English 3010A & B: Writing for Business

80022 (B): 3:30-4:45 R (hybrid: online and classroom—WH 203)
80021 (A): 6:30-7:45 R (hybrid: online and classroom—WH 204)
fall 2013
3 semester hours

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Office hours: W 4:30-5:00, R 12:00-2:00, 4:45-5:30, and by
appointment

1. DESCRIPTION: Prerequisites: ENGL 1102 or 1102H. An
advanced writing course focusing on the elements of effective writing,
particularly as they apply to business and the professions.

2. OUTCOMES: Students who successfully complete Writing for
Business will

    i. demonstrate the ability to produce a variety of written business
communication, including letters, memos, fact sheets, instructions,
and proposals
    ii. demonstrate skills in five components of successful business
writing:

        a. style
        b. chunking (organization and design) of information
        c. audience appeal
        d. message
        e. purpose

    iii. manage all stages of the composing process
    iv. collaborate with other writers by reviewing classmates' writing
and/or working in small groups
    v. practice word processing skills
    vi. demonstrate their awareness of the importance ethical
communication in their lives at work, creating, for example,
persuasive but *truthful* employment documents.

3. ASSIGNMENTS: In order to produce the above outcomes, class members will complete three kinds of assignments, all to be posted to BlazeView discussion boards or dropboxes: (a) four memos requesting the instructor's permission to write on chosen topics, (b) eight rough drafts of assignments, and (c) eight final drafts of business writing documents. The following list presents the twelve assignments for topic memos and final drafts.

1. Letter of introduction (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v)
2. Edits of professional writing (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi)
3. Sales letter and fact sheet topic memo (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi)
4. Sales letter (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi)
5. Fact sheet (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi)
6. Resume (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi)
7. Application letter topic memo (i, ii, iii, iv, v)
8. Application letter (i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi)
9. Instructional topic memo (outcomes i, iii, v)
10. Instructional memo (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v)
11. Internal proposal topic memo (outcomes i, iii, v)
12. Internal proposal (outcomes i, ii, iii, iv, v)

Members will write topic memos to gain the instructor's permission to write on topics they have chosen and to do some preliminary thinking about their documents. Members who do the topic memos will have a much better chance of doing well on their final drafts, as the instructor will comment on their ideas. Similarly, instructor comments on rough drafts will help members to produce more successful finished documents: *do not ignore instructor comments on rough drafts.* Members cannot, however, expect the instructor to see or comment on all of the problems a rough draft might have—it isn't his job to edit a student's work. Students will need to take the comments that are made and apply them to the improvement of the rest of the draft.

4. TEXT AND MATERIALS: The required text is an advanced but brief introduction to business writing: *Successful Writing at Work: Concise Third Edition*, by Kolin (ISBN: 978-0-495-90194-5). In addition, class members will need good word processing abilities; the requisite knowledge and technology to access and navigate BlazeView (don't ask the instructor to help with technology issues: contact IT's [Help Desk] or visit the [Desire2Learn help page]); and, depending on their skills, a grammar handbook.

Class members should use BlazeView email rather than the instructor's

regular VSU email whenever possible.

5. LATE WORK: In a hybrid writing-intensive course, there cannot be late work. Class members will not be able to post rough drafts and topic memos after the deadline and so will lose those points. *The instructor will comment on late rough drafts and topic memos only orally in class.*

Final drafts not posted on time must be submitted by BlazeView email: no other means of submission will be accepted. Late final drafts will receive a two-point penalty, which is a one-grade deduction. The cut-off for emailing late final drafts is 10:00 PM on the Friday following the Thursday due date.

If members find themselves getting behind due to technical difficulties, time constraints, less than adequate writing skills, or personal issues, the instructor strongly encourages them to consider withdrawing before midterm, October 3.

6. GRADING: All final drafts of writing assignments will be given numerical grades that correspond roughly with letter grades. Each final draft will be scored analytically on five criteria, for which SCAMP is an acronym. In *ascending* order of importance, these five criteria are

- **Style:** clarity, correctness, appropriateness, and dignity of diction (word choice) and sentence structure, including punctuation and mechanical conventions.
- **Chunking of information:** paragraphing or segmenting of text and overall design of the document, including use of horizontal and vertical white space, heads, typographical options, font sizes and styles, margins, etc.
- **Audience appeal:** general effectiveness of a document for a reader, given the reader's knowledge, purposes, values, and so on. Audience appeal is affected by a document's performance on the other criteria; if the performance is poor in one area, the document's appeal will suffer.
- **Message:** clarity, relevance, and sufficiency of information or content.
- **Purpose:** clarity, unity, and worthiness of a document's goal.

Each of the eight final drafts of business writing documents is worth 10 points (two points for each criterion) for a total of 80 points.

A rough draft is not just *any* response to an assignment. Mostly successful, *bona fide* attempts to meet the criteria for an assignment will be commented on and given 1.5 points each for a total of twelve points.

Incomplete or only partially successful rough drafts will be given only partial credit (1.0 or .5). Rough drafts aren't worth much in terms of points, but they are essential steps to completing successful final drafts.

Topic memos written to the instructor to get his permission to proceed with a chosen subject will be commented on and given two points each for a total of eight points if they propose an acceptable topic. Memos posted on time but that do not propose acceptable topics will need to be done again and resubmitted via BlazeView email ASAP. They will still be eligible for the two points. Like rough drafts, topic memos may not be worth many points, but they must be completed so that members do the necessary planning for assignments and do not choose inappropriate topics.

There are thus 100 points possible in the course.

The following lists grade equivalents for numerical scores on the final drafts:

- 10/10 = A+
- 9/10 = A-
- 8/10 = B
- 7/10 = B-
- 6/10 = C
- 5/10 = C-
- 4/10 = D
- 3/10 = D-
- 2/10 = F

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

- 100=A+
- 90=A- (cut-off for *A*)
- 80=B
- 70=B- (cut-off for *B*)
- 60=C
- 50=C- (cut-off for *C*)
- 40=D (cut-off for *D*)
- below 40=F

All final drafts must be completed in order for a class member to earn a B in the course; in other words, if a member does not submit a final draft, a C is the highest grade s/he can receive.

Members should note that the grading is not done on a percentage basis:

do not divide a score by the total possible points (and disregard any percentages that Desire2Learn provides). It's a GPA-like system in which a certain number equals a certain grade. Final grades are determined by simply totaling points earned, not by averaging or anything else: if a member wants to know what his/her grade is at a given time, he/she must total up the number of points earned and then estimate the number of points he/she is likely to earn of the points remaining. Members who want an *A* are shooting for 90; members who need at least a *B* must accumulate 70 points.

The instructor will use the BlazeView grade book tool to score rough drafts, topic memos, and final drafts. Students can access their scores by clicking on Grades. Use BlazeView email to ask about missing grades.

7. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Class members are advised not to submit any work written by anyone other than themselves, especially work written for this instructor in past sections of Writing for Business taught by him! That constitutes plagiarism (and stupidity). Plagiarized docs will receive no points.

8. OVERVIEW OF ONLINE PROCEDURES: Here's a quick review of how the course will work on BlazeView:

- The instructor will create in module 1 a discussion board for general questions, comments, and messages about the course. If members have a question or problem that isn't personal, please post it to the general discussion board rather than mailing it to the instructor; other members may benefit from reading the instructor's reply. Keep an eye on this board throughout the term.
- Members will use dropboxes to post rough drafts, topic memos, and final drafts (by attachment). Attach documents in only Word or Rich Text Format with extensions .doc, .docx, or .rtf. Don't use Works (.wps extension) or anything else. Sometimes posting PDF files is a good idea if formatting of the document is crucial, as it sometimes is with fact sheets. You may also post questions or comments along with the attachment in the message text area. Rough drafts and topic memos are due at 11:59 AM (noon) on Mondays.
- Final drafts are due on Thursdays at 11:59 PM (midnight). Those submitted after that time must be sent via BlazeView email and will lose two points. The cut-off for emailing final drafts is 10:00 PM on Fridays. Final drafts will be scored with a five-part rubric (see section 6 on SCAMP), and members can check their scores

with the Grades tool.

- When you attach a document to a post, be sure to close the document first before creating the attachment. If you don't, you're in danger of posting the document's temporary file, which is unreadable. Also, be careful to give your docs clear, helpful names so that you don't post the wrong file.
- The instructor will comment on rough drafts individually or collectively—in a single file for the whole class. Topic memos will receive individual comments, as will final drafts. Whatever is posted will be commented on according to a first posted, first commented on basis and will be completed as quickly as is humanly possible. Obviously, members need to read the instructor's replies in order to know how best to proceed with an assignment. Members may post questions on the general discussion board or via email in response to instructor comments and he'll *try* to respond before the assignment is due.
- Assignments 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10 may be written individually or collaboratively in groups of up to three members. If members choose to do these assignments collaboratively, they should post only *one* rough draft, topic memo, and final draft and indicate in a message who worked on the assignment.

9. SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS: The following schedule and reading assignments are tentative; class members are expected to keep up with changes announced online or in class.

R Aug 15: **Start module 1:** <u>Lecture</u> on letter of introduction (individual only): read syllabus, online assignment 1, Kolin 95-104.

M Aug 19: Post rough draft of letter to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Aug 22: *Post final draft of letter of introduction by 11:59 PM (midnight).*
Start module 2: <u>Lecture</u> on edits of business writing (individual or collaborative): read online assignment 2, Kolin 41-51, 112-115, 376-394.

M Aug 26: Post rough draft of one edit to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Aug 29: <u>Review</u> rough drafts.

T Sep 3: Post rough draft of second edit to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Sep 5: *Post final drafts of edits by 11:59 PM (midnight).*
Start module 3: <u>Lecture</u> on sales letter and fact sheet (individual or collaborative): read online assignments 3, 4, and 5, Kolin 112-115, 197-

207.

M Sep 9: Post sales letter and fact sheet topic memo to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Sep 12: <u>Review</u> topic memos.

M Sep 16: Post rough draft of sales letter or fact sheet to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Sep 19: <u>Review</u> rough drafts.

M Sep 23: Post rough draft of sales letter or fact sheet to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Sep 26: *Post final drafts of letter and fact sheet by 11:59 PM (midnight).*
Start module 4: <u>Lecture</u> on resume (individual only): read online assignments 6, 7, and 8, Kolin 152-186.

M Sep 30: Post draft of resume to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Oct 03: **Midterm:** <u>Lecture</u> on application letter (individual only) and review rough resumes.

M Oct 07: Post application letter topic memo to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Oct 10: <u>Review</u> application letter topic memos.

M Oct 14: Post rough draft of application letter to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Oct 17: **No class—instructor at a conference.**

M Oct 21: Post second drafts of resume or application letter by 11:59 AM (noon)—optional.
R Oct 24: *Post final drafts of resume and application letter by 11:59 PM (midnight).*
Start module 5: <u>Lecture</u> on instructional memo (individual or collaborative): read online assignments 9 and 10, Kolin 249-275.

M Oct 28: Post instructional topic memo to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Oct 31: <u>Review</u> instructional topic memos.

M Nov 04: Post rough draft of instructional memo to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Nov 07: *Post final draft of instructional memo by 11:59 PM (midnight).*
Start module 6: <u>Lecture</u> on internal proposal (individual only): read

online assignments 11 and 12, Kolin 300-310.

M Nov 11: Post internal proposal topic memo to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Nov 14: <u>Review</u> internal proposal topic memos.

M Nov 18: Post rough draft of internal proposal to BlazeView by 11:59 AM (noon).
R Nov 21: <u>Review</u> rough drafts.

Thanksgiving break

R Dec 05: *Post final draft of internal proposal by 11:59 PM (midnight).*

10. ACCESS: Class members requiring course accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss this need with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Class members who require assistance but who are not registered with the Special Services Program should contact the <u>Access Office</u>.

11. ATTENDANCE: There are seven in-class meetings identified in the schedule (#9 above) as lectures: look for <u>Lecture</u>. The instructor expects all students to be in attendance during these meetings and will award bonus points to those students who have excellent attendance records for lectures. *Students who miss none of these seven classes will be awarded three points. Students who miss one of these seven will be awarded two points. Students who miss two of the seven will earn one bonus point.* There are no excused absences: the instructor is not penalizing anyone for missing class.

Class meetings marked by <u>Review</u> will be devoted to the instructor's responses to rough drafts or topic memos and question-and-answer sessions individually or as a whole class. Students are encouraged to attend and ask questions, but the instructor does not regard attendance at these meetings to be absolutely crucial.

12. STUDENT OPINION OF INSTRUCTION: At the end of the term, all students will be expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available on Banner. Students will receive an email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term). SOI responses are anonymous to instructors/administrators. Instructors will be able to view only a summary of all responses three days after they have submitted final grades. While instructors will not be able to view individual responses

or to access any of the data until after final grade submission, they will be able to see which students have or have not completed their SOIs, and student compliance may be considered in the determination of the final course grade. These compliance and non-compliance reports will not be available once instructors are able to access the results. *Class members who complete the SOI will be awarded one extra point*.