

FA 321 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

O'Hare Campus, Wednesdays, September 8 through November 17, 2004, 6:30pm – 9:30pm

Competencies

L-7 (Can learn collaboratively, and examine the skills, knowledge and values that contribute to such learning)

H-3-X (Can create appropriate, professionally written documents and materials)

F-X (To be written by student)

Instructor

Gene McGinnis; MindStream Consulting, Incorporated; 847/931-7720 (voice mail)

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Instructor is available prior to class or by telephone, by appointment.

Course Description

As contemporary American business continues to move toward internet- and web-based communication, and with increasing demands on business managers to communicate key messages quickly and effectively, the ability to write clearly and fluently is an increasingly valuable skill. *Business and Professional Writing* offers practical experience in developing cogent, concise and articulate written products.

Business and Professional Writing examines an array of topics, including: Business letters; memoranda; e-mail; business reports; abstracts and executive summaries; reports and recommendations; cover letters and resumes; narratives; and descriptive essays. The workshop will review process, content and structural elements, including: style; use of active and passive voice; argument and persuasion; cohesions; parallel structure; punctuation; and common grammatical problems.

Students will learn to plan and organize effective business letters and other written products; to examine and write to a specific audience; to select the most effective wording and phrasing; to analyze and revise written works (either their own, or the work of others); to identify logical fallacies; to write within a specific context; and to work collaboratively in creation and modification of business and professional written documents. This course is offered as a workshop.

Methodology and Learning Experience

The classroom experience for this course is designed to be informal. Some degree of informality is needed due to the highly personal nature of analyzing and commenting on one's own work, and on the work of one's peers. The learning experience will include a strong emphasis on personal writing styles, applications and choices of approach, and textual analysis. Other modes of learning include lecture, use of examples, case studies, peer review, and highly experiential activities designed to develop and improve newly acquired skills.

Required Text

The Business Writer's Handbook, Seventh Edition, by Gerald J. Alred, et al. (Bedford / St. Martin's Press; ISBN: 0-312-30922-8).

Students are encouraged to explore alternative book purchase options such as amazon.com, half.com, and ecampus.com.

About the Instructor

Gene McGinnis has enjoyed a wide array of professional experiences, including long-range planning, call center and staff operations management, information technology management, training development and delivery, customer service management, training development and delivery, and internal and external consulting. He is the president of MindStream Incorporated, a consulting company specializing in personal and organization performance. Gene has a BA in Organization Development, an MA in Organizational Performance from DePaul University, and holds graduate certification in Organization Development from Benedictine University. Gene is a certified professional facilitator.

Guidelines for Success

- *Attendance.* Expected in all class sessions. Students should notify the instructor as far in advance as possible if it is necessary to miss a class session. Assignments are due on time regardless of attendance. Students missing more than one session must negotiate additional work to be done to satisfactorily complete the course. Students missing more than two sessions will receive an FX for all registered competences.
- *Punctuality.* We will begin on time, and we will end on time.
- *Preparedness.* Weekly assignments should be completed prior to the beginning of class; students should be ready to engage in discussions at the beginning of class.
- *Delivery.* All assignments will be delivered on or before the due date. Late delivery generally will not be accepted. Students who cannot attend a scheduled class in which assignments are due are expected to deliver on the due date.
- *Integrity.* All work presented in class, and in written artifacts, will be the work of the student, or will have appropriate attribution. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated, and will result in a failing grade for the course and all registered competences.
- *Participation.* Active participation in this course is strongly encouraged.
- *Scholarship.* All written assignments should be delivered in a manner consistent with college-level performance, and should reflect a commensurate degree of critical thought and personal reflection. Grades will be lowered for consistent grammatical and/or structural errors.
- *Responsibility.* Learning is a shared responsibility between the instructor and the student. If any student needs assistance outside of the classroom, needs to discuss or negotiate changes in the content or timing of required deliverables, is not learning the subject matter to their personal satisfaction, or has any other unmet need that interferes with learning, it is their responsibility to contact the instructor to initiate an exploratory discussion at an appropriate time. The instructor will carefully consider each request and make any changes deemed appropriate and necessary.

Learning and skills acquired

At the completion of the course, the learner will understand writing in context, the business and professional writing planning and creation process, adapting written material for specific audiences, the appropriateness and use of editing techniques and tools, how to work collaboratively to produce a superior written product, the importance and process of research for business writing, and the appropriate use of written products as a function of their intended purpose.

Evidence to be submitted

Students will satisfy the requirement(s) of this course by submitting a series of written products (portfolios) demonstrating their understanding of the course topic(s) and their ability to apply the course's concepts. Specific evidence may vary, based upon the competences for which the student has registered. Alternative evidence will be considered and may be approved at the prior discretion of the instructor. Final papers, presentations and other artifacts submitted as evidence of learning are due no later than the end of the last class session. Students wishing their final work / papers to be returned should provide a self-address stamped envelope no later than the last class. Graded papers will not be returned to campus for general collection.

Work submitted in writing should follow generally accepted rules of style (Chicago, APA, or MLA), including attribution, bibliography / references, and presentation. All papers should be double spaced, with one-inch margins, using 10- or 12-point font; include a cover page, numbered pagination and headers containing the author's name, date, and assignment topic.

The instructor is available to meet with individual students during the quarter to resolve any questions or issues they may have regarding projects or deliverables.

Assessment criteria

Assessment includes the following elements:

- The instructor’s evaluation of the learner’s progress (attainment and application of skills and knowledge) during the course;
- The quality, delivery and defense of the learning products;
- The quality and appropriateness of peer review and feedback;
- The quality and depth of reflection, self-awareness and self-analysis.

Overall, satisfactory completion of this course requires the student/learner to aptly demonstrate either significant personal progress between the beginning and end points of the class, or the achievement of competence in integration and application of the concepts and practices offered during the course.

Schedule of Classes

Week	Topics
One September 8	Introduction Grammar, syntax Examples Drills, questions, review
Two September 15	The writing process Preparation Purpose Audience Organizing Outlining Revising Memos, faxes, e-mails Textual analysis Blow Ups: Adding depth to writing
Three September 22	Letter Writing Business Letters: Correspondence Sales Adjustment “You” perspective Refusal International Resumes Chronological Functional Experiential Cover letters (exogenous to text) Purpose Information Format Style
Four September 29	<i>Portfolio One draft due</i> In class peer review (draft and all comments from peers handed in at end of session) Sales letter Refusal letter Two resume cover letters Two resumes
Five October 6	<i>Portfolio One due</i> Gathering, summarizing information

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On line research Search engines Boolean searches Web credibility Documenting sources Summarizing material Document layout and design Designing visuals Instructions Meeting minutes
Six		Developing an argument: Persuasive writing
October 13		Proposals
Seven	<i>Portfolio Two draft due</i>	
October 20	<i>In class peer review (draft and all comments from peers handed in at end of session)</i>	
		Persuasive paper, proposal, instructions
Eight	<i>Portfolio Two due</i>	
October 27		Short Reports
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility Investigative Progress / activity Trip Trouble
Nine		Long Reports
November 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal reports Abstracts Executive Summaries Table of Contents Appendices
Ten	<i>Portfolio Three draft due</i>	
November 10	<i>In class peer review (draft and all comments from peers handed in at end of session)</i>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility report Trip or trouble report Formal report
Eleven		Portfolio Three due
November 17		No formal class