Welcome to English 205: Business Writing

You may be taking this course because it is required, but I think you will find, as most students do, that this business writing course is one of the most practical and immediately useful courses you will take in college. Business writing – writing for the workplace - is quite different from the expository writing you were taught in high school and college composition courses. While essays and research papers aim to demonstrate your knowledge, impress your professors, or voice your opinion, business writing is all about the reader, your audience, and what you want them to know, do, think, or believe. It's all about, as our textbook authors state, “Getting business done!” But many skills you have practiced before will also be very valuable in the workplace, such as basic grammar and punctuation, as well as research and persuasive writing skills.

In the marketplace is where writing gets real – the place where your writing can literally mean the difference between a profit and a loss, an award and a lawsuit, or even life and death. Excellent writing skills make you competitive for jobs and promotions. This course is your chance to develop and hone these vital skills.

Required Materials

2. Readings, videos, and instructional handouts posted on CANVAS.
3. A dictionary and thesaurus of your choice
4. A positive attitude!

YOU DO NOT NEED A PRINTED BOOK. This text is an E-book accessed from within MindTap, our required online course homework web app from Cengage. You will register for/purchase MindTap at www.cengage.com. Detailed information is provided on our Canvas course site to help you get registered with Cengage and MindTap.

Please use ONLY your UWM email when registering.

The Cengage Unlimited option grants you access to multiple Cengage products for $119.00 (per semester). So if you are already using a Cengage product in another course, that’s the least expensive option. Otherwise, our MindTap course is $99.00, which includes the digital textbook, quizzes, graded assignments, and other resources.

If you are unable to pay for MindTap immediately, don’t worry. Cengage allows a two-week free trial period. Just choose the “Continue to Course” option in the registration dialog on Cengage. If you can’t pay by the end of the trial period due to financial aid delays or financial difficulties, please contact me right away so that we can find a solution. If you have questions about the textbook, let me know soon as possible.

The physical textbook will also be available on reserve through the Golda Meir Library, BUT you still MUST purchase MindTap to complete the required weekly homework assignments.
Business Writing Course Goals

English 205 aims to prepare you to be an effective workplace communicator, which is a key factor in one’s professional success, given the high proportion of interactions and decisions that require written communication in business environments. The course helps you to develop knowledge and skills needed to write successfully and to understand and apply the rhetorical principles guiding and underlying workplace communication practices. While sometimes hypothetical, most assignments and assessments will be based upon real-world situations and cases. Ultimately, they all are intended to prepare you to write for audiences and purposes in virtually any business context.

During the semester, this course will introduce you to the processes and products of, as well as some basic issues, strategies, and genres of, business writing, including

- Analyzing contexts, purposes, and audiences to determine appropriate writing choices
- Understanding writing as a continuum of researching, drafting, reviewing, revising, and editing.
- Developing an effective professional tone and style
- Writing various business documents, such as emails, memos, proposals, letters, and reports
- Designing documents and incorporating appropriate visual elements for effective communication
- Defining, analyzing, and attempting to resolve workplace writing problems
- Addressing social issues related to writing, such as ethics, politics, gender, and culture

Required Digital/Electronic Literacy

- Ability to open, edit, save, and store files in common word processing formats.
- **Ability to SAVE AS all MAC Office and Open Office documents in** Microsoft® Word 97-2003 (.doc), 2010-2016 (.docx) or Rich Text format (.rtf), or similar compatible format **before uploading.** Please do not submit in Open Office (.odt or .pages) format.
- Create, send, receive, and read email, including attachments. **You are required to check your UWM Office 365/Outlook email regularly.**
- Use CANVAS to read assignments and submit your work online.
- Use the CANVAS “Guides” (help files) as needed.

**IF YOU NEED HELP WITH CANVAS, PLEASE follow this protocol:**

1. First, **Use the Canvas Help Icon.** This is available in the left-hand navigation – find the circle with the question mark and the word Help beneath it. Click the icon to open a menu with multiple options for getting help. Options include Live Chat with Canvas, email, phone, community forum, ask your instructor a question, and Canvas Guides (interactive help files). **Keep in mind that the company providing Canvas to the UW campuses is called Instructure, so sometimes you will see that term used instead of or with Canvas.** The following link will take you to a Canvas Guide that explains these options in detail. [https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328)

2. If that doesn’t resolve your issue, **Post your question** (if it isn’t confidential/grade-related) to the Canvas Help Discussion in our Canvas course site. I and other students will be reading these posts and anyone can respond. It’s really best to post here rather than use the “ask your instructor a question” because with 100 students in 3 courses, it is very time-consuming to respond to individual messages on the same question, and so a response to you may be delayed. One post in the Canvas Help Discussion on our course site can take care of it quickly for all concerned.
3. If your question is personal/confidential and hasn’t been answered by trying #1 or #2, please email me directly from your UWM O365 account or message me through Canvas Inbox.

4. If all else fails, you can call UWM’s Helpdesk. However, they are mostly focused on responding to D2L inquiries and other campus technical issues, and may not be as good a resource as Instructure/Canvas. Reach the UWM Helpdesk at (414) 229-4040 or toll-free (877) 381-3459, or online visit gettechhelp.uwm.edu

**Required Materials**

**MindTap Digital Learning Tool**

When you purchase **MindTap, you will gain access to Business Communication: Process and Product, 9E, our course textbook**. MindTap provides an online homework system which automatically grades your work and gives you instant feedback on how well you are learning, understanding, and applying course concepts. It will help you understand where you need additional study, review, and practice to become a good business communicator.

By completing the **practice quizzes** and **graded chapter assignments** in MindTap, you’ll be learning about the **process** of business writing and how to accomplish it effectively, step by step. You’ll also be learning about the **products** of business writing – what constitutes excellent, effective business communication – letters, memos, emails, reports and more. Also, completing the **Grammar/Mechanics (G/M) practice quizzes** will help you review and improve basic grammar and mechanics skills. You will then be prepared to apply the concepts and techniques for business writing that you have learned to your formal assessments and informal writing assignments.

**MindTap assignments are always due Wednesday nights at 11:00 p.m.** Keeping up with the assigned reading and submitting these assignments is CRITICAL to your progress in this course – 60% of your grade.

**Sign up for a free account at Cengage using this link and log in during the first week of class to become familiar with MindTap and how it works.** A detailed schedule of chapter readings and MindTap assignments specifically for this course is available at the MindTap website. **You can take advantage of a 2-week grace period before being required to pay for MindTap.** Information on how to register for and purchase MindTap by Cengage is provided on our Canvas course site.

**Course Policies**

**Basic Expectations**

- **Complete all reading and writing assignments by their due dates.**
- MindTap Chapter Assignments are completed in MindTap, and are due on the date listed on the Weekly Schedule (see Assignments/Assessments section of this Syllabus). MindTap Video Activities are completed in MindTap and are due on the date listed on the Weekly Schedule.

- They are considered late thereafter; late assignments may be submitted up to four days late but will incur a 10% penalty in addition to the recorded grade.

- **Writing Assessments are due IN CANVAS on the date listed on the Weekly Schedule.** They are considered late thereafter. I will grant only one extension for one assessment. Please contact me prior to the due date.
• Participate actively, with respect for the ideas of others, the newness of the material to everyone in the class, and the need for patience, patience, patience with everyone and everything.
• Show respect also through practicing good online etiquette, also called “netiquette.”
• Take appropriate steps to avoid computer, printer, or media failures - you have many options:
  o Complete all work in advance of the due date for a security margin.
  o **Save your work frequently!!!**
  o BACKUP your work to your Office365 ONEDRIVE to prevent risk of hard drive or power failure.
  o You are **required** to make backup copies of your work on a flash drive or on the Web.

The **FREE** web app “Dropbox” ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)) will also store your work, update it when you revise it, and make it available to you anywhere, anytime, from any web browser. **Google Drive will also do much the same.**
  o Consider also making a hard copy (e.g., a paper copy) of your work before quitting, even if you are only working on an outline or rough draft. Hard drives can and DO crash at any moment!

**Prerequisites**
To enroll in English 205, you must have completed the English Proficiency Requirement and be of sophomore standing. You must also have earned a grade of “C” or better in English 102 (or an equivalent second-semester college composition course) or a score of 4 on the English Placement Test.

English 205 may not be taken credit/no credit.

Note: **You are required to promptly show evidence of having met the prerequisites** for the course (grade report, transcript, or test score form) if you enroll in the course after the initial registration period or if the records provided to your instructor by the Registrar’s Office are incomplete.

**Administrative Drop**
Students who are registered but who do not attend class (even online classes) during the first week of classes can be administratively dropped from this course.

If you lack a course prerequisite, you may be dropped from - or be required to drop - the class. **Drop the class as soon as you know you can’t remain in the class.** It is your responsibility to drop classes for which you don’t meet published prerequisites or that you do not plan to attend. Don’t wait for the English Department to drop you, as fees for dropped classes are based on the date you drop the class online via PAWS or the date your drop form is submitted to Enrollment Services, Mellencamp 274. (For more information, see “ Registration Policies,” Department of Enrollment Services, [http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/policies.cfm .](http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/policies.cfm))

**Disability Accommodations**
If you need accommodations to complete course requirements, **notify me during the first week of the semester — particularly if you work with an advisor at the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC). Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable.** Accommodations must be approved through the ARC, which is located in Mitchell Hall 112. Email: archelp@uwm.edu, phone: (414) 229-6287, web: [https://uwm.edu/arc/](https://uwm.edu/arc/)

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is cause for a failing grade on an assignment, failure in the course, and possible expulsion from the university. Academic integrity is vital to this course. Plagiarism means representing the work (wording, organization, ideas) of someone else as your own without careful and accurate acknowledgment. **Please be extremely careful to avoid the temptation of downloading material from electronic sources.** All material from electronic and print sources must be clearly and carefully documented. Students who engage in plagiarism are subject to the UW System Academic Misconduct Regulations as described in the guidelines of UW System Chapter 14 and UWM Faculty Document 1686. Those sanctions may include a failing grade for that assignment, a failing grade for the course, suspension, and/or expulsion from the university.
Please take this seriously! **Whenever you quote, paraphrase, or summarize another writer’s work, you must inform your readers of the source of those words or ideas.** If you have any concerns about plagiarizing and how to avoid it, please communicate with me about your concerns.

**Course Week and Due Dates/Times**

A course week covers Thursday through Wednesday. Example: Week 1 begins on Tuesday, January 22 at 12:00 A.M. and ends Wednesday, January 30 at 11:00 P.M. The due date and time for MindTap homework and writing assignments is the last day of a course week, **on Wednesdays by 11:00 p.m.**, unless otherwise stated. Please note this is not the same as many other online courses – it’s 11:00 p.m., NOT 11:59.

**Assignments and Grading**

**Grades**

Your grades will reflect an emphasis on the **written** elements of your work, **professionalism** in interactions with peers, and **satisfactory completion** of assignments and assessments. Professionalism includes leadership, attitude, communication, improvement, and intellectual honesty, all of which can lead to promotion and other successes; improperly managed, these elements can have negative effects on a career.

Grades will be calculated by averaging together separate grades in three areas:

1. Writing Assessments: Significant writing projects such as business memos, letters, and reports
2. Informal Writing: Discussions on CANVAS
3. MindTap homework: Weekly graded chapter assignments and video activities in MindTap

Grades for work completed in Canvas will be posted on Canvas. Your MindTap homework grades and feedback will always be immediately available from within the MindTap website, and will be synced to Canvas with 24-36 hours. Extra credit points will be added at the end of the semester. Refer to the table below summarizing the course assignments and assessments in each of the above areas.

You will have **weekly assignments** that require you to:

- read assigned chapters in your online textbook in MindTap
- complete online homework assignments in MindTap
- read articles and/or watch videos on our course CANVAS site
- prepare writings to post to discussion

In addition, each week may carry deadlines for all or portions of your formal and informal writing assignments. **Refer frequently to the Weekly Schedule document for readings, assignments, and other deadlines.**

Your MindTap chapter homework assignments, Canvas discussions, and formal written assessments are a serious obligation from which you can reap great rewards. Use them to practice thinking your way into and through problems.
Summary of Graded Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MindTap Assignments (60% of grade)</td>
<td>Chapter Assignments (14)</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 581 points</td>
<td>Video Activities (7)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assessments (30% of grade)</td>
<td>Writing Assessment 1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 200 points</td>
<td>Writing Assessment 2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions (10% of grade)</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 115 points</td>
<td>Discussions (5)</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades for this course will be based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 and up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussions/Informal Writing

Video Discussions
Several times during the semester, you will create a short video and upload it to MindTap, following the instructions provided. The video presentations will be graded using a simple rubric. This is your opportunity to gain experience writing informal presentations and then giving them. Only I will see your videos. Once you’ve completed the video, you will then present an informal written reflection of 200-400 words in the Video Activity discussion forum. Other students may comment on your reflections, which shows professionalism.

Please keep in mind that even an informal discussion in the workplace, even one that takes place online, is an opportunity to practice your business communication skills. This is not Facebook or Snapchat; although your colleagues are students, in this context please treat them as professional colleagues.

Informal does not mean sloppy, careless, inaccurate, or poorly proofread work. Informal writing occurs between peers and colleagues in the workplace; formal writing is typically designated for superiors, customers, vendors, and the public. In this class, online discussion postings and similar assignments are defined as classwork/informal writing - the conventions of standard English apply.
Informal writing assignments will be assessed as Acceptable or Unacceptable. Any one of the Unacceptable criteria below may disqualify an assignment from receiving credit. You will be notified by email if your work is Unacceptable; otherwise assume that completion = Acceptable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-task</td>
<td>Sloppy, careless, rushed, mechanical errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively engaged/cites readings/reflective/ responds to discussion prompt</td>
<td>Factually or logically inaccurate/unsupported/rambles/ does not respond to discussion prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive/meets word length requirements</td>
<td>Non-substantive/too short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On time</td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Formal Writing**

**Writing Assessments**

You will complete two formal Writing Assessments, each equivalent to an exam or paper, to demonstrate your ability to apply what you are learning. You will produce actual business-ready documents in response to a business scenario presented to you. In this way you will also gain practical experience in preparing business messages accurately and effectively.

Your grade will reflect the quality of writing and research, not the time and effort expended, and will be based on how you will be expected to write in a business/workplace context. I will assume the role of a manager, applying the following general distinctions between A work, B work, and so on, to your writing:

A = Manager or clients would be **impressed** and remember the work when a promotion or contract is discussed. An "A" is reserved for work that clearly fulfills the requirements or criteria for a given assignment. These assignments must be better than the work of most students in the course.

B = Manager or clients would be **satisfied** with the job but not especially impressed. A "B" indicates some lack or deficiency in one key area. For example, a "B" would be given to an assignment that overlooks a specified criterion, has a less than professional visual quality, or was not edited or proofread thoroughly.

C = Manager or clients would be **disappointed** and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing outsiders to see the work. A "C" indicates more substantial shortcomings in the areas discussed above.

D = Manager or clients would be **troubled** by the poor quality of the work. A "D" indicates that there are profound weaknesses in all areas of the document.

F = Manager or clients would start looking for someone to replace you.

How well you meet these criteria will depend on an assessment’s **form** or overall appearance, visual appeal, and adherence to the models provided; **content**, which includes grammar/punctuation, tone/style, and sentence/paragraph development and organization; and **rhetorical strategy**, adherence to the business writing principles discussed in the assigned readings, shown in the texts, and tested in MindTap.
Although I will give special attention to an assessment’s format, the content and strategy of the assignment will always play a larger part in determining the assessment grade. A business writing rubric giving varying weights to these factors will be used to determine your grade.

Extra Credit information, if any, will be provided via Canvas before mid-term.

INSTRUCTOR COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Generally I try to respond to online inquiries and emails within 24 hours of receipt. At busy times of the semester, it may be longer due to volume (I have 99+ other students). Replies may be delayed over weekends, holidays, and breaks: professors need downtime, too! Please be patient. If you don’t receive a reply within two days, inquire again. And remember, many questions can be answered by reviewing this document, and other students may be able to answer your question in the CANVAS forum.

REMINDES

Work commitments are generally not appropriate justifications for late or missed assignments, especially if this becomes a pattern. Occasionally, we all have life events that unexpectedly interfere with our commitments. Many students have families, full-time jobs, and other personal commitments and responsibilities. Your classmates are under the same time constraints you experience. Everyone is busy and overwhelmed. If you encounter problems, be proactive – contact me right away.

How well you manage your multiple priorities is the key. Log into Canvas daily to keep up with your commitments, but at a minimum every Thursday. Keep an eye on the calendar. Read the weekly announcements. Participate actively online. Balance your work, family, and school commitments carefully. Keep in mind what is most important to you. If you experience conflicts, look at what you can do differently. Please ask for help, no matter what your question is! You can email me or make an appointment to talk with me by phone or in person. UWM has great resources and we want you to succeed.

Remaining in this course after you have received and read the course policies means that you understand the policies and agree to abide by them for the duration of the course.

****THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT INSTRUCTOR DISCRETION.****
Syllabus Addendum:
Policy Links

1. **Students with disabilities.** [http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf)

2. **Religious observances.** Accommodations for absences due to religious observance are available on request. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm)

3. **Students called to active military duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are available on request. [http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm)

4. **Incomplete.** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf)

5. **Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment).** Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf)

6. **Academic misconduct.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. Students who are found to have submitted plagiarized materials in this course will receive a zero on the assignment in question, and may receive a failing grade for the course. [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)

7. **Complaint procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm)

8. **Grade appeal procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm)

9. **Other** The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm)

---

1 Supplement to UWM FACULTY DOCUMENT NO. 1895, October 21, 1993; Revised March 16, 2006; Revised January 24, 2008; Editorially Revised, 8/26/11.
Syllabus Addendum:

Credit Hours

The university has asked departments to break down for students how much time they will spend working on various aspects of their classes.

As the UW System assumes “that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

If this is a traditional, or face-to-face course, you will spend a minimum of
  • 37.5 hours in the classroom
  • 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
  • 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

If this is an online course, you will spend a minimum of
  • 37.5 hours reviewing instructional materials prepared by your instructor and placed online
  • 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
  • 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

If this is a hybrid course, you will spend a minimum of
  • 18.75 hours in the classroom
  • 18.75 hours reviewing instructional materials prepared by your instructor and placed online
  • 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
  • 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

Notes
  • The breakdown above is for a standard 15-week semester. In a 16-week semester, the numbers breakdown above changes as follows. Traditional: 40 hours in classroom, 80 for preparation, 24 for papers and exams; online: 40 hours of online instruction, 80 for preparation, 24 for papers and exams; hybrid: 20 hours in classroom, 20 for online instruction, 80 hours for preparation, 24 for papers and exams. Again, these are minimums.
  • UWM Credit Hour Policy, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Faculty Document No. 2838, can be found at https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/2838_Credit_Hour_Policy.pdf.
  • UWS ACPS 4, the University Of Wisconsin System Policy On Academic Year Definition And Assorted Derivatives, can be found at http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acps/acps4.pdf.