

ENGL 420 Business Writing

Instructor & Course Information

Course: English 420 Business Writing
 Location: Stanley Coulter G46
 Hours: Tues./Thurs. 10:30-11:45 am

Instructor: Don Unger
 Office: Heavilon 210
 Office Hours: Tues. 8:00-9:00 am, or by appointment
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Course Overview

In English 420 students learn the rhetorical principles and composing practices necessary for executing ethical, collaborative projects in professional contexts using contemporary technologies, including design software and social-media applications. Current research in rhetoric and professional writing influence this curriculum, and composing practices used by businesses, community organizations, and academic disciplines inform the assignments. All sections of English 420 are offered in networked computer classrooms or exclusively online to ensure that students taking the course are prepared for the writing environments of the 21st-century workplace.

Required Texts (Online Book)

Porter, Sullivan, and Johnson-Eilola. *Professional Writing Online*, 3rd ed. Longman: 2008.

This textbook is only available online. You must purchase an access code for this text. An access code can be purchased at the university bookstore, or directly from Pearson education:
<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/pwo>

Course Projects & Activities

Project 1—Ubiquitous Computing, Commons-Based Peer Production, and Changes in Business

Readings for Project 1 serve two purposes: first, they introduce you to professional writing practices, and second, they address ongoing debates about the role technology plays in shaping professional contexts. These readings draw from two main sources, our textbook and a sample of readings taken from popular magazines, academic journals, and websites. These supplemental readings will be posted to the course Blackboard Learn site.

In addition to composing weekly reading responses and peer comments, each of you will conduct field, library, and web research in order to create a white paper. The white paper is a common report genre in the professional world. White papers are used in business, industrial, and governmental contexts to sum up the gist of what's known about a subject. Hence, the white paper is commonly referred to as a backgrounder. Your white paper will examine how technological innovations impact professional writing in your field of study. Such research might involve interview, survey, or observational data as well as reviewing existing research in your field.

(Individual; 100 points; 25% of course grade.)

Project 2—Social Entrepreneurship, Gift Economies, and Business Infrastructure as Festival

For Project 2 we will partner with Purdue's Cancer, Culture, and Community organization (CCC). Each fall the CCC holds a colloquium focused on the human response to cancer as expressed through literature and the arts. These colloquia feature nationally renowned writers, entertainers, artists, or athletes and provides a venue for interactions with Purdue students and faculty as well as members of the Greater Lafayette Community. The 2013 colloquium features a guest speaker from the V

Foundation (<https://www.jimmyv.org/>). You will work in production teams to develop print and online advertising for the fall 2013 events. This project culminates in group presentations where each production team presents their work to the class and a panel of judges/clients from the Professional Writing program and the CCC.

(Collaborative; 100 points; 25% of course grade.)

Project 3—Writing Ethos: Professional Portfolios/Professional Avatars

Step 1 of this project asks you to learn about and use various web-based resources for job seekers and to select one job or internship to pursue in this project. Steps 2-4 ask you to prepare a self-assessment memo, the all-important "Cover Letter," and a resume specifically designed for the job or internship you selected in Step 1. Finally, in step 5, you will participate in a mock interview conducted by your peers. In the process of completing each step, you will work closely with your peers and your instructor to shape your writing so that it represents you and your experience fully and effectively given the rhetorical situation.

(Individual; 100 points; 25% of course grade.)

Participation

This portion of your grade will be based on:

- the quality and frequency of your reading responses and comments.
- the degree to which your face-to-face/in class comments offer insightful feedback and suggestions to your colleagues.
- the degree to which your online and face-to-face comments engage with the course content.
- turning all coursework in completed and on time.

Assigned readings should be completed before class on Tuesday. All students are expected to be prepared for class sessions with comments and questions related to the reading. Being unprepared will negatively affect participation grades. In fact, students commonly lose more points from their participation grade for the course than for individual projects.

Reading Responses

Although we will have multiple readings each week, you are responsible for writing **one 150-word discussion post** as a reading response. There are a few common tactics for composing these reading responses: (1) your post might synthesize the readings by comparing and contrasting their contents, (2) your post might address relevant personal experiences that extend or complicate concepts raised by the readings, and (3) your post might offer an example that illustrates a concept from the reading and discuss this example. Again, reading responses are due before class on Tuesdays. Late responses are unacceptable and do not count toward your participation grade. You must post a reading response each week for a total of **14 reading responses** over the course of the semester (weeks 2-9 and 11-16).

Comments and Replies

In addition to your weekly blog post, you are required to write a total of **two comments** to colleagues' posts each week (for a total of **28 comments** over the course of the semester). All comments and replies to another's blog post should follow effective rhetorical strategies for networking with others on the web:

- Keep discussion alive and relevant.
- No trolling or flaming.
- Refrain from the "I agree" posts. They will not count toward your participation grade.

- Think of your comments and replies as part of a lively class discussion in which everyone participates.
- Comments are due before class on the following Tuesday.

(Individual; 100 points; 25% of course grade.)

Grading

Project 1—White Paper (individual)	100 points
Project 2—Advertising Project (collaborative)	100 points
Project 3—Professional Portfolio (individual)	100 points
Participation	100 points
Total	400 points

The three major projects in the course will be comprised of several components, each of which will be worth a portion of your final grade. For the two collaborative projects, students will complete the required Collaborative Evaluation Form.

All major assignments will be graded on the standard plus-minus letter-grade scale:

A=94-100, A-=93-90, B+=89-87, B=86-84, B-=83-80, C+=79-77, C=76-74, C-=73-70, D+=69-67, D=66-64, D-=63-60, F=59 or below.

Students **must** participate in all of the three major projects and complete a majority of the required posting assignments in order to pass this class. Students with questions about final grades should review university policies regarding grade appeals, which are outlined by the Dean of Students:

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/gradeappeal.pdf>. Or, university regulations here:

http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu_conduct/stu_regulations.html.

Other Course Requirements & Expectations

Technology Requirements

In order to participate fully in the course, you should already be able to use the technology platform and applications listed below.

- Mac OS X or Windows XP, Vista, Windows 7
- Microsoft Office for the PC or Mac (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) or Apple counterparts (Pages, Keynote, Numbers)
- Web Browser (e.g., Firefox, Safari, or Internet Explorer 8)
- Email Program (e.g., Purdue Webmail, Thunderbird, Gmail, etc.)
- Adobe Acrobat and Reader (for PDF documents, collaborative review)

Technology Responsibilities

Familiarity with certain technologies is crucial for participation and success in the course. If you need any assistance now or at any point during the semester, please do not hesitate to ask.

During the semester, you'll need regular access to the Internet and email. Because the course Blackboard Learn site is the main locus of the class community, you are responsible for reading and keeping current with all content posted there, including what has been submitted by both the instructor and your fellow students. You'll be responsible for configuring your system to access course materials, to read course email and participate in online discussions, and to submit your work. Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to demonstrate that you can meet these responsibilities:

- Becoming proficient sending and receiving email attachments, resolving file compatibility

issues, and following professional email decorum.

- Becoming proficient participating in the class Blackboard Learn space.
- Becoming more proficient with unfamiliar composing technologies and applications, including various web-based, desktop publishing, and graphic design applications.
- Maintaining back-up copies of all assignments via your home directory, portable storage devices (e.g., USB drives) or various cloud storage spaces (e.g., DropBox).

If at any time you have problems accessing the Internet from home, you'll need to find a public lab or connection point. Problems with computers will not be an excuse for falling behind or failing to complete required assignments. If your Internet service goes down, find another connection point. If your computer breaks, use another one. In other words, find a way to complete the assignments on time. Because computer problems are a fact of life, always work to complete your assignments early and make frequent backups to multiple storage devices.

Collaborative Work

Teamwork is a required component of the course. You and your production team members are responsible for updating one another and me about assignment development and progress. In addition, you also are responsible for negotiating all aspects of your work together, including planning, drafting, revising, file managing, and delegating assignments. When a collaborative project is assigned, you will receive explicit guidelines for successful collaboration. Individual group members will complete Team Evaluation Forms.

Attendance

Attendance is required at all scheduled face-to-face and online meetings. Because you will be working in production teams for part of the semester, you also will be required to attend any scheduled out-of-class meetings with your team in order to complete course assignments. **More than four absences from regular class meetings will result in your current project grade being lowered by a letter (e.g., from a "B" to a "C").** Excused absences may be granted for religious holidays or university-sponsored events, provided you make a written request to me no less than two weeks in advance and that you complete any required work before the due date. Being excessively or regularly late for class or team meetings, both face-to-face and online, can also be counted as an absence. Do not send or bring me Doctor's notes or notes from PUSH. If you require medical attention during class time, then contact the Office of the Dean of Students. They will contact your instructors for you.

Academic Integrity

Purdue students and their instructors are expected to adhere to guidelines set forth by the Dean of Students in "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students," which students are encouraged to read here: <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>

The preamble of this guide states the following: "Purdue University values intellectual integrity and the highest standards of academic conduct. To be prepared to meet societal needs as leaders and role models, students must be educated in an ethical learning environment that promotes a high standard of honor in scholastic work. Academic dishonesty undermines institutional integrity and threatens the academic fabric of Purdue University. Dishonesty is not an acceptable avenue to success. It diminishes the quality of a Purdue education, which is valued because of Purdue's high academic standards."

Academic dishonesty is defined as follows: "Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are

examples of dishonesty." [University Regulations, Part V, Section III, B, 2, a] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]

If you have any questions about this policy, please ask.

In Case of a Campus Emergency

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. You can acquire updated information from the course website, by emailing me, or by contacting me through the English Department at 765-494-3740.

Late Work

Missed class assignments *cannot* be made up. If a serious and unavoidable problem arises, however, you should contact me in writing prior to the deadline to determine whether or not an extension for that work will or will not be granted.

General Calendar		
Themes		Important Dates
Project 1	Week 1—1.8 & 1.10	Project intro Thursday, January 10
	Week 2—1.15 & 1.17	
Ubiquitous Computing, Commons-Based Peer Production, and Changes in Business	Week 3—1.22 & 1.24	Adobe InDesign Tutorial
	Week 4—1.29 & 1.31	
	Week 5—2.5 & 2.7	White Papers Due Thursday, February 7
Project 2	Week 6—2.12 & 2.14	Project intro Tuesday, February 12
	Week 7—2.19 & 2.21	Adobe Photoshop Tutorial
	Week 8—2.26 & 2.28	
	Week 9—3.5	No class on Thursday, March 7
	Week 10—3.12 & 3.14	Spring Break
	Week 11—3.19 & 3.22	Group presentations Project 2 Due Thursday, March 22
Project 3	Week 12—3.26 & 3.28	Project Intro Tuesday, March 26
	Week 13—4.2 & 4.4	
Writing Ethos: Professional Portfolios/ Professional Avatars	Week 14—4.9 & 4.11	
	Week 15—4.16 & 4.18	
	Week 16—4.23 & 4.25	Mock Interviews
	Finals Week	Professional Portfolios Due Monday, April 29