ENGLISH 351/551 COURSE SYLLABUS

In this Document…

Welcome to English 351/551 online (Fall 2022)

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to some of the different types of documents found in the workplace and to give you the chance to practice writing them.

This class is practical and practice-oriented. You will learn useful methods for creating effective workplace documents that you can apply immediately to a variety of documents from one-page letters to multi-page reports or proposals.

As you learn to analyze and understand your readers' needs as well as develop a coherent structure, clear style, and compelling page layout, you will be able to create workplace documents that communicate effectively.

Textbook

Writing that Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job (13th edition), Oliu, Brusaw, and Alred, Bedford/St. Martins, 2020.

Course Expectations

This course functions much like a standard classroom course. You will be expected to keep up with weekly textbook readings and lectures, meet deadlines for assignments, and participate actively in weekly discussions online. But you can participate in class at any time of day and choose where to participate…at the library, at home in your bunny slippers, or anywhere else you have Internet access.

Students should expect to spend 6-12 hours per week on this course. This includes readings, viewing course content, completing homework assignments, posting to the discussion area, etc.

I will post need-to-know information in Announcements on our Canvas home page and sometimes use UWSP email for communication.

Email requirements: Because this is a business writing course, any **emails** to me or class members are expected to be written in a professional manner. This means emails should have a clear subject line (e.g., English 351/551: Assignment question), a greeting (with the correct title/name), a closing, your name, and use paragraphs (not a single, big chunk of text), punctuation, and correct grammar. *Emails that do not follow these professional writing guidelines are not likely to receive a response.*

My email address is lmorgan@uwsp.edu.

An email from our UWSP Online office that you should have received offers useful suggestions and helpful links for success in an online course. Included in the email was this link to the student support web page for online courses.

If you'd like to meet with me, face-to-face, to discuss any aspect of the course (material, assignments, etc.), contact me by email to schedule a day and time for either an in-person meeting or a Zoom meeting. Because of roof repairs to the CCC, we are unable to use our fourth-floor offices; thus, I can't schedule regular office hours.

All announcements/changes/due dates also will be posted on Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to check our Canvas site for communications and changes to the course several times a week.

Return to top

Computer Requirements

Since this is an online course, there are hardware and software requirements to complete the course.

Canvas Questions
For recommended operating system requirements, web browser compatibility, and other issues involving Canvas, see the "Student Resources" section on the Canvas login page.

Microsoft Word
All homework assignments should be completed in a format compatible with Turnitin.com (like Microsoft **Word** or a .pdf file) and submitted electronically via Canvas. *Any work submitted as a .zip or .pages file will not be accepted.*

Adobe Acrobat Reader
You will need to obtain Adobe Acrobat Reader, which can be downloaded free from the Internet. You will use Acrobat Reader to access some of the course material.

Return to top

Technical and Course Support

If you are having technical problems with Canvas, you can contact free technical support through one of the following ways:

- Phone: 715-346-4357 (HELP)
- Email: help@uwsp.edu
- Web: See the Canvas login page under "Student Resources"

Any course content-related questions should be directed to Prof. Morgan.

Return to top

Projects and Grading

The projects in this class will include writing memos, e-mail, various types of letters, proposals, job application letter and resume, and instructions. You will also be required to participate in weekly discussions as part of your final grade.

Here is what each of these projects is worth in the final grade.

Assignment	Points
Memo	60
Claim and Adjustment Letters	100
Internal Proposal	125
External Proposal	125
Recommendation Report	150
Quizzes (four at 10 points each)	40
Final exam case study	250
Discussion / Participation	150

Graduate students: Students registered in English 551 will receive a separate document with a list of the graduate-level assignments.

Meaning of grades: Because the work in this class is based on writing in the workplace, the following correspondence between grades you earn and workplace standards will apply:

A range	**Yes!** Manager would be impressed and remember the work when considering a promotion for you.
B range	**Well, OK…** Manager would be satisfied with the job, but not impressed.
C range	**Hmmm…** Manager would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing clients and others to see the work.
D range	**Ohmigosh!** Manager would be troubled by the poor quality of the work.
F	**Uh-oh…** Manager would start looking for someone to replace you (or you committed plagiarism).

Points and letter grades: The total course points and associated final letter grades are as follows:

Course Grade	Total Points
A	940+
A-	900-939
B+	870-899
B	840-869
B-	800-839
C+	770-799
C	740-769
C-	700-739
D+	670-699
D	640-669
F	668 and fewer

Discussions / Class Participation

This class is your opportunity to practice informal and formal writing. You will do formal writing in assignments. You will do informal writing by posting discussion responses. Participating in discussions is our way of attending class and correlates with the Discussion/Participation part of the final grade.

In an online class, each missed response is like an absence in a regular class. If you miss both responses in one week, it is the same as missing two classes. Missing more than 20 percent of the discussions (weekly tasks)—or about three weeks—will imperil your final grade, just as missing 20 percent of a face-to-face class.

FAQs about discussions:
1. *How many prompts will there be each week?* There will generally be one prompt each week. Specific instructions will be included in a section at the end of the weekly "lecture notes" and labeled "Tasks for the Week." As a rule, you will be required to post an original response to the prompt and two responses to the postings of other classmates. In this way, we can develop a conversation on topics presented in class. However, you can respond more than two times a week, if you wish.
2. *How much are discussion responses worth?* Your original response is worth up to 5 points and your follow-up response is worth up to 5 points for a total of 10 points a week. Since there are 15 weeks in the semester, discussions are worth 150 points.
3. *Do I have to submit a response to every prompt?* To get the most out of the course and to receive a good Discussion/Participation grade, you should respond to every prompt.
4. *What happens if I don't submit a response in time?* You can't make up a missed response. At the end of the week, I will close the discussion. If you didn't respond at all that week, you will lose 10 points. If you only responded once, you will lose 5 points.

5. *How long should my discussion response be?* I don't count words but I do consider content. I look to see if you have given serious thought to the prompt and have fully answered it. If you do this, you get full credit. But if your response is hurried and short, and doesn't relate to the prompt well, you won't get full credit. But it is better to post something than nothing at all.

Collaboration: Collaborative work, such as studying or discussing course assignments and materials with other class members, is highly encouraged. Students are encouraged to collaborate with each other using email or the discussion tool. *However, all submitted work must be a student's own, original work.*

Grammar & Spelling

Bad grammar and spelling mistakes are annoying. They tell people that you haven't taken the time to proofread. They reflect negatively on you in the classroom and in the workplace.

That said, in an online class like this one where most of our correspondence is written, the occasional bad sentence construction or misspelling is understandable in discussion responses. It's very important that you communicate in this class, and you should not let your fear of mistakes get in the way. But in your formal assignments, bad grammar and spelling will be penalized.

You should know basic grammar. If you don't, I recommend that you obtain a writing reference book such as *Things Your Grammar Never Told You* (Longman), *SF Writer* (Longman), or *Rules for Writers* (Bedford St. Martin). Additionally, the "Revision Guide" in the textbook (p. 611) is a good resource.

Always spellcheck your assignment; then print out a copy and read it carefully to find errors spellchecking may have missed. *Do not rely on spellchecking as your only review method.* I also recommend that you obtain a good dictionary (Webster's, American Heritage, Oxford, etc.).

Late Work

This class moves fast. It's important to keep up or you'll be left behind wondering what happened. So, don't submit assignments late.

That said, late—with a limit—is better than not at all. If an assignment will be late, email me in advance of the due date to tell me your assignment will be late and when you plan to submit it. I don't need excuses. However, turning in assignments late may cost you a half grade per day on that assignment and **unless there are extenuating circumstances, there is a two-day limit for late assignments (with reduced credit)**.

In the event of extenuating circumstances when several days or more of a week will be missed and you are unable to participate or otherwise complete course work (for example, with our current situation, that may be Covid-related), you must contact me and let me know your situation as soon as it is evident you will be unable to participate. In other words, do not wait until you've missed a week of class and then send me an email that says, "The reason I haven't logged on for eight days is because…." As long as I am aware of your situation, we can work out a reasonable solution to make up lost work.

In an effort to cut down on plagiarism, the following is an explanation of plagiarism and the consequences of committing plagiarism. I understand that most students are honest. This information is offered because I realize that unintentional plagiarism is a problem for all writers and I want to help students avoid it.

What is Plagiarism?

In academic writing, plagiarism occurs when a writer uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging the source. ("Original" means information that is not common knowledge in our society.) This definition applies to writing that appears in print or online, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

How Do Student Writers Commit Plagiarism?

Plagiarism usually takes several forms in university writing courses:
- Students submit papers or portions of papers that someone else has written–whether from a commercial service, a web site, or a friend–and then claim the writing as their own;
- Students get too much help from friends, relatives or tutors and claim their writing as their own;
- Students are careless about documenting sources. When they sit down to write, they cannot remember where they got their information and so neglect attribution altogether;
- Students have not learned how to properly cite sources: They do not know how to quote, how to paraphrase, or how to summarize, or they do not recognize when to document sources.

How Can I Avoid Plagiarism?

Understand writing assignments as opportunities for genuine and rigorous inquiry and learning. Such an understanding means that:
- You do not purchase papers from commercial services or copy and paste information from a web site without citing it (this includes graphics as well as text);
- When you ask tutoring services or friends and family to read your work (as you should), you make sure they leave all decisions about what to write and how to revise in your hands.
- You knowledge clearly when and how you are drawing on the ideas or phrasings of others;
- You learn the conventions for citing documents and acknowledging sources.
- You consult your instructor when you are unsure about how to acknowledge the contributions of others to your thinking and writing.

What Happens If The Professor Thinks I've Committed Plagiarism?

If there is a suspicion that you have committed plagiarism or concern that you have not mastered academic conventions for properly acknowledging your sources, first, you and I will discuss these concerns. If we can not come to a resolution, we will invite the chair of the English Department to join our discussion.

If your work falls into the category of plagiarism, one of the following actions will be taken:
- You may be asked to rewrite your paper.
- You may be assigned a grade of "F" for the assignment or for the course.
- You may be asked to discuss the matter with the Dean of Students, who may choose to pursue further disciplinary action.

Course Policies

Access to Education: Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner.
Copyright: All materials in this course fall under copyright laws and should not be downloaded, distributed, or used by students for any purposes outside of this course.
Privacy and Canvas Tracking Notice: Canvas or the course web site automatically records all students' activities, including, your first and last access to the course, the pages you have accessed, the number of discussion messages you have read and sent, chat room discussion text, and posted discussion topics. The primary reason to access this data is to evaluate class participation and identify students having difficulty using Canvas features.
UWSP Policies: This course falls under all UWSP policies for last day to drop courses, etc.

Return to top