

# Professional Business Writing

## Course Syllabus

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## Course Information

### Course Description

This course develops writing skills used in a business setting. Effective writing skills are directly related to a person's ability to successfully maintain and grow in a career. As the world continues to shrink globally, being able to produce clearly written communication across all cultures is a skill that is not only desirable but also essential.

### Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Identify current trends and practices in business communication and professional writing
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of several types of communication styles, including electronic communication
- Apply the guidelines of collaborative writing to improve clarity and effectiveness
- Develop appropriate and correct visual aids
- Analyze and respond to issues involved in intercultural communications

### 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 Text Book

*Excellence in Business Communication*, Eighth Edition, by John V. Thill and Courtland L. Bovee ISBN 0136157505

*Business Scenarios*, by Heidi Schultz ISBN 0072984244

10-week subscription to the Wall Street Journal (subscription prices includes paper, online, and mobile editions) – to subscribe go to <http://subscribe.wsj.com/quarter>

### Course Competences

In this course, you will develop the following competences:

<b>Competence</b>	<b>Competence Statement</b>
H-2-X	Can identify, understand and implement various communication media, including electronic media, as they apply within organizations and institutions.
H-3-X	Can analyze and respond to business issues as they pertain to intercultural communications.
F-X	Written by student/instructor

### **Relationship of this course to the competence statements**

Taking this course for the H domain will enable you to write with functional fluency and conciseness as well as recognize common organizational problems in other written communication. You will have the opportunity and the advantage of knowing which written application is best for which situation and how to tailor messages to specific audiences. You will begin with learning the basics of organization and formats and later in the course you will evidence your skills in the finished the finished products including but not limited to: letters, memos, e-mails, presentation, proposals and reports.

Taking this course in the F domain will allow you to tailor your writing skills and strategies to your particular area of Focus addressing the specific areas of written communication in your field of work.

### **Assessment Criteria for each Competence**

*The following are criteria for receiving a passing grade. The criteria for passing require that:*

- You participate consistently and constructively by completing the assignments by their due dates.
- You consistently, actively, and in a timely fashion participate in the online discussions. You will receive a weekly note from the instructor, if your participation is estimated as outstanding, sufficient or insufficient. In any case you will have the opportunity to comment on the opinion of the instructor.

### **Course Structure**

The Professional Business Writing class is divided into 10 Modules. Each module is one week in length and will include a written assignment, a posted assignment/discussion, and a group assignment/discussion. In addition there is one PowerPoint presentation, one proposal project, and a competence demonstration essay.

**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**

### **Specific Course Grading Criteria**

<b>Week 1 Business Writing Basics</b>	
Assignment 1.1	10 points
Assignment 1.2	10 points
Assignment 1.3 (Groups)	10 points
Readings: Chapters 2 & 4 in Excellence Text Chapter 1 in Business Scenarios	
<b>Week 2 Audience Centered Messages</b>	
Assignment 2.1	10 points
Assignment 2.2	10 points
Assignment 2.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 3 Writing with Clarity</b>	
Assignment 3.1	10 points
Assignment 3.2	10 points
Assignment 3.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 4 Tone &amp; Revision</b>	
Assignment 4.1	10 points
Assignment 4.2	10 points
Assignment 4.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 5 Writing Persuasively &amp; Knowing Your Audience</b>	
Assignment 5.1	10 points
Assignment 5.2	10 points
Assignment 5.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 6 Communicating Bad News</b>	
Assignment 6.1	10 points
Assignment 6.2	10 points
Assignment 6.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 7 Communicating Across Cultures</b>	
Assignment 7.1	10 points

Assignment 7.2	10 points
Assignment 7.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 8 Crisis Communication</b>	
Assignment 8.1	10 points
Assignment 8.2	10 points
Assignment 8.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 9 Executive Summaries &amp; Proposals</b>	
Assignment 9.1	10 points
Assignment 9.2	10 points
Assignment 9.3 (Groups)	10 points
<b>Week 10 Competence-specific Essays</b>	
Assignment 10.1	10 points
Assignment 10.2	10 points
Assignment 10.3 (Groups)	10 points
H-2-X – Competence Essay	P/F
H-3-X – Competence Essay	P/F
FX – Competence Essay	P/F
PowerPoint Presentation	50 points
Proposal Project	50 points
Total Points Possible	400 points

### **Assessment Criteria for Reading and Writing Assessments**

- Your participation and advance in terms of concepts and competencies will be accessed in the weekly discussion forums.

### **Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation**

- In order to receive credit for your participation in the online discussion parts of the course you must contribute in a timely fashion each week and clearly and consistently link what you are learning in the course to your real life experience.
- In addition, you must demonstrate good “listening” skills and active inquiry skills by commentary on other’s posts in a constructive way.

### **Course Grading Scale**

*(for graded courses – this is the DePaul standard)*

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**

**Discussion Boards** are a forum for discussion and sharing information among students. Your instructor may create one or more discussion forums related to the topics you are studying each week.

At the beginning of the quarter, your instructor will set up three discussion forums. These three forums 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 forums are:

- Introductions
- Course Q&A
- A social meeting space for discussion that is not directly related to course content. (This has different names in different courses.)

The Q&A forum is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask 'process' questions and receive answers. You will also find the schedule of specific dates for your course in this forum, and the emails sent out to the whole class.

The Social Meeting Place Forum can be used freely for your own conversation (like setting up groups or teams, if these are used in the course).

### **Online Discussion Instructions**

You are expected to actively participate in informal online discussions with your classmates and the instructor when they are required by the syllabus. "Active participation" means that you read and contribute to the online discussions. This discussion is "informal" in the sense that it is meant to encourage interested discussion. It is expected that you follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar and usage, although you will not be assessed for these particular characteristics when you are on the discussion board. These discussions are a place for you to exchange your reflections with the others in the class about what you are learning. The discussions will be organized into forums around the particular assignment you are studying each week.

You should contribute your responses to the particular assignment for that particular discussion heading which will be posted. Directions are provided with each assignment. They must be followed according to the due dates given. Principles of good practice for participating in online discussions should be adhered to when it comes to responding to the contributions of other people in the class. These "principles" will be provided in the Online Participation Guidelines section in this study guide.

## 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 acknowledgment that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgment.
- 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 acknowledgment.

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.

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.

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 your life events 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 the instructor immediately.

### **Your Instructor's Role**

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. 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. You will receive feedback to assignments.

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 to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### **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 own 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.

### **Credits**

*This course was designed and produced by Kathleen Schmidt and staff of SNL Online at DePaul University.*

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