

ENC 5236: Advanced Business Writing for Accountants

Course Information

<u>Instructor:</u>	Aaron Beveridge
<u>Section Number:</u>	ENC 5236-2D82
<u>Classroom:</u>	Gerson Hall (GER) Room 0229
<u>Meeting Times:</u>	Tuesday and Thursday 9:35 to 11:30am
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<u>Office Location:</u>	Turlington Hall 4213
<u>Office Hours:</u>	Thursday 12:00 to 1:00pm

Course Description

In this course we will focus on the kinds of documents found in the working lives of accountants: emails, memos, letters, proposals, and reports. Even apparently simple writing tasks reflect your professional ability, and becoming a competent and savvy technical writer is important for furthering your career. In addition to learning how to write effectively within a variety of business genres, you will also develop an awareness of how to write best for a particular audience.

You will also learn to examine writing rhetorically in order to compose texts that respond appropriately and ethically to complex professional situations. Throughout the semester, we will discuss methods of revising prose for clarity, beginning with an examination of what it means to write in “plain” English, as the SEC, AICPA, and other bodies increasingly emphasize.

Required Texts

Lanham, Richard A. *Revising Business Prose*. 4th edition. Longman, 1999.

Securities and Exchange Commission. *A Plain English Handbook: How to Create Clear SEC Disclosure Documents*. Available at <http://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf>.

Additional readings will be provided through Sakai and Course Reserves throughout the semester as needed. You are responsible for retrieving and bringing them to class. These include:

Markel, “An Ethical Imperative for Technical Communicators.” *Professional Communication*.

McBride, “Toward a Sense of Ethics for Technical Communication.” *Orange: A Student Journal of Technical Communication*.

McIsaac & Sepe, "Improving the Writing of Accounting Students: A Cooperative Venture." *Journal of Accounting Education*.

Shipley, David, and Will Schwalbe. *Send: Why People Email so Badly and How to Do It Better*.

Stout & Wise, "Ethics, Gen Y Style." *California CPA*.

Course Assignments

Letters

The letters will address different audiences, contexts, and situations, and in composing them you will demonstrate revised and professionally-polished plain English. You will be given a prompt for each letter assignment. (2 total; 200 points)

E-mails and Memos

Like the letters, you will be given a prompt for each email and memo. A detailed prompt will specify the required length of each document. (3 total; 300 points)

Website Critique

You will complete an informal, internal report analyzing an accounting related website of your choice as if you are a member of that company/group. (100 points)

Group Report / Proposal

You will work in a group to write a formal report. Your group may select among a feasibility/recommendation report, investigative report with recommendations, or a sales proposal. You will compose this document for multiple professional audiences and it needs to be context specific. (150 points)

Group Presentation

Your group will give a 15 minute presentation. You will take on the role of a team of accountants working for a corporation. Your team will deliver an informational or persuasive report related to a specific issue in accounting. Your goal will be to either inform your audience on an important but little-understood topic, or identify a problem in company policy and propose a solution. (100 points)

Participation

Participation includes your in-class contributions during discussions, satisfactory completion of in-class assignments and activities, and appropriate conduct throughout the semester. Participation also includes any necessary preparations or drafts for workshop sessions in class. (150 points)

TOTAL: 1000 points

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Course Policies

Attendance

This is a participation-oriented, skills-based writing course, which means that you will build your skills incrementally and systematically in each class throughout the semester. Much of the learning that takes place is spontaneous and difficult to reproduce outside of class.

Consequently, if you miss more than two classes during the semester, your grade will drop considerably. Each absence beyond two will lower your overall course score total by 5 points. If you miss more than four classes, you will fail the course. Exempt from this policy are only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, for which you must provide appropriate documentation in advance of the absence. Absences for illness or family emergencies will count toward your two allowed absences. I advise that you save your absences for when you are truly ill.

Email Correspondence

This is a business writing course, so I expect all emails to be professional. Please include proper salutations and a signature that includes your name. If you use email to submit an assignment, please include your last name and assignment title in the email subject line.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b.) Submitting a document or assignment that in completely or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code.

University Statements

Statement of student disability services: The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Statement on academic honesty: All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Course Schedule

Week 1

8/26: Course Introduction

8/28: Professional emails; *Send* 17-34

Week 2

9/2: Lanham ch. 1

9/4: *Send* 117-142

Week 3

9/9: Lanham ch. 2

9/11: "Paramedic Method" Workshop

Email 1 due on Monday, September 15, 2014

Week 4

9/16: Audience centered writing; *Send* 56-89

9/18: *Send* 99-116, 225-230

Week 5

9/23: Plain English - basics; *PEH* ch. 1, 3

9/25: *PEH* ch. 4, 6

Week 6

9/30: Plain English - design and organization; *PEH* ch. 5, 7

10/2: "Paramedic Method" Workshop

Email 2 due on Monday, October 6, 2014

Week 7

10/7: Lanham ch. 3

10/9: Memos

Week 8

10/14: McIsaac & Sepe

10/16: "Paramedic Method" Workshop

Memo due on Monday, October 20, 2014

Week 9

10/21: Intro to ethics; Stout & Weiss

10/23: Ethical scenarios; Markel

Week 10

10/28: McBride

10/30: Letters

Letter 1 due on Monday, November 3, 2014

Week 11

11/4: IM and Txt; *Send* 46-51

11/6: Telephone; *Send* 41-45, 52-54

Week 12

11/11: No Class

11/13: *Send* 206-224; "Paramedic Method" Workshop

Letter 2 due on Monday, November 17, 2014

Week 13

11/18: Lanham ch. 4

11/20: Informal reports and web design

Week 14

11/25: *Send*: 231-250

11/27: No Class

Website Informal Report due on Monday, December 1

Week 15

12/2: Group report outline due; Formal reports, proposals, and presentations

12/4: Group Presentations

Week 16

12/9: Group Presentations

Group Report due on Friday, December 12