

ENC 5236: Advanced Business Writing for Accountants Course Description and Schedule, Fall 2009

Section: 2133
Instructor: Sean Morey
Phone: 392-6650
Email: swmorey@english.ufl.edu

Location: GER 0228
Time: MW 3-4
Office Location: TUR 4414
Office Hours: M Periods 5-6

Class Website: www.seanmorey.org/5236
Class Listserv: FALL-2133-L@lists.ufl.edu

Texts (available at UF's Bookstore)

May, Claire B., and Gordon S. May. *Effective Writing: A Handbook for Accountants*, 8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009.

Securities and Exchange Commission. Office of Investor Education and Assistance. *A Plain English Handbook*. Washington: GPO, 1998.
(Available online @ <http://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf>)

Other online texts TBA

Overview

This writing intensive course focuses on the forms of communication most often found in the working lives of accountants: memos, letters, proposals, and reports. While gaining practical experience producing these documents, students will also consider the theories underlying successful writing in accounting. ENC 5236 provides a context for this type of writing, showing how and why particular documents are necessary in the workplace.

Since the course's writing assignments consist of "reader-based" communication, students will also spend a good deal of time and attention on the collaborative and social aspects of discourse, especially audience and publication. Towards that end, the course examines several methods of revising prose for maximum clarity. In addition, the class will discuss the role of technical communication in relation to contemporary issues.

Major Assignments:

Class Presentations

Each student will be assigned a group at the beginning of the semester. These groups will cover some part of the writing assignments, chapters from the texts, or a combination of both. The purpose of the presentations includes not only covering the material in the texts, but also your plans for completing the related assignments. These presentations count toward a large percentage of your grade (20%), and you should be well prepared. The minimum requirements for the class presentations include:

- An overview/summary of the material
- Examples from external accounting writing sources and an analysis of their effectiveness
- A class handout on the chapter/assignment

- Your plans for completing the assignment (if applicable)
- An in-class assignment for your other classmates to complete after the presentation (can consist of writing exercises/document analysis, etc.)

Some of these presentations will require a search for online reading materials. If you feel stuck, feel free to ask me for readings/assignment ideas. You will also have access to the classroom's computer, so think about how to integrate PowerPoint, the Web, or other graphical aids.

Technical Definition

In order to write technical information for various audiences, students will have to write a two-part technical definition explaining to a layman audience 1) what GAAP are; and 2) a particular principle of GAAP or FASB standard used to apply GAAP.

Emails

Throughout the semester, students are required to make 4 email posts based upon the readings/assignments to the class listserv. Some emails will be on topics that I assign, others may be free choice. Such posts can be about thoughts or opinions about the readings, observations about writing in general, news about writing in the accounting field, as long as it pertains to the class. Each email should reflect good email writing practices as discussed in class, as this will be the main criteria for evaluation.

Reassurance Letter

This assignment will address the situation described on p. 162 of Effective Writing (9-3). Assuming the role indicated by the case, students will be asked to write a letter to reassure a supplier that an overdue invoice will be paid soon. This letter should be 1-2 pages in length.

Response to an Inquiry Letter

Assuming the role described by the case on p. 163 of Effective Writing (9-9), students should write a response that fully explains the situation to the client in an appropriate tone and format. This letter should be 1-2 pages in length.

Memos

All students are required to write the two memos below. These memos will deal with in-class assignments and ongoing projects. Each memo must be designed to complete a specific task and will have to meet specific requirements. As a general rule, each memo should be between one full page and three pages in length unless specified otherwise.

For the first memo, we will adapt Exercise 10-1 on page 178 of the textbook. This assignment will require a small amount of outside research before drafting, and the final written product will be 2 or 3 pages in length. We will discuss the rest of this assignment's details later.

The second memo will use the prompt found in Exercise 2-6 on page 27 of the textbook. This assignment will require a bit more outside research than the first memo, but the final product for this memo will also be about 2-3 pages in length. More details will be available after we discuss the first memo.

Cover Letter and Résumé

Because résumés and cover letters are important documents in the workplace, students will be required to produce these job application materials. Each document should be limited to one page.

Proposal

This proposal is in response to the case study located at:

http://wps.prenhall.com/chet_dobrin_techcomm_2/113/29042/7434989.cw/index.html

Students will write a proposal to Mr. Barksdale requesting new computers. Students must also write a memo to their coworkers explaining their research, as well as a memo to the instructor explaining the choices they made in the proposal.

Formal Report

Students will propose and write a persuasive report. This will be a formal report, with all the constituent sections of a formal report. The main text of the report should be 4-6 pages in length.

This report will require that you incorporate research and persuasive writing into the format of a professional report. I would like this writing assignment to be relevant to your interests in accounting, so you may choose to write this report on any accounting topic you like, provided we discuss the topic and agree on its appropriateness beforehand. You may also choose to work with one of the following prompts:

Ex 2-4 (25)

Ex 2-5 (27)

Ex 8-5 (129)

Ex 11-2 (199)

Ex 11-5 (200)

Ex 11-10 (201)

You may work with one of the prompts above, modify one of these prompts, or develop a topic on your own. In any case, you will be required to submit in writing a proposal for your research before starting.

We will discuss possible topics later in class.

The formal report requires several parts or sections in addition to the main (4-6 pages) text. These parts include:

- * Transmittal Document
- * Title page
- * Table of Contents
- * List of Illustrations (optional, only if you have illustrations)
- * Summary Section
- * Introduction
- * Body of the Report
- * Conclusion
- * Appendices (optional)
- * Notes (optional)
- * Bibliography or Works Cited
- * Graphic Illustrations (optional)

Assessment: Your grade on this assignment derives not from application of advanced accounting principles, but from demonstration of advanced writing skills (including research, document design, presentation, and argumentation/persuasion).

Final Portfolio

The final portfolio will contain revised versions of several assignments, and will be due on the final day of class. Included in the portfolio should be: 1 resume and cover letter, 1 letter, 1 memo, 1 formal report.

Peer Reviews

We will workshop all the writing assignments in this course, and writing assignments cannot be turned in for a grade unless they have been reviewed by your peers. Thus, writing workshops are mandatory and graded. To receive a grade for the peer reviews, you must collect peer review documentation from your reviewers and turn in with your final draft.

Grading

Technical Definition	50
Emails	(4@25) 100
Reassurance Letter	50
Response Letter	50
Memo 1	50
Memo 2	50
Résumé and Cover Letter	50
Proposal	100
Final Portfolio	200
• 1 letter	
• 1 memo	
• 1 resume and cover letter	
• 1 formal report	
Chapter Presentations	200
Peer Reviews	100
TOTAL	1000

Grading Scale

UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

A+	98-100	C+	78-79
A	94-97	C	74-77
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	88-89	D+	68-69
B	84-87	D	64-67
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
		E	59 and below

Course Policies

Text Requirements

Type all major writing assignments on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, double-space the text, write in Times New Roman (12 point font), and use 1" margins on all sides.

All assignments, including visuals, should be computer generated and should be rendered in the most professional-caliber method available to students.

Bring three copies of assignments to writing workshops. Drafts for writing workshops should not be "rough," but complete and polished. You will be graded on this.

Writing workshops are mandatory. Final submissions that have not been reviewed in the workshop will not be accepted for evaluation. If you miss a workshop, it is your responsibility to arrange for a make-up session with your classmates.

Submit all drafts of assignments with the final versions.

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class indicated on the schedule. Late assignments will not be accepted unless the student has made arrangements with the instructor prior to the submission of the late work. Part of the role of this course is to instruct students in producing documents within given time constraints as is often the case in workplace writing; hence, it is crucial for students to abide by required deadlines.

Please note: the policy regarding late submissions of work applies to collaborative assignments, too. In the case of a late collaborative assignment, all members of the writing group are penalized equally.

Quizzes

The instructor reserves the right to give quizzes at any time.

Classroom Conduct

On occasion this class might discuss controversial topics. Our academic coursework requires that we study how to use language to argue persuasively and logically, thus the classroom should provide a venue in which to openly discuss volatile issues. With this in mind, you may feel free to express dissenting opinions, but please adhere to standard courtesy guidelines. In particular, if you disagree with the instructor or with classmates, please express your disagreement through calm, reasoned discussion rather than through emotional or "knee-jerk" responses. (On occasion, I may opt to "reign-in" discussions for reasons of time and/or focus.)

My expectations for classroom courtesy follow informal social and professional standards. Thus, as you would in any professional environment, please turn off all cell phones, pagers, beepers, and other intrusive electronic devices prior to the start of class.

Additionally, since we will spend some of our classroom time on in-class writing or other work, your conduct should never interfere with your classmates' ability to work productively. Otherwise, you may leave your seat when appropriate, ask questions at any time, and converse quietly with others regarding coursework (unless I have expressly asked you not to do so).

Attendance and Tardiness

Because much of our work will be accomplished in a collaborative workshop setting, it is absolutely necessary that you attend each class. Students with more than 3 unexcused absences will be penalized 50 points for each additional absence (starting with the 4th absence). However, prolonged absences cannot be excused (unless documented medical reasons).

In-class work may not be made up, but out-of-class writing may be turned in for partial or full credit. Any work missed is due the day you return, so email me regarding missed assignments before you return.

Although I have never yet imposed this penalty, I do reserve the right to penalize (by a grade reduction of 1/2 of a letter grade) repeated or flagrant tardiness, instances of significant classroom disruption, or other significant classroom discourtesy. (Note that my judgment determines these offenses.)

Late Work

You are responsible for getting assignments in on their due dates. Work is due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. You should complete readings and assignments included in the syllabus before coming to class on the date they are assigned, unless otherwise indicated.

Grade Complaints

A low grade on a single assignment will not prohibit a good course grade if your work improves. You should first discuss grade complaints with me (not the Director of Writing Programs nor the Chair) in at least one conference soon after the next term begins. If the conference does not resolve the problem in a valid, college-level manner, the complaint can be expressed on a form in the English office 4008 Turlington Hall. The form must be accompanied with copies of every assignment and the Program Assistant to the Director of Writing Programs for further action. Please note that the department does not review a complaint about a separate assignment nor will it review a complaint about final grades unless the above procedures are followed. The review committee may decide the grade should remain as it is, be raised, or be lowered. Its decision is final.

Academic Dishonesty

All students are required to 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>

Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

and the policies regarding harassment:

<http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

Common courtesy is mandatory in this classroom. This means things that interrupt discussion (such as mobile phones and talking) are not tolerated and will result in an absence for that day. Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action. Respect for the opinions of your fellow students is requisite. Arrogance and intolerance are not indicators of above-average intelligence. We can always learn something from one another.

One of the major benefits of higher education and membership in the university community is greater knowledge of and respect for other groups – religious, racial, or cultural. Indeed, genuine appreciation for individual differences and cultural diversity is essential to the learning environment. Sexual attitudes or actions that are intimidating, harassing, coercive, or abusive, or that invade the right to privacy of the individual are not acceptable. Those that upset the balance of communal living will be subject to disciplinary action. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs is located in 155 Tigert Hall and is open to assist students and groups.

Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action. Respect for the opinions of your fellow students is requisite. Arrogance and intolerance are not indicators of above-average intelligence. We can always learn something from one another.

Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Conferences

I encourage you to see me during my office hours, especially when you have questions about an assignment, need help with a particular writing problem, want extra feedback on a draft, or have questions about my comments on your work. Of course, we can also correspond via e-mail.

Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative and may change as the semester unfolds. We may add assignments or to change the order of assignments, but we will discuss any changes in class.

EW = *Effective Writing*

PEH = *A Plain English Handbook*

8/24 M – Introduction to the course, find writing samples (EW 1)

8/26 W – Discuss EW 1 and writing samples (EW 2; PEH 3)

8/31 M – Discuss Audience

9/2 W – Group 1: Technical Definitions

9/7 M – **No Class – Labor Day**

9/9 W – Draft Technical Definitions

9/14 M – Workshop Technical Definitions (EW 3, 10, 190-192; PEH 5)

9/16 W – Group 2: Emails and Organization

9/21 M – Draft/Workshop Emails (EW 4&5, PEH 6)

9/23 W – Group 3: Plain English (EW 6, PEH 7)

9/28 M – Group 4: Design (EW 9)

9/30 W – Group 5: Letters

10/5 M – Workshop Letter 1 / Draft Letter 2

10/7 W – Workshop Letter 2 (EW 10)

10/12 M – Group 6: Memos

10/14 W – Workshop Memo 1 / Draft Memo 2

10/19 M – Workshop Memo 2

10/21 W – TBD

10/26 – Group 7

10/28 – Draft Proposals

11/2 M – Workshop Proposals

11/4 W – Group 8

11/9 M – Workshop Cover Letter and Resume (EW 11)

11/11 W – **No Class – Veteran's Day**

11/16 M – Group 9: Reports

11/18 W – Draft Reports in class

11/23 M – Workshop Reports

11/25 W – Writing Essay Exams (EW Ch. 12)

11/30 M – Writing Workshops / revise resume, letter, memo

12/2 W – Writing Workshops / revise report

12/7 M – Workshop Reports / revise Portfolios / course evaluations

12/9 W – Portfolio due, last day of class