

## Business Communication in Its Rhetorical Contexts

### ***Jo Anna Bashforth***

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**Office hours:** Mon. & Wed.: 9:30-10 and by appointment

**Texts:** Matador Bookstore & Online Library Reserves:

\*Kolin, P. C. (2009). *Successful Writing at Work*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Houghton Mifflin.

\*Online Course Reader – Course Reserves via Library Access through– Passwords 3134 & 4222

**Prerequisite:** Successful completion of the lower division writing requirement (Freshman Composition 155)

### **Course Description:**

English 205 helps students master the rhetorical principles and writing practices necessary for producing effective business letters, memos, reports, and collaborative projects in professional contexts. The curriculum is informed by current research in rhetoric and professional writing and is guided by the needs and practices of business, industry, and society at large, as well as by the expectations of CSUN students and academic programs. The course teaches the rhetorical principles that help students shape their business writing ethically, for multiple audiences, in a variety of professional situations, ability to recognize and analyze ethical issues and a keen ability to communicate with a diverse audience.

### **Course Requirements:**

This course is designed to teach you techniques to analyze and write various kinds of business genres, to comprehend and define audience needs, and to apply appropriate rhetorical techniques to both format and content of assignments. You will be expected to learn and practice Standard Edited American English and to make appropriate style/language choices. You will also be expected to: read the textbook; complete exercises from it; complete writing assignments both in class and out; post Moodle-like posts in a non-Moodle like environment as required; be present to take quizzes; work collaboratively with peers on group assignments and in revision workshops; and attend class regularly, arrive on time, and remain until the end of the period.

### **Participation and Late Assignments:**

- This class is more workshop than lecture. Much in-class work will be collaborative, so your in-class participation, and hence attendance, is necessary, as is outside reading of assigned material. Excessive absences (two classes or more in this twice a week class), lateness, and early departures will affect your grade – if you are not here, you cannot participate. All absences will require a doctor's note or other appropriate documentation.

**Participation and Late Assignments, con't:**

- Assigned readings should be completed before coming to class so you will be familiar with topics, vocabulary, etc. and have a frame of reference for and to be able to participate in class discussions, take quizzes successfully, etc.
- Having assignments completed on time is essential. If you expect to be away or miss a class when an assignment is due, you will need to make arrangements to get the assignment to me ahead of time. **I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK.** Missed or late work of any kind means an **F** for that particular assignment. Because we will be focusing on various genres and the writing process, **PEER EDITING SESSIONS ARE NOT OPTIONAL.** Missing one will mean that your work will not be accepted for submission.

**Grading Criteria:**

Writing assignments are evaluated on your grasp of the rhetorical situation, the ability to effectively analyze audience expectations, and communicate very specific types of information based on that understanding. Audience analysis entails examining your writing purpose in light of your audience's information needs. You will need to consider your writing goals relative to the following:

- Content depth, breadth, and suitability
- Organization (clarity, purpose, and design)
- Style of design (layout) and language (syntax/usage)
- Mechanics of language (grammar/usage/ spelling and punctuation/ appropriate documentation)

**In addition,** you will submit with each assignment a written analysis of both your audience and your writing goals. Both your analyses and your assignments should reveal audience awareness in each if the following areas:

## 1. Rhetorical Analysis

- The purpose of each writing assignment
- The problems that assignments imply and directly state
- Potential readers
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## 2. Rhetorical Performance

- Appropriateness and accuracy of content (text and visuals)
- Appropriate format/organization (design layout/clarity/purpose) and language choices (usage/diction/tone)
- Attention to detail in proofreading and correction/Mechanical correctness and sentence clarity (spelling, punctuation, and grammar)

**Grading:**

Project #1- Employment Documents	20%
Project #2 – Usability Study	30%
Interactive Posts and Assignments	40%
Class Participation (quizzes, discussions, group work)	<u>10%</u>
	100%

**Plagiarism:** Don't do it. PLAGIARISM (INCLUDING “SELF-PLAIGIARIAM”) WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE ON THE PAPER INVOLVED, REPORTING OF THIS ACTIVITY TO THE DEAN OF STUDENTS, COULD LIKELY RESULT IN FAILING THE COURSE, AND POSSIBLE EXPULSION FROM CSUN,. Please familiarize yourself with this link. Plagiarism: what is it and how to recognize it?  
<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

## CSUN Professional Writing Goals

**Writing in Context:** Analyze professional cultures, social contexts, and audiences to determine how they shape the various purposes and forms of workplace writing, such as persuasion, organizational communication, and public discourse, with an emphasis on 1) writing for general audiences and decision makers; and 2) understanding the ethical dimensions of workplace communication.

**Writing Process:** Develop and understand various strategies for planning, researching, drafting, revising, and editing documents that respond effectively and ethically to professional situations and audiences.

**Collaboration:** Learn and apply strategies for successful collaboration, such as 1) working and communicating online with colleagues; 2) setting and achieving project goals; 3) responding constructively to peers' work; and 4) working as part of a writing team and/or with a client organization.

**Research:** Understand and use various research methods to produce professional documents 1) analyzing professional contexts; 2) assessing and using information resources; 3) using primary research methods such as interviews, observations, focus groups, and surveys to collect data; and 4) working ethically with research participants.

**Technology:** Select technologies appropriate to the generic conventions of various types of workplace communication, including email, memos, letters, reports, online documents, and white papers.

**Document Design:** Analyzing and learning the generic conventions, i.e. the workplace documents design, including 1) understanding and implementing various principles of format and layout and 2) interpreting and arguing with visual information.

\*\*Check schedule for various computer lab dates, shaded in gray with appropriate room assignments listed. *There is no excuse for arriving late or missing a lab date*, which are typically Peer Reviews, collaborative writing, or some other activity where your prompt arrival and group participation are essential.