Overview

This course is designed to help you develop the knowledge and skills needed to research and write grant proposals. You will be introduced to the theory, lore, and practices of grant writing, and will work directly with a local non-profit organization to produce an actual grant proposal, as well as other proposal-related documents, for that organization. (The required Service Learning component is a critical aspect of the course.) In addition to examining a variety of print and web-based resources, you will also encounter several local experts in grant writing and philanthropy as they share their experience and knowledge.

This course will focus on grant proposals produced by non-profit organizations, with a focus on basic foundation proposals, although the broader landscape of proposal writing includes proposals for academic research and for business. Proposal writing skills are easily transferred across disciplinary boundaries.

Please read this syllabus carefully. If you have any questions or need further elaboration, please email me or I can speak or meet with you individually to discuss your concerns. If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

Course Goals

The aim of English 443: Grant Writing is to help you develop a reader-centered approach to researching and producing grant proposals and related documents, using your Service Learning project – the experience of working with and writing for a nonprofit organization – as the primary vehicle for your learning. More specifically, the course is designed to help develop your ability to

- Research and write about an nonprofit’s mission, programs, and activities;
- Research, analyze, and report on the range of funding sources available to an organization;
- Produce reader-centered grant proposals and related documents;
- Incorporate constructive comments from others to effectively revise draft documents; and
- Offer your colleagues helpful feedback on their writing.

Students who complete this course will be prepared to research and produce basic documents used in nonprofit fundraising, including print and online proposal narratives, cover letters and letters of intent, memos, and analytical reports.

Service Learning in Grant Writing 443

Throughout the semester, each student will work with a single community nonprofit organization, learning the process of grant writing by doing it, step-by-step.

You must propose a nonprofit agency of your own choosing as your Service Learning site. However, all site placements must be approved in advance by the instructor. You must propose three potential sites via email to me BEFORE making any contact with the agency. If you cannot locate a suitable placement, I will assist you. An appropriate site placement is required by the end of the third week of classes. Please refer to “Choosing and Proposing a Service Learning Site for Grant Writing” for more information.
IMPORTANT: Please note that you WILL NOT sign up for Service Learning through the online process that other courses use (the ISL website). All Service Learning (SL) placements for this course must be coordinated by or through the instructor.

Because this is a project-based service learning course, all activities related to the documents you produce for your site (these are also your course assignments) are considered part of your SL hours requirement. Therefore, you can expect to invest more than the typical total of 12-15 hours per semester encountered in many service learning courses. Much of your work – mostly writing and research – can be conducted off-site and virtually through email and telephone. Naturally, though, the more time you actually spend visiting your site, the more knowledgeable you’ll be, and the better your final proposal.

BE PREPARED: Students who work full-time are strongly advised to discuss in advance with employers these course expectations for service learning. Nonprofit staff members are notoriously overworked and difficult to contact. Expect to invest time in ongoing communication – email and phone calls - with your site.

WHAT TO EXPECT: You will be working on a series of writing tasks during the semester. In each case, I will provide you with guidelines, concepts, and strategies for accomplishing the task and you will receive feedback on the writing you produce, including peer review.

IMPORTANT: This course also includes a required customized orientation to the regional Funding Information Center (FIC) hosted by Marquette University, which provides information about and access to a variety of subscription-only databases as well as print resources for philanthropy, fundraising, and the nonprofit sector. You must experience this orientation before beginning your research. The tour will be scheduled for an evening or Saturday. If you do not live in the Milwaukee area, you will need to arrange to visit the nearest Foundation Center coordinating collection in order to satisfy this requirement.

About the Instructor
I’ve taught this course at UWM since 2005, in multiple formats: face-to-face, fully online, and blended. In addition, I teach courses in business writing, technical writing, and writing for nonprofits. I am also a practicing freelance grant writer with experience and success in writing foundation, corporate, state, and federal grants. More than a dozen past students have found employment in the field of nonprofit development and fundraising, and some have written proposals in this course that were eventually funded. Most past students will tell you this is a challenging course; however, those who complete it usually feel that taking it was rewarding, even if they don’t become grant writers. You’ll learn practical skills from a real grant writer, you’ll better understand the nonprofit sector and the unique genre of grant writing, and you’ll have broader potential career options in professional and technical writing.

Textbooks and Other Materials

Required for all students – available at UWM Bookstore and online retailers
•  *Grant Seeking in an Electronic Age*, by Victoria M. Mikelonis, Signe T. Betsinger, and Constance Kampf
  - Approximate retail price: $86.60 (new) from Pearson
•  *The Business Writer’s Handbook, 10th Ed.*, by Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu
  - Approximate retail price: $43.95 (new) from Bedford St. Martin’s
• *Grant Writing Made Simple: 87 Tips for Great Grants*, by Sally Stanton and Laurie Risch
  ▪ Retail price: $16.00 (new) from Amazon
• Readings on class D2L website and other handouts/electronic documents as assigned

**Topics Covered in this Class**
• Philanthropy and the nonprofit sector
• Strategic planning and audience analysis
• The grant-seeking process
• Researching and analyzing print and online resources
• Identifying and matching funding sponsors
• Rhetorical strategies for grant writing
• Identifying needs and writing need statements
• Common Applications/application formats
• Requests for Proposals (RFP)
• Collaborative grant writing
• Letters of intent and pre-proposals
• Designing and writing goals, objectives, and outcome statements (evaluation)
• Writing proposal narratives
• Managing the grant writing process
• Appendices
• Cover letters
• Executive summaries and abstracts

**Technologies Used in this Course**
All course materials, other than required textbooks, are available on our D2L course website. When we are not meeting in the classroom, our course D2L site and e-mail will constitute our primary modes of communication. Writing assignments must be submitted electronically using D2L. E-mailed assignments are not accepted.

Reviewed or graded documents maybe returned to you either in Word format or in PDF.

In order to participate fully in the course, you will need access to the following technologies:

• Microsoft Word/Office 2010 or later (for basic word processing, document design)
  ▪ Please note, documents must be submitted in MS Word or compatible format. PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR DOCUMENTS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH WORD BEFORE SUBMITTING THEM. If I can’t open it, I can’t grade it.
• Microsoft PowerPoint
• Microsoft Excel
• Web browser and Internet connection (for research and for accessing D2L site)
• Adobe Acrobat Reader (download latest version free at www.adobe.com)
Writing Projects, Class Activities, and Grading

Your final grade will be derived from the writing you produce during the semester and from your participation in classroom and online activities, including discussions and peer reviews, according to the percentages noted below. There will be no mid-term or final exam, so how you approach these projects and how actively you participate in online and group discussion and writing activities will determine your grade for the course. Grading will be based on the following scale: 100% - 93% = A; 92 - 90% = A-; 89 - 88% = B+; 87 - 83% = B; 82 - 80% = B-; 79 - 78% = C+; 77 - 73 = C; 72 - 70% = C-; 69 - 68% = D+; 67 - 63% = D; 62 - 60% = D-; below 60% = F

Undergraduate Student Assignments
Letter of Agreement – 10%
Organizational Profile – 10%
Need Statement – 10%
Funding Source Report on relevant funding sources – 10%
Grant Proposal (inclusive of proposal application form, proposal narrative, and cover letter) – 30%
Discussions and Class Activities – 30%

These activities include participating actively in online discussions and collaborative projects, and providing useful feedback to classmates on their written work. Poor participation and attendance will negatively affect your grade!

Graduate Student Assignments
Graduate students must take the same requirements as listed above for undergraduates. In addition, graduate students are expected to take a leadership role in class and online discussions (first to post, multiple responses to other students, including outside references and links to more information in your posts, etc.) and you will complete a separate research/writing project as part of your participation grade.

Important Information for All Students

Regular participation in online activities is a requirement of this class. Research shows that learners who participate actively learn more, are more satisfied with their experience and receive vital, helpful feedback to improve their writing and to develop their skills in grant seeking. The English Department reserves the right to administratively drop students who have not attended/participated online during the first week of classes.

You must complete all the assigned writing work to pass the course. You will be given a schedule indicating when each assignment is due and will be expected to submit it on time through D2L. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your work, to allow for unforeseen computer and Internet problems. If you do experience problems, e-mail me immediately. I will grant extensions only under extreme circumstances, and only if you contact me before the due date. Even if you are granted an extension, 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day that it is late. In the world of grant writing, there is no such thing as “late.” You either meet the grantor’s deadline, or you don’t. If you don’t, your organization will not receive funding. Submit all required assignments on time, even if incomplete.

As would be expected in a professional setting, all written work must be carefully proofread and spell-checked before it is submitted. If you submit work that contains numerous errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling, it will be returned to you for corrections before it is graded.

Present yourself as a professional when communicating with your nonprofit service learning placement. Always notify your site supervisor if you expect to be late or absent from a planned meeting or event. Honor your commitment as best you can, even when others don’t honor theirs. Produce your best quality work. Ask questions to ensure you truly understand what you need to know to be effective. Notify me immediately if you encounter problems, so we can work through them together. Expect a positive learning experience!
Make use of the many resources available for grant writers. Increasingly, these can be found on the Internet. However, as with all Internet resources, be discriminating and critical. Traditional print sources remain the most authoritative. Remember, grant writing is an art. You will learn more by doing it than just by reading about it. The bibliography below may assist you with areas not covered in this class.

Selected Bibliography

- *Perfect Phrases for Writing Grant Proposals*, Beverly Browning (McGraw-Hill Professional, 2007)