

# Business 300: Written Communication for the business professional

FALL 2018 SYLLABUS



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**COURSE GOALS:** My objective as a professor is to help your perceptions about good writing expand beyond the absence of spelling, grammar, structural, and factual errors to include writing clarity, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness. I want you to approach the writing process with a focus on message strategy instead of composition and delivery, and to *choose* to invest more thought into planning and revising your messages and less into writing them. I also aim for students to more readily detect and diagnose faulty logic and biased, incomplete, or inaccurate information.

## SBE MISSION:

The UWSP School of Business & Economics educates and inspires students and prepares graduates for success in positions of leadership and responsibility. Evidence of our graduates' level of preparation is evident in their ability to

- analyze and solve business and economics problems
- understand the opportunities and consequences associated with globalization
- appreciate the importance of behaving professionally and ethically
- communicate effectively.

## COURSE OUTCOMES:

- Establish document purpose
- Critically analyze target audience
- Write clearly, precisely, and correctly, using style and vocabulary appropriate for the audience
- Maintain a professional, reader-centered tone.
- Research, synthesize, and document information from outside sources.
- Interpret information, analyze problems, and base decisions on logic and evidence strength
- Select, prioritize, organize, and format information strategically based on audience needs.
- Use ethical, logical, and well-supported persuasive techniques
- Write, revise, and edit documents conscientiously through multiple drafts
- Process/provide feedback ethically and accurately

## COURSE MATERIALS:

**Required:**

*Business Communication Today* 14th Edition, Courtland Bovée & John V. Thill. Prentice Hall, 2016

[CANVAS course management system](#) content.

**Recommended:**

[Bovée & Thill's Real-Time Updates](#).

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## CHANGES TO COURSE POLICIES/CALENDAR

Please note that I reserve the right to make changes to this course syllabus as we progress through the semester; however, I will make every attempt to avoid doing so, and will consider it only under extraordinary circumstances. You will be notified during class of any changes that arise. Any changes made to the course work plan will be announced at least one week in advance.



## STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The overall objective for this course is to help prepare you for the workplace. Successful companies don't retain employees who put forth inconsistent effort or demonstrate unprofessional behavior. *Local* employers have indicated that many recent business graduates seem to lack these conduct-related competencies:

- Listen actively and attentively
- Consistently and comfortably ask for clarification or feedback
- Employ effective questioning techniques
- Accept constructive criticism without deflection or defensive behavior

I will take note of any behaviors that demonstrate deficiency in these areas, both in and outside of class. Follow the strategies described on this page to build habits that increase the likelihood of success in all of your courses, including this one.

**1. Do your own work.** The minimum penalty for plagiarism is a zero on the assignment. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is (i.e. "I didn't know" won't work as an excuse). For more information, see the UWSP "[Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures](#)" section of Chapter 14 in the Rights and Responsibilities document.

**2. Check Canvas and your [UW-SP email account](#) regularly.** Visit the Canvas for course materials. *I respond more quickly to mails with a specific subject line and questions that have not already been covered in class or course materials.* If need help with these accounts, call the [Help Desk](#) at 346-4357 or 1-877-832-8977.

**3. Attend class.** Asking your professors if you "missed anything important" while you were absent is generally unwise. Whenever possible, contact your professors prior to missing class and arrange to get notes and other materials from a classmate. Accumulating absences makes assessing your learning outcomes difficult, so regularly missing class will affect your final grade in the course.

**4. Come to class on time.** Constant tardiness can damage your professional image. If you plan to be late or leave early, please let me know in advance to minimize disruption. Habitual unexplained tardiness will impact your final grade.

**5. Be respectful.** Chatting, texting, or working on unrelated schoolwork during class is disrespectful and disruptive to others. Engaging in such activities during class will count as an absence and affect your final grade.

**6. Read instructions.** I provide specific instructions for each assignment. If you choose to ignore them, expect a zero on the assignment until you revise it. If you do not understand the assignment, please ask me before the day it is due!

**7. Ask for help.** Saying, "I didn't get it" after the fact is a passive academic approach that is incompatible with success. If you do not understand the assignment instructions, please talk to me before the project is due! See page 5 for additional support options.

**8. Meet deadlines.** Each assignment has a precise deadline. Unless you request a deadline extension via email the day before the deadline, the penalties for late work are:

- first drafts: 0, no revision opportunity
- peer reviews: 0, no make-up opportunity
- participation: 0, no make-up opportunity
- final drafts, within 24 hours of deadline: Up to 75%, one revision opportunity
- final drafts, more than 24 hours past deadline: 0, no revision opportunity.

Grant extensions *only* if they are requested a day in advance. If you realize you need more time on the day an assignment is due, don't ask—just do the best you can and submit it.

**9. Complete required revisions.** If you earn less than 75% on a final draft, you get two chances to revise it as long as you have met all deadlines. My feedback will explain revision requirements. If your *second* revision does not earn 75%, you'll keep the highest score.

For more information, review [UW-Stevens Point's Rights and Responsibilities document](#). It describes in more detail UW-SP's expectations for all faculty, staff, and students as we build a more positive and productive learning environment at UWSP.

## WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that involves taking another person's written work and presenting it as your own. Even if it is unintentional, claiming authorship of another's writing style is a violation of academic integrity and subject to severe penalties. Don't panic, though - I am much more interested in helping you avoid plagiarism than trying to catch you in the act of it.

To assess the originality of student work, I run all first and final drafts through Turnitin.com's Originality Reporting service. I will show you in class how this works.

The sidebar at the right describes specific types of plagiarism. The range of penalties is explained below. Please see page 4 for an example of plagiarism and tips for how to avoid it.



## PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARISM

### Deliberate acts:

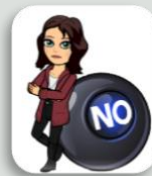
You are responsible for knowing the information provided in this syllabus; therefore, "I didn't know" will never be an acceptable excuse for deliberate acts of plagiarism listed on this page. Any deliberate violation of academic integrity, including plagiarism, WILL result in:

- a zero for the assignment in question -- and most likely the course
- a written reprimand for your disciplinary file detailing the offense.

Repeat offenses can lead to suspension or expulsion from UW-SP. For more information, see "[Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures](#)" in Chapter 14 of the UWSP Rights and Responsibilities document.

### Accidental acts:

Accidental acts of plagiarism (see right) will be handled at my discretion. Penalties can range from a failing grade on the assignment to a mandatory revision of the assignments for a lower (but passing) grade (most often no more than 75%).



## TYPES OF PLAGIARISM

In general, there are two types of plagiarism: Deliberate and accidental.

### Deliberate Acts of Plagiarism:

Many students are already familiar with deliberate acts of plagiarism, which include:

- buying or trading a paper via a web site and turning it in as your own work
- copying text off a web page and pasting it into the body of a paper that you turn in as your own work
- taking a paper that was written by another student and turning it in as your own work
- revising a paper that was written by another student and turning it in as your own work.

### Accidental Acts of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is much more than stealing, trading, or buying other people's written work, however. More subtle forms of plagiarism, which students sometimes commit accidentally, include:

- changing a few individual words of someone else's written work by substituting synonyms, but failing to restructure the sentences
- paraphrasing someone else's ideas and information adequately, but failing to correctly cite the source.

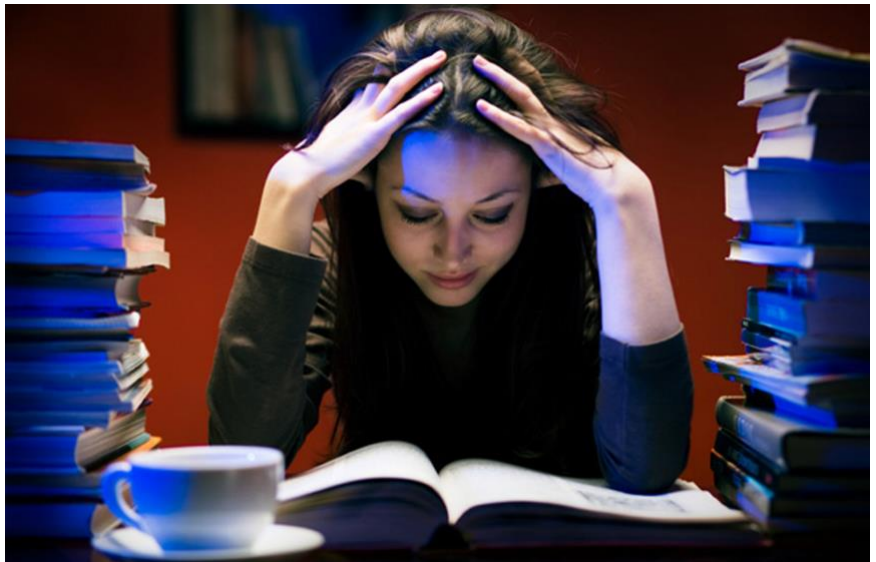
## TIPS TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

Refraining from copying others' work is important to maintaining your integrity, developing your writing skill, and ultimately passing the course. These seven tips can help you avoid plagiarism:

- 1. Know what plagiarism is.**
- 2. When in doubt, ask an instructor.**  
If you don't ask, we can't help.
- 3. Avoid procrastinating.** If you tend to put things off until the last minute, "lie" to yourself about upcoming deadlines by writing them down a day or two earlier in your date book. For example, if a paper is due on Thursday, May 25, write on your calendar that it is due on Tuesday, May 23.
- 4. Record precisely where you get your information.** Make an electronic or paper copy of every source you use (articles, chapters, etc.) so you can double check your reference information (author, page numbers, etc.) and make sure notes are accurate and properly paraphrased.
- 5. Learn to paraphrase and cite properly.** We'll work on these skills this semester. See tip #2.
- 6. Take notes that are paraphrased, not quoted.** Taking notes that copy your original sources word-for-word increases the chances you'll forget to paraphrase or do it improperly later. It is far better to paraphrase your notes right away.
- 7. Cite your sources.** If you are unsure whether to cite your source, cite it.

## SOURCE DOCUMENTATION

All written assignments should follow the *Publication manual of The American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) guidelines for documentation. Points will be deducted for citations and references that are not follow APA formatting standards.



## How do I avoid plagiarism?

Anything you've written that uses ideas, opinions, or data that are not solely your own must be quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, and then properly cited -- or it is considered plagiarized. We will work on these skills in Business 300. How do you know if you have paraphrased and cited correctly? The paragraphs below provide examples of a passage that is both plagiarized and properly paraphrased and cited:

### Original passage:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final \*research+ paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.

Source: Lester, J. D. (1976). *Writing Research Papers* (2nd ed.). pp. 46-47.

### Plagiarized paragraph:

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

### Acceptable paraphrase:

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester, 1976).

## PROOFREADING ERRORS

The 10 types of errors below will cost you half a point each on all final drafts:

**1. Capitalization errors.** Capitalize correctly; never write in all lower case (texting) or upper case (shouting) except when using an acronym. Also know the difference between title and sentence case. See pages 604 and 622 of *Business Communication Today* for more guidelines.

**2. Illogical shifts and unclear wording.** Illogical shifts in tense, voice, and point of view make reading difficult. See pages 134-5 and 610 of *Business Communication Today* for information on avoiding such errors.

**3. Typographical and phonological spelling errors.** Spell check does not always catch these errors. See page 629 of *Business Communication Today*.

**4. “Sound alike” spelling errors.** These errors involve words that sound alike but are spelled and used differently depending upon the meaning (i.e. effect and affect). Spell check is NOT a reliable way to catch them. See pages 626-628 of *Business Communication Today* for examples.

**5. “Agreement” errors.** Pronouns must agree in number, person, and gender with the noun to which they refer. Verbs must agree with the subjects whose action they describe. See pages 605-7 (Unclear Antecedents) and 609 (Subject-Verb Agreement) of *Business Communication Today*.

**6. Faulty parallelism.** All items in a list should be similar in structure and not shift between different parts of speech and inconsistent phrasing patterns. See pages 159-162 and 618 (Parallelism) of *Business Communication Today*.



## GRADING GUIDELINES

### FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS

I provide specific instructions for each assignment. Read them carefully – you will be accountable only for the criteria described in each assignment’s instructions (and this syllabus). I am happy to answer questions about grading criteria, to be sure to *ask me* if you need clarification on any written instructions.

### AVOID BIASED LANGUAGE

To avoid headaches, hurt feelings, and potentially lawsuits, learn to remove all sexual, racial, ethnic, and other biases from your documents before sharing them in a professional setting. See pages 119-121 of *Business Communication Today* for explanations and examples.



### OBSERVE BASIC GRAMMAR, SPELLING, AND PUNCTUATION RULES

In addition to the specific content and formatting requirements provided on the assignment handouts, you need to follow some basic writing principles on all assignments. The ten specific types of errors listed on this page will likely be noticed (either consciously or unconsciously) in a way that could compromise your credibility.



*NOTE: Look closely for “Easter Eggs” in my handouts. If you are the first student to locate a typo in a course handout, discreetly notify me and I will award you a point toward your final course grade. This is the only extra credit I offer.*

**7. Fused (run-on) sentences.** A run-on sentence is two or more independent clauses smashed together. See pages 615-6 of *Business Communication Today*.

**8. Sentence fragments.** These are phrases that do not contain a subject, a verb, and complete thought. See page 615-6 of *Business Communication Today* for additional explanation and examples.

**9. Comma splices.** These occur when a comma separates two independent clauses. See page 615-6 and 619 of *Business Communication Today* for more explanation and examples.

**10. Apostrophe errors.** Use apostrophes only to show possession – not plural. Contractions also use apostrophes. See pages 604-5 and 621 of *Business Communication Today* for specific rules and examples.

## HOW TO GET HELP

I am always eager to assist you if you are confused or have questions about course materials and assignments; however, if you feel you need additional help, listed below are some places to find it:

### If you need assistance:

The [Mary K. Croft Tutoring-Learning Center](#) located in room 018 of the Learning Resources Center offers a variety of academic support services, including:

- [Writing and Reading Consultations](#) if you are struggling with a tough writing or reading assignment
- [Technology Tutoring Services](#) if your computer skills aren't up to speed
- [Academic Skills Specialists](#) if you are struggling with study skills, time management, or other general academic challenges.

### If you require accommodations:

Please speak with me the first day of class if you know or suspect that you have a recognized disability. You must also make an appointment with the [Disability Services Office](#) (346-3365) as soon as possible. Although course standards cannot be lowered, appropriate accommodations may be available to you under certain circumstances.

## PERMISSION TO USE YOUR WORK

I may wish to use a sample of your work or some of the feedback you share with me in future teaching or research activities or projects. Examples: showing students an example of a well-done assignment; discussing teaching techniques at a conference. Of course, if I used some of your work, I would conceal your identity. If you prefer not to have your work included in any future projects of mine, please send me an e-mail indicating that you are opting out of this request. Otherwise, your participation in the class will be taken as consent to have portions of your work or feedback anonymously used for teaching or research purposes.

**NOTE:** If you have multiple courses with SBE Events requirements, it is your responsibility to ensure you attend enough events for each course.

If you have not attended enough events to cover all your courses, your attendance will be allocated to your courses in alpha-numeric order.

## COURSE GRADING SCALE

Your final grade in this course will initially be based on the percentage of all possible points that you earn throughout the semester up to your final project. The quality and persuasiveness of your Final Grade Proposal will influence that figure. All assigned work will be graded using the following scale:

<b>A: 93%</b>	<b>A-: 90%</b>	<b>B+: 87%</b>	<b>B: 83%</b>
<b>B-: 80%</b>	<b>C+: 77%</b>	<b>C: 73%</b>	<b>C-: 70%</b>
<b>D+: 66%</b>	<b>D: 60%</b>	<b>F: 59% ↓</b>	

In this class, you must earn a cumulative grade of at least 73% to receive a C. As long as you meet deadlines, you will have the opportunity to revise for 75% on most final drafts.



If you are concerned about your performance in the course, please talk to me – *especially* if you feel confused or overwhelmed. Effective communication takes two, and I can't help you if you don't ask. Don't let a small problem become a major crisis because we didn't talk.

## PROFESSIONAL POINTER EVENTS

Several UWSP departments and programs, including the School of Business & Economics, sponsor **Professional Pointer Events** (or **Pro Events**). Pro Events connect you to:

- *Campus* (e.g., academic coaching, student clubs)
- *Community* (e.g., Rotary, Business Council)
- *Careers* (e.g., internships, networking)

As an SBE student, you will be able to choose from a wide variety of speakers, workshops and special events. With over 300 events per year on the Pro Events calendar, you will have significant flexibility in selecting your events. Whatever you choose, Pro Events will help you to make the most out of your time as a student and to prepare for transitioning into a successful career.

Visit the Pro Events web site ([proevents.uwsp.edu](http://proevents.uwsp.edu)) for announcements of upcoming events, or follow us on social media:

- Facebook: [UWSP School of Business & Economics](#)
- Twitter: [@UWSPBusiness](#)

For this course, you must attend **two** official Pro Events. One event must be before the mid-semester cut-off of **Oct. 19**; a second event must be before the end-of-semester cut-off (**Dec. 14**). If you go to extra events before the mid-semester cut-off, those credits will carry over into the second half of the semester. Attendance at each event counts for 10 points towards your final grade.

Typically, when you attend an event, you will sign in with your Point Card and thereby receive your Events credit. Occasionally, there are events requiring that you take along an Events Attendance form and obtain a signature at the event; events requiring an Events Attendance form will be clearly labeled and the form will be available online.

Attendance at Pro Events will be confirmed with automatic emails to you and updated on the Pro Events web site. Please allow a week for confirmation of attendance at events held outside the SBE, such as Career Services events. If you have a question about Pro Events attendance, please email [proevents@uwsp.edu](mailto:proevents@uwsp.edu). After the mid-semester and end-of-semester cut-offs, a Pro Events coordinator will receive reports confirming your attendance. You do not need to do anything else.