Professional Writing
ENGL 305/Fall 2015

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Course Information

Course Description
English 305 offers extensive practice in professional writing, communication, and presentation. In the first part of the course, we will examine rhetorical choices—such as audience, purpose, and style—within a variety of genres, including professional emails, memos, cover letters, resumes, reports, and proposals. In the second part of the course, students will make inquires into the types of writing that may be used in their future professional and civic lives, and will work collaboratively to create and present projects for workplace or public audiences.

In addition to focusing on specific genres and skills necessary to writing in professional situations, this course will ask you to reflect upon the values you hope to bring to future careers and communities, as well as the lifelong goals you hope to achieve as engaged citizens living in solidarity with and for others. Though you may be uncertain about exactly what work you will do for your future career, in this course we will examine the foundational characteristics of how you might carry that out, as well as practicing how to articulate those values to others in meaningful ways in the workplace.

Course Learning Outcomes
Students taking this course will learn to:

• Identify conventions of common business genres
• Evaluate audience and purpose of professional communications to compose rhetorically effective documents across multiple settings
• Apply genre and rhetorical awareness to new situations, adapting style, tone, and formats to serve various purposes
• Reflect upon and communicate values and ethics in professional settings
• Create a range of documents that clearly articulate goals, values, and purpose in ways that are rhetorically effective in professional settings
Course Materials


Various readings posted on Canvas

Laptop or tablet which can be used in class. (You can check out a laptop from the library if you do not have access to one.)

Course Structure

**Graded Course Activities/Major Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reflection, Values, and Professional Mission</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Genres, Style, and Rhetorical Situations</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Preparing for a Career</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Collaborative Research Inquiry</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Final Revisions/Web Portfolio</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>General Participation</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
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*Module 1: Reflection, Values, and Professional Mission*

In this module, we will focus on the deeper meanings and motivations for the work that we do and/or hope to do in the future. By reflecting and articulating the values we hope to fulfill in future careers, we can focus our future projects and plans by building them upon a basis that speaks to our most deeply held values. **Projects Due:** Reflective Essay/Mission Statement

*Module 2: Genres, Style, and Rhetorical Situations*

In this section, we will review the basics of rhetoric and apply it to writing in the workplace. We will also examine common genres of professional writing, contextualizing these within various rhetorical situations for diverse audiences. Through drafting, peer response, and revision, we will apply appropriate genre and stylistic conventions we have learned. **Projects Due:** Request memo, complaint letter, reply to complaint, inter-cultural genre conventions memo + presentation (collaborative).

*Module 3: Preparing for a Career*

In this section, we will examine career-building genres, such as the resume and job application letter, and compose these documents as part of our skill-building exercises. We will have a guest speaker from Career Development visit our class and offer advice for your projects so that they have the “real world” application. Near the end of this module, we will also practice interviewing
techniques and compose follow-up materials for post-interview interactions. Projects Due: Resume, job application letter, interview, and post-interview thank you memo.

**Module 4: Collaborative Research Inquiry**
In this module, you will work together with a group to form inquiry questions about issues in your professions or disciplines, form a proposal and action plan, and carry out research. Once you have completed the initial stages of the project, you will co-write a report and present your findings to the class using PowerPoint, Prezi, or some other visual presentation software. Projects Due: Proposal/action plan, research report, presentation.

**Module 5: Final Revisions/Web Portfolio**
Near the end of the semester, you will revisit your initial Mission Statement and revise it based upon what you have learned throughout the course and/or working with others. For this module, you will complete all revisions and changes that you want to make on any previous projects and arrange these documents in a web portfolio that you can use for your ongoing professional development. (Note: We will create free web sites in class—you do not need to have experience with this prior to taking this course.) Projects Due: Revision of Mission Statement, web site design/layout, course projects uploaded onto site.

**Participation**
Participation is a vitally important component of ENGL 305, constituting a significant portion of your grade for the course. There are a number of ways that you will be expected to participate and/or collaborate in ENGL 305 which will constitute 15% of your overall grade. These activities include: participating in peer review, having drafts ready on time for peer review, reading required materials prior to the class for which they are assigned, participating in group and class discussions, meeting your responsibilities within collaborative groups, participating in and upholding citizenship guidelines, responding to student and course readings, asking questions, commenting, and being actively engaged with the activities of this class.

Quizzes will be given over assigned readings during the class period for which the reading was assigned and will cover the major points of the chapters we read.

**Course Policies/Guidelines**

**Amount of Writing**
You should expect to have some written assignment due in practically every class period over the entire semester—either writing due for class or writing you do in class. Some of the writing you do will be the final polished versions of your major writing assignments; the other half will be invention and exploratory exercises, short in- and out-of-class writing assignments, rough drafts, formal drafts, written peer responses to your classmates’ writing, etc. Be prepared to write regularly for this course, as we will need to practice the concepts we are learning and acquire the skills necessary to use them effectively in real world settings.

**Academic Integrity**
Xavier University
Plagiarism is the representation of another’s images, words, or ideas as one’s own. It includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work (whether these ideas appear in traditional print text, in an image etc.), and/or the inappropriate, unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. Plagiarizing is a serious offense and can ruin a student’s academic career. As part of our work in this course includes significant research, ethical attribution of work and ideas will be an important part of our learning process. (Please see the University’s policy on academic integrity below.)

**Conduct, Consideration, and Citizenship:**
The use of rhetoric is the basis of policy-making in a democratic society, and as such this classroom will endeavor to integrate the principles of choice and participation as much as possible. Near the beginning of the course, we will collaboratively build a classroom Mission Statement and make choices about how we will handle issues that fall outside of the parameters we have set for our space.

The classroom environment is co-created by everyone in that classroom and is most effective when it takes the needs of all parties into account. As responsible citizens who have freely chosen to engage in this community, I would request that we be mutually respectful of the time, attention, and goals of all participants. All members of this community are welcome to express their ideas about what would foster the most conducive atmosphere for learning, and to speak up if those needs are not being met. Included in the many skills we will practice this semester are to acclimate to the idea of being responsible and participating members of a professional community and to keep in mind the long term goals we hope to achieve through the day to day application of focus, intention, and applied skills. *Each individual is an important member of this community and affects the experience of all the other members.* To respect the goals you have set, as well as the goals of others, please keep this responsibility in mind when entering the classroom.

**In addition…**

- All members of this community are welcome to express their ideas freely and openly.
- We agree to listen to others with respect and consideration and will not become hostile toward others, even when we disagree.
- We will use respectful, ethical language and endeavor to be sensitive to the racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation identities of our classmates.
- We agree to be polite and friendly to one another.
- Light snacks and closed beverage containers are welcome in the classroom.
- We will turn off cell phone ringers, refrain from texting, and avoid off-topic discussion during class time so that our classmates have the opportunity to focus. If students do not follow these guidelines, we agree that we should __________ TBA! ____________
- We are free to take emergency calls, use the restroom, or attend to other personal and urgent business as we deem necessary.
- The instructor is willing to work with students individually whenever they request. She can be informed during or after class if students would like additional information about anything pertaining to our class.
• All students are invited to inform the instructor if there is something that they are uncomfortable or dissatisfied with in class. This can be done during class, after class, through email, or through an anonymous note.
• We will remember that each individual is an important member of this community and that our presence affects the experience of all the other members.
• We will respect the goals we have set as individuals, as well as the goals of others.

Other Policies
Late Assignments
Turning assignments in on the due date helps to make the class run more smoothly and is also in your best interest, as it assures that you will not fall behind with the work required for this course and that you have sufficient time to revise and prepare your drafts. In addition, because we are practicing writing in the workplace, we should attempt to observe the expectations for professional behavior as much as possible, which includes being accountable to the other members of your team and meeting deadlines on time. At the same time, unavoidable events may arise that would make following through on a deadline impossible.

1) If an assignment is going to be late due to an unforeseen emergency, you will agree to let the instructor know in advance and make arrangements to turn in the work as soon as possible.
2) If an assignment is late without prior negotiation with the instructor, each business day that it remains outstanding will result in the lowering of the grade by five percent, or \( \frac{1}{2} \) of a letter grade.

Absences
Much of the learning in ENGL 305 happens through "engaged learning" in class, via in-class inquiry activities, in-class writing assignments, class discussion, and group interaction that cannot be easily made up or replicated outside of class. Class time will be highly interactive, requiring frequent participation, discussion, teamwork, in-class writing, and responding to writing. It is imperative that you attend each class period—it is not possible to learn the material in this course or to successfully integrate the Learning Outcomes without attending class; a significant amount of the knowledge offered in this course occurs inside the classroom and may not be included within the assigned texts. In addition, this course will incorporate many collaborative and group practices that require the presence of the members of our group to participate directly. In addition to absences affecting your class participation grade and overall ability to incorporate the material, the proposed policy is:

1) You will agree to make your best effort to come to class on time every day that we are scheduled to meet.
2) If you are unable to attend for whatever reason, you are responsible for getting the course materials and completing the daily assignments.
3) Any late assignments due to absence will be assessed according to the policy above.
4) After five absences, your grade will be lowered by 5% or \( \frac{1}{2} \) of a letter grade unless otherwise negotiated in advance.
5) Ten or more absences will result in a failing grade unless otherwise negotiated in advance.
6) There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, with the exception of University recognized religious holidays. (If you will be absent due to a religious observance, please inform the instructor in writing within the first two weeks of class.)

Tardiness
Just as regular attendance is important to success in this course, arriving late can likewise hinder your ability to learn, hear, or integrate the material. Please do your best to arrive on time, and if you know you will be late, please email the instructor in advance if possible. If another commitment will habitually result in lateness to the class (such as another class immediately preceding this one, or a job shift that ends near the beginning of class) please talk with the instructor; it may be in your best interest to take a different section if other commitments will make you repeatedly late.

Cell phones, disruptive speech, and other social distractions
For the consideration of your class members, please turn cell phones off or set on vibrate mode. If taking an emergency call is unavoidable, please exit the room to talk in the hallway. Please be considerate of the attention and time of your classmates – within a closed community, what one person does affects the entire room. Likewise, if other students are engaging in behaviors that you find disruptive or distracting, please feel free to respectfully request that they consider altering this behavior in order to more fully meet the needs of the class. We are all responsible adults in this class – you are responsible for your behavior within the community and its effects upon others, as well as expressing yourself respectfully to others when your needs are not being met.

A word to the wise…..
*Back Up Your Work/File Formats!!!!!!*
You are responsible for keeping copies of your written course work — at least two copies in two different locations — so that if you should have an MSF (massive system failure), you can recover your work. Platform compatibility, file transfer, and e-mail attachments are sometimes irritating, though rarely unsolvable, problems. It is your responsibility as sender/writer to submit files to your instructor and to your classmates in an accessible, downloadable format. All of your papers will be submitted electronically via Canvas.

Viewing Grades in Canvas
Points you receive for scored activities will be posted to the Canvas Grade Book. Click on the Grades link in the course menu to view your assignment scores.

Grade Posting Policy
In general, you should expect to receive feedback on short, graded assignments within 48 hours of submission, and within one week on longer assignments (e.g., major essays). Exceptions to this will be announced in class.
Assignment Submission

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Canvas unless otherwise instructed, including in-class writing. For this reason, if you have a laptop, it is important to bring it almost every day.

Incomplete Policy

Incompletes are not considered except in the case of a true, documented emergency near the end of the semester that would preclude a student from completing final work. To be considered for an incomplete, students must have already completed at least 75% of the work in the course prior to the emergency. Incompletes are not given to avoid failing grades or to offer extensions on deadlines.

Technical Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Access to Canvas through a supported Web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Check Browser Tool from the Technology Services Web site.
- Check your computer against Xavier’s suggested minimum computer requirements: http://www.xavier.edu/ts/students/Computer-Recommendations.cfm

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Canvas, contact the HELP Desk at (513) 745-HELP/4357 or visit the HELP Desk Web site, or contact Canvas at 855-778-9967.

Academic Support

Learning Assistance Center

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides support services to facilitate learning. The LAC has two main purposes: tutoring and disability services. The tutoring services include subject specific tutoring, drop-in sessions, study skills assistance, and Supplemental Instruction (SI). For students with documented disabilities, services include accommodations such as extended time on exams, reduced distraction testing environment, note-taking assistance, and assistive technology. Services are provided in a positive and encouraging environment, which promotes appreciation for diversity and cura personalis. Students in an online course can contact the LAC at (513) 745-3280 to set up an appointment. The LAC is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 514. http://www.xavier.edu/lac/
Writing Center

The Writing Center offers free one-on-one tutoring on writing assignments for all Xavier students. Students in an online course can contact the Center at (513) 745-2875 to set up an appointment. Sessions can be conducted in multiple ways, including discussions by phone and by email at writingcenter@xavier.edu. The Writing Center is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 400. http://www.xavier.edu/writingcenter/

University Policies

Academic Honesty Policy

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited, as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

Copyright Policy

Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit the library copyright Web page and download the following for reference purposes: http://www.xavier.edu/library/copyright/copyright_policy_2009.pdf

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Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should notify the course instructor and contact Cassandra Jones in the Learning Assistance Center at 513-745-3280 or e-mail jonesc20@xavier.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Library Services for Online Students

As an online student at Xavier University you have access to the Library Collections and Services. The Library databases can be accessed from off campus using your Xavier login.

Information on borrowing Library materials. We also have many e-books that can be viewed on your computer.

There are many ways to get help from a Librarian including chat text and email.

SCHEDULE

Module 1: Writing in the Workplace: Reflection, Values, and Professional Mission

WEEK 1

T: 8/25

Introductions/overview of course – reflections on values/needs, that we will set up classroom like a working professional space – review behavior and late policies

Homework: Canvas Discussion Board
For this assignment, please look through these lists of some basic and universal human needs, as described by psychologists like Abraham Maslow and Marshall Rosenberg. These handouts may help you as you begin to articulate the needs and values that you hope to fulfill in your future careers.

When you think of “the workplace,” what kinds of values do you imagine are common? What are YOUR values? What area, discipline, or field(s) are you considering for your future? How will you bring your values into these fields? Look at these lists and then draft/freewrite what values you hope to bring into your future careers

Read: TCT Chapter 1

H: 8/27

• Ch 1 Quiz -- individual AND group.
• Class mission statement

Homework:
Read: TCT Chapter 2 – reader focused communication
Read: TCT Chapter 3 – working in teams

WEEK 2

T: 9/1
• Quiz – individual AND group.
• Identifying needs, values, attitudes of readers
• Collaborative groups – think of classroom as a workplace – how will be resolve conflict? Work well together? Etc? revisit class mission statement and add these strategies to it

Homework: Read: TCT Chapter 4 – ethics

H: 9/3
• Quiz
• Examine Xavier ethics/mission statement – write a memo suggesting changes, or identify an area (real or fictitious) where ethical codes are not being followed

Homework: Reflective Essay/Mission Statement:
• reflecting back on your initial writing about the values you want to express in your future career, and all we have worked on/talked about in class, draft a mission or purpose statement articulating the values that are of the most importance to you, fields or disciplines you hope to apply them in the future, and the type of work environment you want to create/be in.

WEEK 3

T: 9/8
Peer response to mission statements

Homework: Revise mission statement; turn in with reflective letter

Module 2: Genres, Style, and Rhetorical Situations
H: 9/10
Introduction to business genres
(Style and formats)

Homework:
Read TCT Chapter 5: Letters, Memos, and emails

WEEK 4
T: 9/15
In class:
• Collaborative memo/letter analysis (p 113)
• Go over prompt for request email

Homework:
Draft a request email
Read TCT: Ch 15: Organizing and Drafting

H: 9/17
In class:
• Quiz (ch 15)
• Peer response to email draft
• Go over prompt for complaint letter

Homework:
Read TCT: Ch 16: Using Plan and Persuasive Style
Draft complaint letter
PRINT a paper copy to bring to class on Tuesday

WEEK 5
T: 9/22
In class:
• Quiz (Ch 16)
• Exchange complaint letters
• Peer review AND respond to the letter (write a memo to the person who wrote the complaint – do in class)

Homework:
Draft response to complaint letter
Revise complaint letter per memo

H: 9/24
In class:
• Peer review response (same pairs)
• Go over collaborative analysis project – begin research, brainstorming, and make an action plan with your group

Homework:
Read: TCT Chapter 20: Preparing and Giving Presentations
Break up work/plan to work on collaborative project over weekend
Deliverables:
• Memo written to the rest of the class
• Some type of visual aid (e.g. PowerPoint, handouts, etc.) for presentation
WEEK 6
T: 9/29
In class:
• Quiz (over Chapter 20)
• Work on collaborative presentation project
• Workshop ideas/prep for presentation on Thursday

Homework:
Finalize presentation materials

H: 10/1
In class:
• Presentations + feedback to each group
• Turn in final materials + reflection

Homework:
Read TCT: Chapter 11: Starting Your Career

Module 3: Preparing for a Career

WEEK 7
T: 10/6
In class:
• Guest speaker – resumes and preparing for the job market
• PLEASE BRING IN A COPY OF YOUR CURRENT RESUME
• Hand out/go over prompts for job material writing

Homework:
Begin drafting resume

H: 10/8
NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

WEEK 8
T: 10/13
In class:
• Workshop ideas/resume drafts
• Individual conferences with each student in class
Homework:
Revise resume per peer response
Draft cover letter for job

H: 10/15
• Peer response to revised resume and cover letter
• Go over interviewing techniques

Homework:
Prepare for interviews in class

WEEK 9
T: 10/20
In class:
• In class interviews
• Interviewer gives feedback per rubric

Homework:
Write a thank you memo to your interviewer – send one copy to them and cc me on the email.

Read Chapter 21: Writing for the Web pages 557-567 only

H: 10/22
In class:
• Think about design, platform, what materials you want to include, etc.
• Set up free WordPress or Wix site (Note: If you are familiar with another platform you are free to use it!
• Start adding resume, Mission Statement, writing samples, etc.
• Also Note: Web pages are not “due” in their final form until the end of the term
• Be sure to send me a link to your page once you have the url finalized

Homework: Read
Chapter 12: Strategic Planning, Being Creative
Chapter 13: Persuading Others

Module 4: Research in the Workplace
**WEEK 10**
T: 10/27
In class:
- Quiz over Chapter 12 and 13
- Review project prompt
- Brainstorming – begin writing Objectives, Task List, and Timeline

**Homework:**

H: 10/29
In class:
- Research project in class
- Plan to work on projects over the weekend for presentation on Tuesday

**WEEK 11**
T: 11/3

In class:
- Turn in persuasive document here by class time.
- Present your materials to the class—try to persuade them of your idea as part of the presentation
- Review prompt for next project and begin planning

**Homework:** Read Chapter 8: Proposals

H: 11/5 – no class
- You can use this as time to begin planning and working on your next project if you wish

**Week 12**
T: 11/10
In class:
- Quiz over Chapter 8
- Brainstorm/work on proposal for group research project

**Homework:** Begin drafting proposal for research project. Be ready to peer review/revise/discuss proposal and plans in class Thursday.

H: 11/12
In class:
- Review/revise proposals
• Work out timeline/work schedule
• Final proposals + timelines due by midnight Friday

Week 13
T: 11/17
In class:
• Work on research projects
• Conference/check in with each group

H: 11/19
In class:
• Work on research projects
• Conference/check in with each group
• Final prep for presentations and projects

Homework: Complete Research Project and prepare to present materials on Tuesday

Week 14
T: 11/24
In class:
• Present Research Projects

Brainstorm issues in professions that you hold in common with others in your groups. What issues are current right now? What problems are people working on? Consider different areas that might be of interest for your collaborative research project.

Module 5: Web-based Profession Presence

Read: Chapter 21 – Writing for the Web (review beginning you have already read and then read the rest of the chapter)

• Quiz (Ch 21)
• Analysis of web sites – what is effective, what is not?
• Practice putting materials/pages into site

Learn a new web-based communication, e.g. podcast, blogging, video, etc.