

# Guidelines for Courses in Professional, Technical and Business Writing

## Guidelines for English 3307

ENGL3307 Professional and Technical Writing 3 credits. An intensive course covering skills and conventions pertinent to professional writing. Applications in disciplines or subjects of interest to the individual student. Especially appropriate for science, engineering, business, and pre-professional majors. Prerequisite: English 1102 and completion of 45 credits.

English 3307 prepares students for a variety of professional writing contexts and forms of technical discourse. This junior-level course also offers a specialized analysis of stylistic elements common in professional writing and instruction in advanced writing skills. Major forms of reports are discussed and assigned. Typically, students prepare realistic documents, involving audience and purpose analysis, document design (including graphic aids), and research development.

Skills that students are expected to bring to English 3307:

- Basic skills in rhetoric outlined in the English 1101 Guidelines, including choosing and focusing a subject, organizing multi-paragraph papers, shaping effective paragraph structures, providing readers the information they need to understand a new subject.
- Basic understanding of the grammar of English sentences as outlined in the English 1101 Guidelines, including the ability to compose grammatically correct sentences in a variety of patterns used in written English.
- Mastery of the conventions of the writing system of standard edited English, including conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and manuscript form.
- Ability to choose and to present relevant evidence and arguments; see the English 1102 Guidelines.
- Mastery of basic library research techniques as presented in English 1102.
- Understanding what constitutes plagiarism and students' responsibility for doing their own work.

Aims of English 3307:

- Emphasize professional standards of correctness, grammar, diction, paragraph structure, and conventions of written English.
- Provide students with an awareness of audience analysis and specific ways to restructure documents according to levels of readers, including providing for multiple levels of readers in one document. This involves adjusting to different stylistic levels of writing.
- Provide students with skills to analyze purpose and objectives in writing. This entails writing documents that follow fixed formats for discipline-specific audiences (such as NIH requests for

proposals) and tailored formats for individual readers (such as progress reports), as well as document formats for standard reports (such as instruction manuals and literature reviews).

- Provide some analysis of common stylistic traits inherent to various academic disciplines (for example, when to use the passive verb, particularly in laboratory reports). Enhance and refine students' prose styles.
- Introduce essential research skills in major fields, generally in library research and specifically in individual disciplines. Enhance skills already acquired in English 1102.
- Use and develop a consistent form of documentation of sources found in specific disciplines. This may allow students to demonstrate a knowledge of publishing conventions (journal requirements, for example) in their respective fields, and may allow students to write a publishable document during the course.
- Create an environment where revision skills are emphasized.
- Possibly offer alternatives to individually written products, such as group writing situations. This could entail learning interpersonal skills necessary to working in groups, and may involve other oral communication projects, such as oral reports and mock job interviews.

#### Written work of English 3307:

- Students may expect to write the equivalent of at least 25 typed or word-processed pages.
- Individual instructors may prefer unacceptable work to be revised rather than graded.
- Instructors may lower the grade on late papers or they may refuse it as work for the course.
- Students are encouraged to think carefully about expectations for the course in terms of their own field or discipline, matching expected writing tasks in real-world contexts with writing assignments in the course itself.

#### Attendance and class participation:

- Students are required to attend class regularly. Missing more than six meetings of a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class, four meetings of a Tuesday-Thursday class, or two meetings of a once-a-week class may constitute grounds for failure. (Students who register late and miss classes as a result must assume that further absences may be possible only for illness or verifiable emergencies, with limits established at the discretion of the instructor.)
- Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in the discussions and writing exercises so essential to a course on written composition.
- Written work must be turned in on time. Instructors may lower the grade on any assignment turned in late, or they may decline to give credit for the assignment.
- Instructors should schedule at least one mandatory conference with each student. Students are also encouraged to confer with their instructors as need arises.
- Instructors are not expected to spend either class time or conference time on writing problems proper to earlier courses in the composition sequence.

## Use of the Student Success Center

While enrolled in English 3307, students are encouraged to seek extra help at the Academic Skills Center.

## English 3308 Guidelines (Revised December 2006)

ENGL3308 Business Communications 3 credits. An advanced course in business writing, emphasizing audience and rhetorical strategies. Primary focus on business writing competencies as defined in departmental guidelines, critical analysis and synthesis of information. Secondary focus on written communication integral to career search. Prerequisite: English 1102 and completion of 60 credits.

English 3308 should provide students with skills they need to write successfully in the workplace. The course will teach students the rhetorical skills and stylistic conventions of contemporary business writing contexts.

Skills that students are expected to bring to English 3308:

- Basic rhetorical skills outlined in the English 1101 and 1102 guidelines, including choosing and focusing on a subject, organizing multi-paragraph papers, shaping effective paragraphs, and providing readers the information they need to understand a new subject. Rhetorical skills that relate to audiences, taught in 1102, are expected as well.
- Sound understanding of the usage and grammar of written English as outlined in the English 1101 and 1102 guidelines, including the ability to compose grammatically correct sentences in a variety of patterns used in written English.
- Mastery of the conventions of standard edited English, including conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and manuscript form.
- Ability to choose and to present relevant evidence and arguments, particularly in academic writing from a number of disciplines, a key focus of English 1102.
- Mastery of basic library research techniques as presented in English 1102.
- Understanding what constitutes plagiarism and students' responsibility for doing their own work.

## College of Business Expectations of English 3308 (Adopted: December 13, 2006)

- To provide students with opportunities to demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving approaches used in business-related fields.
- To teach students the rhetorical strategies of written communications used in business disciplines and to apply those strategies in a business relevant context through writing email, letters, memos, reports and proposals. Relevant assignments include the case analyses, product evaluations, trade article analyses, and communicating the result of statistical analyses; and other writing assignments that involve the synthesis of information and evidence, analysis of financial data, and use of appropriate documentation style.
- To introduce students to visual rhetoric, particularly the use of structural elements such as headings and white space, as well as the use of appropriate visual aids within a written text, including exhibits and other kinds of visual aids.
- To address specific writing needs in the job search process. This includes conducting research on available positions and corporate cultures, and writing resumes, cover/application letters and interview follow-up letters as well as completing online applications.

In meeting these expectations, English 3308 instructors do the following:

- Review the conventions of standard edited English and enhance students' abilities to write standard edited English free from errors that would prove a distraction in professional writing contexts.
- Teach students to analyze the objectives of different documents from a variety of rhetorical contexts, specifically, relative to a given objective or purpose, to address the following:
  - ◆ *\*Audience* - Who will read this document? What do they need, what do they expect, and what needs/expectations do I actually need to fulfill?
  - ◆ *\*Context* - What are the political and logistical exigencies surrounding this document?
  - ◆ *\*Ethical constraints* - What is my ethical line? Will I support actions I disapprove of? Will I hide or misrepresent facts instead of concerning myself with what is right? Will I think or act beyond the limits given to me, if those limits demand my unethical behavior?
- Introduce and reinforce the business writing values of purposeful style and structure, appropriateness to audience, coherence, clarity, conciseness and appropriate grammatical conventions as reflected in the College of Business writing rubric.

### Written Work:

English 3308 is a business writing course, and as such students can expect to produce and receive feedback on a significant number of written assignments totaling a minimum of 10,000 words of finished prose employing business appropriate technology and media. Some writing should also take place in-class to simulate the need for quick communication turnaround often encountered in business settings.

COB Writing Rubric  
Spring 2006

Written Component		Performance Level			
Key ↓	Feedback →	L3	L2	L1	0
1	Purposeful Style and Structure				
2	Appropriate to Audience				
3	Coherence				
4	Clarity				
5	Conciseness				
6	Appropriate Conventions				

Overall performance level score \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Performance Levels Defined

1. Create a purposeful style and structure (introduction, development, conclusion, focused by major points)

L0: No apparent structure

L1: Presents a message with a recognizable introduction, development and conclusion

L2: Presents message while indicating introduction, development and conclusion by effective use of headings and sub-headings.

L3: Effective visual presentation of message through appropriate use of headings, subheadings, bullets, inserts and other structural elements.

2. Appropriateness to intended audience

L0: Little or no evidence of awareness of intended audience

L1: Shows some ability to use examples and/or evidence meaningful to audience

L2: Supports most generalizations with examples and/or evidence meaningful to audience

L3: Uses development of appropriate length and of sufficient interest to convince audience

3. Coherence

L0: Unclear purpose/focus

L1: Presents an ordered thought process consisting of logically related ideas

L2: Establishes and maintains a focus on a clear purpose, providing transitions to clarify relationships between most points of development

L3: Without digression from the focus of the work, consistently articulates relationships between the points of development

4. Clarity

L0: Uses language that does not show awareness of appropriate word choice/style/tone

L1: Uses language that shows some awareness of appropriate word choice/style/tone

L2: Uses language that shows general awareness of appropriate word choice/style/tone

L3: Uses language that reflects a refined awareness of appropriate word choice/style/tone

5. Conciseness

L0: Contains significant unnecessary detail/disgressions/wordiness

L1: Generally avoids disgressions

L2: Avoids disgressions and includes only relevant detail and content

L3: Writing contains no unnecessary elements (words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs)

6. Appropriate conventions (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, sentence structure)

L0: Little or inconsistent use of appropriate conventions

L1: Generally follows appropriate conventions

L2: Consistently follows appropriate conventions

L3: Shows a refined sense of appropriate conventions

Revised: December 2006

