

## 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. The writing skills taught in this course are developed through assignments that make use of case studies, outside readings and the text. Additionally, students actively engage with business publications in discussions that analyze current business topics; domestic and international.

### 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

### Course Competencies

In this course, you will develop the following competencies:

**H2X:** Can identify, understand and implement various communication media, including electronic media, as they apply within organizations and institutions.

**H3X:** Can analyze and respond to business issues as they pertain to intercultural communications.

**FX:** 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.

## 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 Reading:

*Excellence in Business Communication*, Ninth Edition, by John V. Thill and Courtland L. Bovee ISBN 10 0136103766

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 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

Please note: Grades lower than a C- do not earn credit or competence in the School for New Learning.

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.

## Course Structure

The Professional Business Writing class is divided into 10 Modules. Each module is one week in length and is worth a total of 30 points. Each module includes: a written assignment pertaining to the weekly topic submitted to the instructor, a posted assignment/discussion, and small group discussions, group summaries, and required readings. In addition in the final week of the course, students submit one essay for each registered competence demonstrating mastery of that competence. The competence essays are Pass/Fail.

To see course due dates, click on the Checklist link on the top navigation bar. This page

contains module-specific checklists and due dates for the work due in the course.

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## Assessment of Learning

### Specific Course Grading Criteria

<b>Week 1</b>	
<b>Business Writing Basics</b>	
Assignment 1.1 Memo - as assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 1.2 Shareholder letter evaluation - instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 1.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 2</b>	
<b>Audience Centered Messages</b>	
Assignment 2.1 Writing for content readability - as assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 2.2 One message – two audiences - instructions posted to discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 2.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 3</b>	
<b>Writing with Clarity</b>	
Assignment 3 .1 Writing an informational and routine inquiry assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 3.2 Clarity, readability & design - instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 3.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 4</b>	
<b>Tone &amp; Revision</b>	
Assignment 4 .1 Active voice exercise – as assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 4.2 Using appropriate tone and word choice – instructions in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 4.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 5</b>	
<b>Writing Persuasively &amp; Knowing Your Audience</b>	
Assignment 5.1 Structuring a persuasive message – as assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 5.2 Incorporating credibility – instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 5.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 6</b>	
<b>Communicating Bad News</b>	
Assignment 6.1 PowerPoint presentation – as assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 6.2 Framing bad news constructively – instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 6.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 7</b>	
<b>Communicating Across Cultures</b>	
Assignment 7.1 Cross Cultural Communication – as assigned by instructor	10 points

Assignment 7.2 Lost in Translation – instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 7.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 8 Crisis Communication</b>	
Assignment 8.1 Communicating during a crisis – as assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 8.2 Designing a crisis response – instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 8.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 9 Proposals &amp; Information Reports</b>	
Assignment 9.1 Proposal – as assigned by instructor	10 points
Assignment 9.2 Informational report – instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 9.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
<b>Week 10 Competence-specific Essays</b>	
Assignment 10.1 TBA	10 points
Assignment 10.2 Mini-Self Assessment – instructions posted in discussion forum	10 points
Assignment 10.3 (Small Groups)	10 points
Readings: As assigned	
H2X – Competence Essay	P/F
H3X – Competence Essay	P/F
FX – Competence Essay	P/F
Total Points Possible	300 points

## Grading Policies and Practices

To complete the course, you must complete each of the assignments as described in the course and submit them to your instructor by the assigned deadline. In addition, you must participate in the course discussion forum by responding to all instructor requests and by interacting with fellow classmates as necessary.

Points are deducted for late 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.

## 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 and evaluated according to the posted online discussion grading rubric.

## General Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments

All writing assignments are expected to conform to basic college-level standards of mechanics and presentation.

Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are free.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email.

Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. To schedule a Face-to-Face, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing).

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## Online Discussion

### Discussion Boards

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

At the beginning of the quarter, your instructor will set up two discussion boards. These two 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
  - Each week will consist of three parts:
    - Written assignment submitted to instructor
    - All-class discussion assignment posted to board
    - Small group discussion and summaries posted to board
    - Readings

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. Your instructor will add additional discussion boards as you move through the modules.

## 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.

## 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.

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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://sr.depaul.edu/catalog/catalogfiles/Current/Undergraduate%20Student%20Handbook/index.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.

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### **For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussion will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact your instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week or two of the course). Please be sure to contact the following office for support and additional services:

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)  
#370, Student Center, LPC, 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.

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## Protection of Human Subjects

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

Demonstrating the acquisition of competencies 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 at SNL Online of the School for New Learning of DePaul University.

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