H-3-D	Can employ the skills of negotiation, mediation, or interpersonal communication in the resolution of a problem.
F-X	Can apply the principles of peer and collaborative editing to workplace writing Or Written in consultation with the instructor.

### How the Competences will be Demonstrated in this Course

#### L-7

You will develop skill in using a collaborative model to achieve good outcomes in workplace writing.

You will demonstrate this competence by working in teams of three or four to write a report or proposal.

**H-3-D** In class discussion and in writing assignments, you will show you understand the problems that may develop between writers and those who review their work, and that you can use principles of interpersonal communication to solve them.

You will develop skill in reviewing others'™ work at various stages of the writing process in ways that not only improve the writing but also show respect for others.

**F-X** You will examine models for team writing, including the roles and responsibilities of each individual, and applies a collaborative writing model to a particular writing project.

## Course Structure

This course consists of 10 modules. The estimated time to complete each module is one week.

**To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.**

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## Assessment

### Assessment of Learning

#### Percentage distribution of Assessments

In assessing your final grade, consideration will be given to four components. The first two components assessed are your participation in the discussion forums. This is especially important in a course that stresses collaborative learning, peer review, and interpersonal communication.

As mentioned, for a good part of this class, you will be working in teams, and thus more frequent participation is required than in other online classes. If you're unable to participate at least FOUR times a week (more frequently in some weeks), it will be difficult to pass the class.

The third component relates to two written assignments: your mid-term Progress Report and your end-of-term Self-assessment.

The fourth component relates to your contribution and participation in the Team-writing project.

20% - Quality of contributions to weekly discussion forums:

- Relevance to the topic addressed.
- Accuracy of information and use of theory.
- Conciseness of explanations and focus on main points.
- Timeliness of submitting messages.

20% - Quality of responses to other students in discussion forums.

- Respect for other participants' ideas and input.
- Appropriate use of comments related to discussion topics.
- Focus on staying on track with discussion.
- Contributions of helpful and insightful ideas.
- Questions that challenge and engage others.

20% - Quality of Progress Report and Self-Assessment

- Addresses the assignment according to directions.
- Assignments submitted on time.
- Summarizes and prioritizes information appropriately.
- Demonstrates understanding of learning objectives.
- Describes content with appropriate level of reflection and detail.

40% - Contribution and Participation in Final Project

- Addresses the assignment according to directions.
- Assignment submitted on time.
- Demonstrates skill in using a collaborative model involving all team members.
- Is the result of effective interaction and peer review.
- Accuracy of information used as evidence and proper referencing.
- Presented with attention to principles of effective writing.

## How To Do Well In This Class

This section provides a few hints on how to do well in this class:

1. Participate in class discussions. The class discussions and homework exercises are worth a large percentage of your grade. Most modules ask you to post an opinion and include a follow-up. Don't miss the follow-up posting.
2. Don't fall behind. In general, once a discussion is graded it's over. Don't think you can post discussion items several weeks after they are graded and expect credit. The class has moved on and it is difficult for course administrators to find your postings after it has been graded.
3. Read the assignments carefully. If the assignment says answer three questions, then answer three.
4. Email questions to the instructor.
5. Post all assignments by the specified Due Date.

## General Assessment Criteria for Writing Assignments

Grading of assignments will be based on the following:

**Content** refers to the treatment of the topic logically and analytically. This is the substance, the "what" of the paper; what you had to say about the topic, what you presented in defense of your position, and what your analysis revealed about thought processes and grasp of the material you grappled with.

**Organization** is the way your paper is arranged and presented, including both the overall organization and the arrangement of sub-parts. These include: relevant title and subheadings; introductory material, where needed; summaries, where appropriate; connective and transitional links; and what used to be called "rhetoric": the skillful arrangement of the pieces for maximum persuasive impact on the reader.

**Mechanics** refers to the use of Spelling and Grammar check, the use of Standard English, the basics of sentence structure and punctuation, and effective and sensitive word choice usage. Mastery of basic communication and writing skills is a must for undergraduate (and graduate) students. The paper you prepare should also use proper APA citation form for in-text references as well as for the bibliography.

## Assessment Criteria for your Final Paper or Project by competence

It is important that your final paper:

- Is the result of an effective team process, in which each team member has participated and which is consistent with concepts of collaborative writing and editing stressed in class.
- Organizes your supportive evidence into relevant paragraphs that address your subject.
- Takes into account a variety of points of view.
- Demonstrates that you are able to integrate evidence into your argument according to principles of standard English, using proper grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure.
- Uses proper quotation form, including introduction of your quotation as well as your commentary following the quotation.
- Has an introduction and concluding paragraph.
- Contains proper APA citation form for in-text references as well as for bibliography.

## Online Discussion

### Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation

In the online discussions your responses will be graded on whether you are:

1. Offering up ideas or resources and inviting a critique of them
2. Asking challenging questions
3. Articulating, explaining and supporting positions on ideas
4. Exploring and supporting issues by adding explanations and examples
5. Reflecting on and re-evaluating personal opinions
6. Offering a critique, challenging, discussing and expanding ideas of others
7. Negotiating interpretations, definitions and meanings
8. Summarizing previous contributions and asking the next question
9. Proposing actions based on ideas that have been developed

The above list was adapted from Gilly Simpson's™ book *E-Moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan Page: p.143 (2000).

### Discussion Boards

Discussions Boards are a forum for discussion and sharing information among students. Your instructor may create one or more discussions related to the topics you are studying each week. Starting in Module 6, when the Team-writing project begins, students will post work-related discussion and Deliverables to their Assignments area on the course website.

At the beginning of the quarter, your instructor will set up three discussions. These three discussions will help you and your classmates get off to an immediate start on the course, by providing conversational spaces for necessary, ongoing social and administrative activities. These discussions are:

- Introductions
- Course Q&A
- ☕Coffee Break.☕

The Q&A discussion is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask ☞process☞™ questions and receive answers.

☕Coffee Break☕ can be used freely as a ☞social meeting place,☞ that is, for your conversation, not related to the course.

### Course Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

For SNL courses taken for Pass/Fail, a ☞Pass☞ represents a grade of ☞A☞ for purposes of financial aid and employer reimbursement.

Students wishing to declare a Pass/Fail option must do so before the end of the 2nd week of the quarter.

## Online Participation Guidelines for this course

A significant part of your online learning experience involves learning with and from your classmates and the instructor in the online discussions and group assignments.

Active participation means sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing, and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. This discussion is informal in the sense that it is meant to encourage interested discussion. You are expected to follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar, and usage, although you will not be assessed for these particular characteristics when you are participating in the Discussion Board discussions.

These discussions are for you to exchange your reflections with your classmates and instructor about what you are learning. The discussions will be organized into forums around the particular topic you are studying each week.

You may be asked by the instructor to take leadership in a certain group for a certain time of the course. You will receive further instructions from your instructor if this occurs.

You should contribute your responses to the particular assignment for that particular discussion heading which will be posted.

For each Discussion, you are required to make at least one original contribution to each topic and respond to at least one classmate's contribution.

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## Policies

### Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

### Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

## Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

## Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve “interactions” interviewing and or observing other people “discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s).

As such, these activities qualify as “research” with “human subjects” and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning’s Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no “harm” “physical, mental, or social” does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
  - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an “informed consent” document. For information on creating an “informed consent document” see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>

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## Course Expectations

### Time Management and Attendance

SNL’s online courses are **not** self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

In most SNL classes, you are required to log in to your course at least **FOUR** times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions. Because a large part of this class involves teamwork, there will be some weeks where you will need to log in to your course more than FOUR times a week. In this class, a great deal of your grade is based on participation and team communication. If you’re

unable to participate at least FOUR times a week, and sometimes more frequently, it will be difficult to pass the class.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if conflicts do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact your course instructor immediately.

## **Your Instructor's Role**

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours over the weekend.

## **Your Role as a Student**

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

You will learn with and from your classmates in the online discussions and group assignments, sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. You are encouraged to bring your questions to the online discussions and respond to each other's do not always wait for the instructor to answer questions.

## **Credits**

This course was designed and produced by Michelle Greenberg and staff of SNL Online at DePaul University.

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