

**Fayetteville State University**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of English and Foreign Languages  
**Engl344, Business and Professional Writing**  
Fall 2009

**I. Instructor Information:**

Instructor: Dr. Kirkpatrick  
Course # and Name: Engl344, Business and Professional Writing  
Semester Credit Hours: 3 credit hours  
Total Contact Hours for Class: 3  
Day and Time Class Meets: Virtual Online Hours or 24/7  
Office Phone: 672-2146  
Office Location: BU363C  
Office hours: Th 2-6 p.m. EST  
Email address: [kkirkpatrick@uncfsu.edu](mailto:kkirkpatrick@uncfsu.edu)  
This syllabus is available for download at [www.uncfsu.edu/english/syllabi.htm](http://www.uncfsu.edu/english/syllabi.htm)

**Email Policy:**

**FSU Policy on Electronic Mail:** Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account ([username@uncfsu.edu](mailto:username@uncfsu.edu)) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail.

Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at  
<http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf>

Your UNCFSU email address is a public email address – available to the UNCFSU community and the only address Blackboard associates with you. It is the only approved email address for school use. You must use your UNCFSU account for correspondence within this course. This is the primary address I will use to initiate correspondence by email with you through Blackboard. Banner may have another email address listed for you, which I may use as backup. I can also reply to messages from you using a different email address, but I cannot add this address to Blackboard.

**II. Course Description:** This course explores the principles of effective writing in business and administration with special focus on the elements of mechanics, organization, technical style, and documentation. Students will learn various forms of writing commonly used in business communication, such as business letters, memorandums, reports, and proposals. The course emphasizes clarity, conciseness, organization, format, style, tone, and correctness. Prerequisite: English 120. SBE students should have completed BADM215 prior to this course.

Additionally, during this course, you will investigate different kinds of and occasions for professional business writing. This course should help you to communicate effectively by understanding your audience, knowing your subject and expressing yourself clearly on the job. This course is designed to help you consider problems and solutions that can and will arise from your writing in your professional life. Therefore, the work you do for this class should look and read like professional business documents which you would write while on the job.

**III. Disabled Student Services:** In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1<sup>st</sup> Floor); 910-672-1203.

**IV. Textbook:** Oliu, Walter; Charles Brusaw; and Gerald Alred. *Writing that Works*, 9th ed. New York: Bedford St Martins, 2007. ISBN0312448449

**V. Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Discuss ethical issues related to business writing practices.
- 2) Employ editing techniques to improve a text's readability and appropriateness for its intended readers.
- 3) Use a style manual for citation suitable for business writing, such as Chicago.
- 4) Write business-style documents, such as memoranda, reports and proposals, applying principles of effective writing in business and administration.
- 5) Design documents, such as brochures and reports, that illustrate visual-design techniques.

#### **VI. Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria:**

##### **A. Grading Scale :**

In terms of the actual letter or number grade on professional writing assignments, grades are determined by the following standards:

**A** when an employer would be impressed with the professionalism and clear understanding of purpose, audience, content, expression, organization, style, and mechanics. Document would not be sent back for revision.

**B** when a document is geared toward an audience and is well organized but content could be more specific or when there are stylistic problems. Revisions would be minor.

**C** when there is a deficiency in content, arrangement, concept of audience, mechanics, and style, and the employer has to take time out of his or her schedule to correct the work and send it back for major revision.

**D** when the work is poor and the employer will be looking for someone to replace the employee or would send the employee for extensive communications training. The document would be started over from scratch.

**F** when the work is downright bad or unethical. The employee would be dismissed and legal action against the employee could be pursued. The document would be started over from scratch.

Grades will be determined using this grading system:

A: 90-100%    B: 80-90%    C: 70-80%    D: 60-70%    F: below 60%

Final grades are calculated on a four-point system and affect a student's grade point average as indicated below.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>Quality Points</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
A	Hours attempted and earned	4 per credit hour;	Exceptionally high
B	Hours attempted and	3 per credit hour	Good

	earned		
C	Hours attempted and earned	2 per credit hour	Satisfactory
D	Hours attempted and earned	1 per credit hour	Marginally passing
F	Hours attempted – Not earned	0 per credit hour	Failing
FN	Hours attempted – Not earned	0 per credit hour	Failing due to non-attendance. (Student registered, but <u>never</u> attended.)
W	Hours attempted – Not earned	No impact on GPA	Class withdrawal prior to deadline (see Academic Calendar)
P	Hours attempted and earned	No impact on GPA	Satisfactory - Assigned only in classes specified as Pass/Fail
WU	Hours attempted – Not earned	No impact on GPA	Withdrawal from all classes for semester or term
AU	Hours attempted – Not earned	No impact on GPA	Auditing

### REVISION OF GRADES – STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The following revisions become effective on August 16, 2007.

#### WN GRADE DISCONTINUED:

WN - Withdrawal due to non-attendance - discontinued, effective August 16, 2007.

STUDENTS: Do not expect faculty to withdraw you for non-attendance. Drop or withdraw\* from classes according to the deadlines published in the catalog. \*See warning below about class withdrawals.

NEW TYPE OF GRADE: INTERIM GRADES – (New name for “midterm grade,” with additional purposes). Interim grades will be assigned from the first week of the semester until the deadline for class withdrawals. Interim grades are used for informational and warning purposes only; they are not part of your permanent transcript and have no effect on your GPA. Instructors may assign interim grade of F to warn students of poor academic performance or they may assign “X” or “EA” grades. (See below for explanations) After midterm, faculty will assign all students an interim grade of A-F to inform students of their academic status as of midterm.

INTERIM GRADE X = NO SHOW – Assigned to students who are on a class roster, but never attend class. For warning purposes only; NOT a final grade.

STUDENTS: Check interim grades early in the semester. If you have an X grade, either begin attending the class or withdraw\* from it. \*See warning below about class withdrawals. If you do not take action in response to an X grade, you will receive a final grade of FN. (See “FN” below)

INTERIM GRADE EA = EXCESSIVE ABSENCES - Assigned to students whose class absences exceed 10% of the total contact hours. For warning purposes only, NOT a final grade.

STUDENTS: Check your interim grades often. If you have an “EA” grade for a class, you are in jeopardy of failure if you do not take immediate actions. Either resume attending the class or withdraw from it. \*See warning below about class withdrawals.

#### NEW FINAL GRADE:

FN = FAILURE DUE TO NON-ATTENDANCE – Assigned to students who are on class roster, but never attend the class. An FN grades is equivalent to an F grade in the calculation of the GPA.

STUDENTS: You must attend (or withdraw\* from) all the classes for which you are enrolled.

\*See warning below about class withdrawals.

#### WARNING ABOUT CLASS WITHDRAWALS:

When you withdraw from a class, you are wasting your money and time. You receive no refund for withdrawing from individual classes and you slow your progress toward degree completion.

If you withdraw from or fail more than one-third of your classes, you will no longer be eligible for financial aid.

**STRIVE TO EARN CREDIT FOR ALL THE CLASSES IN WHICH YOU ENROLL;  
WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES ONLY WHEN IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!**

## **B. Participation and Attendance:**

*University Attendance Requirements* – “Students are expected to attend all class meetings, laboratories, and other instructional sessions for all courses in which they are enrolled. Students are also expected to arrive to class on time and remain in class for the entire scheduled period. When students must miss class(es) for unavoidable reasons, i.e., illness, family emergencies, or participation in official university sponsored activities – they are responsible for informing faculty of the reasons for the absences, in advance if possible, and completing all missed assignments. During the first half of the semester/term, faculty will assign an interim grade of EA, Excessive Absences, for students whose class absences exceed 10% of the total contact hours for the class. Students who receive EA interim grades must either withdraw from the class or resume attendance. Students who resume attendance must consult with the instructor about completion of missed assignments. The EA is not a final grade, so students who are assigned an interim grade of EA, but do not withdraw from the class, will receive a final grade based on the evaluation criteria for the class.”

Online courses are designed for students who need a flexible schedule. Course content, assignments, and discussions are all delivered via Internet through Blackboard. Students should be familiar with using a web browser and e-mail systems. Check your UNCFSU email account regularly; you should also have the ability to send PDF, .rtf (rich text format) and .doc files. Please convert all .docx files to .doc files.

You are expected to have the equipment at your home or be able to travel to the UNCFSU campus to connect to the computer.

You are responsible for technical problems that arise with your equipment.

Technical problems on your end must be documented and communicated to the instructor in order to receive extensions on assignments. Save a copy of every assignment, posting, and email until final grades are posted.

If you have questions concerning Blackboard, phone Student Blackboard Assistance 24/7: 910.672.2085 and "Press 1" or toll free, 1-866-518-3955 or visit the site at [blackboard.uncfsu.edu/](http://blackboard.uncfsu.edu/)

You attend virtual classes by regularly posting comments to the Editing Workshops, Discussion Boards, Blogs, and Wikis. The minimum expectation is:

Log on to Blackboard at least three times a week to participate in the assignments, blogs, workshops, and discussions.

You are expected to spend about three hours each week online in Blackboard with ENGL344 e-mails, blogs, discussions, lectures, and reviewing course materials. (This is equal to the three hours of time you would spend in a traditional classroom.)

You are expected to spend an additional average of six hours a week on- and off-line working on course requirements – reading the textbook, writing documents, meeting with groups, working

with the writing center or Smarthinking, etc. This follows the college standard study guidelines that for every hour you spend in class, you should spend two hours outside of class in preparation.

### C. Course Policies and Grading:

Weekly lectures and/assignments will be posted and available every Monday.

<i>Proposed point distribution for coursework (subject to adjustment):</i>	<i>1000 points</i>
Weekly Discussions, Workshop and Blog comments	100 points
Blog maintenance and non-assignment blog entries	150
Quizzes – almost weekly on Blackboard	160
Revised weekly written assignments	320
Final Group Project, broken down as:	270
Group project and participation	130
Plan/Proposal/Progress report	70
Status report	70

### Discussion Boards/Workshopping and Blogs:

#### I. There are three **Discussion Boards** :

- 1) The **Discussion Board Forum** is intended to provide a medium to simulate classroom discussions. Each week in the Announcements and on the Discussion Board, I will post that week's discussion theme or questions based upon that week's lecture and reading. Participate in our classroom discussion of this topic by posting your comments to the discussion board.
- 2) We will also have a **Q and A Discussion Forum** where you can post questions on anything pertaining to our class. Keep in mind that a classmate may be to answer your question more quickly and more thoroughly than can I – especially if it is a tech question.
- 3) Additionally we will have a **Student Lounge Discussion Forum** where you can just go and chill with your classmates and discuss anything you want – the Superbowl, the cafeteria food, child care. Need a referral to a good dentist? Ask here. I will monitor this Forum only to ensure that all participants are being respectful and polite; otherwise, I consider this student space and will leave it to you.

II. **Workshops** will take place via **Blogs**. You are responsible for maintaining your own blog and reading and commenting on others' blogs. The blog's topic is your involvement and use of Business and Professional Writing and you can add anything to this blog that you like on topic. It is basically your public diary or journal for this class. All rough drafts of your weekly written class assignments are to be posted to your blog so that classmates can leave feedback. Then revise your

draft and repost it for a grade. The version you submit for grade should be a PDF, rft, or doc attachment.

As part of the Blog Workshop, you must read your classmates' rough drafts critically and leave comments suggesting specific improvements. Consequently, comments on postings should be substantive. They should address content as well as form. However, broader discussion of the material involved is encouraged, as well as comments about "little" things, like sentence structure and punctuation. Postings will be evaluated on their thoroughness, tone, clarity, and appropriateness. Do not respond with empty comments like "How true!" or "Good job!" Be substantive and specific. Each posting should be at least three lines long, which allows you the opportunity to make a meaningful comment. Try to incorporate what you have learned through your readings and online lectures.

Consider responding to questions like these:

Instead of writing "I agree," why do you agree? Be specific.

Is something missing? Do you need additional information?

Are there any unanswered questions? What more do you need or want?

What new ideas can you add to continue the conversation?

Has the author written to the appropriate audience? Is she using jargon that is understandable to this audience?

Has the author clearly employed the appropriate formula (ie, the Direct, Indirect, or AIDA format) to organize the correspondence?

How would you respond if you received this letter in the mail? Would you read it or not? Why?

Has the author achieved appropriate "you" attitude? How? Where?

Follow-up comments should consist of at least two complete sentences. Always be respectful and feel free to disagree with your classmates' opinions. Cite evidence to support your dissenting opinion. When you see an especially well written section, praise it, but be specific about why it is so good.

**Post each week:1) at least one entry to your blog, in addition to the class assignments;**

**2) a minimum of two substantive comments to the Discussion Topic on the Classroom Discussion Boards;**

**3) a minimum of two substantive comments to your classmates' blogs.**

**Grading Standards Rubric**

For a business writing course, standards correspond (as nearly as the classroom setting will allow) with what would be expected of students or employees in an actual business setting. Texts should be:

**Word processed.** All out-of-class assignments should be typed or word processed and presented on good-quality paper if handed in by hard copy or sent as a PDF or MSWord file attachment via email or dropbox. Handwritten or inline memos, letters, and reports are not acceptable in a professional setting and should not be acceptable in the classroom.

**Clean.** Appearance and format should count toward the grade. The proper use of heads, white space, margins, and other visual devices all contribute to readability and accessibility of information, and handling them skillfully is extremely important.

**Error-free.** Simple mechanical and grammatical accuracy is absolutely necessary. Nothing destroys an author's credibility faster than spelling or grammatical errors.

**Audience-appropriate.** Readability, a style and tone chosen for clarity of expression and suitable to the target audience, should also play a significant role in determining the grade on an assignment.

**Purposeful and well supported.** Whether they set out to explain, analyze, or persuade, students' documents should have a clear purpose that is supported by appropriate facts and details. Visuals should be incorporated where useful, and research should be properly documented.

In terms of the actual letter or number grade, grades are determined by the following standards:

**A** when an employer would be impressed with the professionalism and clear understanding of purpose, audience, content, expression, organization, style, and mechanics. Document would not be sent back for revision.

**B** when a document is geared toward an audience and is well organized but content could be more specific or when there are stylistic problems. Revisions would be minor.

**C** when there is a deficiency in content, arrangement, concept of audience, mechanics, and style, and the employer has to take time out of his or her schedule to correct the work and send it back for major revision.

**D** when the work is poor and the employer will be looking for someone to replace the employee or would send the employee for extensive communications training. The document would be started over from scratch.

**F** when the work is downright bad or unethical. The employee would be dismissed and legal action against the employee could be pursued. The document would be started over from scratch.

#### **D. Policy on Missed or Late Assignments:**

Assignments are due by 9 a.m. on their due date. Late work will receive a grade deduction – half a letter grade within 48 hours of due time and a full letter grade thereafter but no assignment is accepted for grade after seven days. Depending on the assignment, work should be submitted by posting to the blog, drop box and by email. **Always keep a copy of every assignment**, whether on disk, computer, or hard copy. When you submit work by email, be sure to save it as a PDF, rft or MSWord .doc file. Convert all .docx files to .doc Emailed work must be in the form of an attachment. University computers cannot read wps, Word Perfect or Lotus. **Additionally, you may be asked to submit reports electronically to turnitin.com in order to receive a final grade.**

#### **E. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:**

According to the Student Handbook Code of Conduct at FSU:

Academic dishonesty is the giving, taking, or presenting of information or material by a student with the intent of unethically or fraudulently aiding oneself or another on any work which is to be considered in the determination of a grade or the completion of academic requirements.

**It is expected that all members of the University community will work to actively deter academic misconduct and thus will share in the responsibility and authority to challenge and make known to the appropriate authority acts of apparent academic dishonesty.**

1. **Violations** A student shall be guilty of a violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy if he or she engages in act(s) of:

**a. Aiding and Abetting Others to Cheat or Plagiarize.** Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, giving unauthorized assistance to another in order to assist that person in cheating or plagiarizing.

**b. Attempt.** Such conduct shall include attempting any act that if completed would constitute a violation as defined herein.

**c. Cheating.** Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, a student receiving unauthorized aid or assistance on any form of academic work.

**d. Falsification.** Such conduct shall include the unauthorized changing of grades or conduct involving any untruth, either spoken or written regarding any circumstances related to academic work.

**e. Plagiarism.** Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, copying the language, structure, ideas and/or thoughts of another, without giving appropriate recognition and/or adopting the same as one's own original work.

In short, plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's words or ideas *as your own*. Besides being unethical, it is stealing, illegal, and prosecutable. When it comes to writing within the adult world, it is especially important to understand and avoid any taint of plagiarism, as you can lose not only your job but also your reputation and livelihood. If you are caught plagiarizing on the job, you and your company can be sued. Get in the habit now of writing your own work. Plagiarism includes forgetting to place quotation marks around a quotation; not documenting that quotation, or summary, paraphrase, illustration, original idea, data; allowing a friend or relative to write or rewrite a paragraph in your paper; submitting a paper that has been written by anyone other than yourself. Evidence of plagiarism, either intentional or not, will result in an automatic F for the assignment and perhaps in the course.

**Please note: If these evaluation criteria must be revised because of extraordinary circumstances, the instructor will distribute a written amendment to the syllabus.**

#### **F. Student Behavior Expectations:**

The instructor will respect all students and will make every effort to maintain a virtual classroom climate that promotes learning for all students. Students must accept their responsibility for maintaining a positive

classroom environment by abiding by the following rules:

1. Student/teacher relationships, as well as relationships among peers, must be respectful at all times. No flaming.
2. Students are not permitted to post to the discussion boards any information that may be distracting or offensive to the classroom environment.
3. Students are not permitted to use the class list serve for business or political purposes or to distribute jokes or other material unrelated to course content.
4. Students must refrain from any activity that will disrupt the class.
5. Students are not permitted to use profanity, promote violence, or use hate writing or images of any sort.
6. Student participation is a required part of class. Participation means that you have read the assigned readings, have prepared meaningful comments on them, attend class regularly and take an active, cooperative role in class discussion and workshops. Participation requires your alertness, preparation, and involvement.

*Consequences for Failing to Meet Behavioral Expectations* — The first time a student violates one of these rules, the instructor will warn him or her. (Faculty members reserve the right to warn students publicly if needed.) The second time a student violates the guidelines, the instructor may deduct as many as 20 points from the student's final grade. If a student violates the guidelines three times, the instructor will report the student to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action according to the FSU Code of Student Conduct.

Below is FSU's formal statement on Disruptive Student Behavior. Although it is written with the traditional classroom in mind, we will employ within our virtual classroom the principles upon which the policy is based. For example, Point 5 is the no-eating-in-class rule. Of course you may eat during your visit to our virtual classroom. But the principle is, don't be doing something during the virtual class visit that will distract you so much that you can't concentrate – so don't try to make your Easter dinner for your huge family while you are also taking an online quiz.

### **FSU Policy on Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom**

The *Code of the University of North Carolina* (of which FSU is a constituent institution) and the *FSU Code of Student Conduct* affirm that all students have the right to receive instruction without interference from other students who disrupt classes.

FSU Core Curriculum Learning Outcome under Ethics and Civic Engagement (6.03): All students will “prepare themselves for responsible citizenship by fulfilling roles and responsibilities associated with membership in various organizations.” Each classroom is a mini-community. Students learn and demonstrate responsible citizenship by abiding by the rules of classroom behavior and respecting the rights all members of the class.

The FSU Policy on Disruptive Behavior (see FSU website for complete policy) identifies the following behaviors as disruptive:

1. Failure to respect the rights of other students to express their viewpoints by behaviors such as repeatedly interrupting others while they speak, using profanity and/or disrespectful names or labels for others, ridiculing others for their viewpoints, and other similar behaviors;
2. Excessive talking to other students while the faculty member or other students are presenting information or expressing their viewpoints.
3. Use of cell phones and other electronic devices
4. Overt inattentiveness (sleeping, reading newspapers)

5. Eating in class (except as permitted by the faculty member)
6. Threats or statements that jeopardize the safety of the student and others
7. Failure to follow reasonable requests of faculty members
8. Entering class late or leaving class early on regular basis
9. Others as specified by the instructor.

The instructor may take the following actions in response to disruptive behavior. Students should recognize that refusing to comply with reasonable requests from the faculty member is another incidence of disruptive behavior.

1. Direct student to cease disruptive behavior.
2. Direct student to change seating locations.
3. Require student to have individual conference with faculty member. At his meeting the faculty member will explain the consequences of continued disruptive behavior.
4. Dismiss class for the remainder of the period. (Must be reported to department chair.)
5. Lower the student's final exam by a maximum of one-letter grade.
6. File a complaint with the Dean of Students for more severe disciplinary action.

Students who believe the faculty member has unfairly applied the policy to them may make an appeal with the faculty member's department chair.

## **VII. Academic Support Resources:**

### **Internet sites:**

1. <http://www.uncfsu.edu/writingcenter/index.htm> (FSU – The Writing Center)
2. <http://writing.eng.vt.edu/> (Virginia Tech)
3. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> (Purdue Writing Lab)
4. <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/> (Wisconsin Writing Lab)
5. <http://athena.english.vt.edu/%7EIDLE/Gym2/index.html> (Virginia Tech Grammar Gym)

Study Strategies (Center for Academic Success at Louisiana State University:

[http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/cas.nsf/\\$Content/Study+Strategies+About?OpenDocument](http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/cas.nsf/$Content/Study+Strategies+About?OpenDocument)

Smarthinking Online Tutoring: [http://www.smarthinking.com/static/pub\\_common/hours.cfm](http://www.smarthinking.com/static/pub_common/hours.cfm)

The Learning Center in the H.T. Chick Building is available to assist students with writing, mathematics, and reading.

If you have questions concerning Blackboard, phone **Student Blackboard Assistance 24/7: 910.672.2085** and "Press 1" or toll free, **1-866-518-3955** or visit the site at [blackboard.uncfsu.edu/](http://blackboard.uncfsu.edu/)

## **VIII. General Course Outline (subject to change)**

**Week 1 – Topic: Welcome and Introduction to Course; Introduction of Professor and Students**

**Week 2 – Topic: Review Writing Process; Blogs**

**Week 3 – Topic: Business and Professional Writing; Memos and Emails**

**Week 4 – Topic: The Informal Report**

**Week 5 – Topic: Business and Professional Letters Part 1**

**Week 6 – Topic: Business and Professional Letters Part 2**

**Week 7 – Topic: Persuasion**

**Week 8 – Topic: Job Materials: The Cover Letter**

**Week 9 – Topic: Job Materials: The Resume**

**Week 10 – Topic: Formal Reports; Transmittal Memos and Contents**

**Week 11 – Topic: Wikis and Working in Groups**

**Week 12 – Topic: Reports: Proposals**

**Week 13 – Topic: Reports: Progress**

**Week 14 – Conference Week**

**Week 15 – Topic: Reports: Status, Etc.**

**Week 16 – Completion**

### **IX. Teaching Strategies**

This course will be workshop- and discussion-oriented and student-centered. Although most classes will follow a discussion/lecture format, other strategies will include presentations, multimedia review and analysis, and testing and quizzes.

To that end, you will be doing a lot of writing and your writing will be critiqued by the class in writing workshops. All of the writing you do in this class should be considered *public* writing, meaning it will be shared with the class. When a written assignment is due for workshop, it should be presented to class via your blog for discussion. Class members will then respond to the writing, pointing out how it achieves its goals, making suggestions for improvement, describing its effect upon potential audiences, evaluating its professional qualities. For workshops to be effective, active participation is required from each student.