Written Communications in Business



**Course Information**

Semester: Fall 2023

Course: English 312

Professor: Dr. Christine Grogan

Credits: 3

Email: [cgrogan@udel.edu](mailto:cgrogan@udel.edu)

Website: <http://christinegrogan.weebly.com/business-writing.html>

Prerequisite: English 110

Student Appointment Hours: TWR 8:00-9:00 am and by appointment in Room 759

**Course Description**

When asked what business courses should teach more of, venture capitalist and Silicon Valley marketing executive Guy Kawasaki responded: “teach students how to communicate in five-sentence e-mails and with 10-slide PowerPoint presentations. If they just taught every student that, American business would be much better off.” In this course, you will learn to do that and more. English 312 introduces you to the conventions, genres, and strategies of business communication as it examines the role of written communication in decision making. In particular, it focuses on skills in rhetorical analysis, document design, reader-centered writing, and professional discourse. You will create written messages including e-mails, memos, letters, proposals, and reports that simulate on-the-job communication tasks.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

* produce clear, concise, and effective reader-centered and purpose-specific business messages
* demonstrate mastery of standard grammar, writing mechanics, and appropriate formats
* use written and visual rhetoric to accommodate different audiences and purposes
* craft accessible, persuasive, and usable documents
* gain a competitive edge with professionalism and business etiquette skills

The course’s General Education Objectives are:

* read critically
* analyze arguments and information
* engage in constructive ideation
* communicate effectively in writing, orally, and through creative expression

Required Materials

No textbook is required for this course. Readings will be provided on Canvas.

A laptop that you take to all our classes is required.

You must regularly check Canvas and your UD email account; know where to go to print your work and how to save a document as a PDF; and know how to use Word or Google Docs and PowerPoint or Google Slides.

Graded Assignments

During this course, you will complete five major projects along with classwork assignments. The following distribution of points will be used to determine final grades:

Topic Proposal 100

Progress Report 100

Business Report 200

Correspondence Packet 100

Internship Application 100

Classwork Assignments 400

\*If you take your papers for our class to the Writing Center and/or participate in the upcoming extra credit events, you will receive a token. Tokens may be “cashed in” to revise or turn in late (one class day) the topic proposal, progress report, correspondence packet, and internship application.

**Grades**

This course uses the following grading scale. There are a total of 1,000 points to be earned in the course. At the end of the semester, your point total will be divided by 1,000 to determine your final grade.

**A** 940-1000 points (or 94% - 100%)

**A-** 900-939 points (or 90% - 93.9%)

**B+** 870-899 points (or 87% - 89.9%)

**B** 840-869 points (or 84% - 86.9%)

**B-** 800-839 points (or 80% - 83.9%)

**C+** 770-799 points (or 77% - 79.9%)

**C** 740-769 points (or 74% - 76.9%)

**C-** 700-739 points (or 70% - 73.9%)

**D+** 670-699 points (or 67% - 69.9%)

**D** 640-669 points (or 64% - 66.9%)

**D-** 600-639 points (or 60% - 63.9%)

**F** 0-599 points (or 59.9% or lower)

Attendance Policy

As in the workplace, you must attend and be punctual. Regular attendance is required, as there is no PTO (paid time off). I will take attendance at the start of each class for purposes of financial aid eligibility. It is your responsibility to notify me that you are present if you are late to class. If absent, it is your responsibility to check Canvas Modules for missed work and to check with a classmate for class notes.

If you never attend class or you stop attending class after the drop/add period (September 13), you will receive a grade of Z at the end of the term. It is your responsibility to drop each course that you do not plan to attend, even if your registration is canceled for non-payment of fees.

Students with extended absences are encouraged to contact Dr. Trembanis ([sltrem@udel.edu](mailto:sltrem@udel.edu)) to coordinate communication with faculty and with Mr. Mendoza ([melvin@udel.edu](mailto:melvin@udel.edu)) to work through program progress issues.

For further information about the university’s attendance policies, please visit <https://catalog.udel.edu/content.php?catoid=63&navoid=16103#seat-claim-policy>.

Late and Missed Work

Late/missed work is unprofessional. An assignment is late if it is not turned in by the due date on Canvas. See page 2 for what work can be turned in late with a token.

**Class and Online Etiquette**

Professionalism is expected at all times. While a free exchange of ideas and expressions is very much encouraged, strive for civility and respect in all of your comments—whether in the classroom or online. Please keep in mind that we come to the class conversation from different walks of life and with different personal experiences. Whatever our values, commitments, or stories might be, I trust that diversity will prove to be an asset as we explore these topics together. If at any point you feel concerned about or uncomfortable with a dynamic in our conversation, I encourage you to reach out to me to share your observations.

Student learning can only occur when students and their instructors feel safe, respected, and supported by each other. To ensure that our learning environment is as safe as possible, you are expected to abide by the most up to date [University of Delaware’s COVID-19 Guidelines](https://www.udel.edu/home/coronavirus/).

**Writing Center**

AAP writing specialists [**Michael Aronovitz**](https://www.aap.udel.edu/people/marono) and [**Dr. Brandy Yates**](https://www.aap.udel.edu/people/byates) offer writing tu​t​oring sessions through which all members of the UD AAP community can meet to talk and learn about writing.

Wilmington: Michael Aronovitz ([marono@udel.edu](mailto:marono@udel.edu))

Sign up here through Blue Hen Success for virtual appointments Fridays starting at 8am and finishing at 6pm (so the last appointment for the given day would be 5pm). [UDEL Student Scheduling Link](https://udel.campus.eab.com/capabilities#/my/appointment-results?care_unit_id=2&service_id=17197&begin_date=2022-02-22&staff_ids=6420478)

When you sign up, it sends Professor Aronovitz an alert so he can email you the link for the meeting on Zoom.

Meetings are virtual by default, but if you need a face-to-face meeting, it could certainly be arranged. Also, if you need to go over a paper and you are not available on the given Friday, please send Professor Aronovitz an email. He will set up a meeting on Zoom off schedule, even the weekend if need be!

Dover and Georgetown: Brandy Yates ([byates@udel.edu](mailto:byates@udel.edu))

Sign up for virtual appointments through Blue Hen Success at <https://udel.campus.eab.com/pal/hC7tCT7lUa>.

In person hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12-2

Virtual Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-6

**Academic Honesty**

Please familiarize yourself with UD policies regarding academic dishonesty. The [Academic Honesty Policy](https://www.udel.edu/content/dam/udelImages/student-life/StudentGuide.pdf) states: “Students must be honest and forthright in their academic studies. Students are expected to do their own work and must give proper credit for any work not their own. Students may neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance. Engaging in academic dishonesty, or allowing other students to do the same, corrupts the educational process and diminishes the quality of a University of Delaware degree.” View the [university’s procedures](https://www.udel.edu/students/community-standards/conduct-process/) for resolving academic dishonesty concerns. Contact Community Standards & Conflict Resolution at [communitystandards@udel.edu](mailto:communitystandards@udel.edu) or 302.831.2117.

**AI or Machine Learning Tools**

Unless given permission to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E 2), each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools.

**Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct**

The University of Delaware works to promote an academic and work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and sexual misconduct. As a member of the community, your rights, resources, and responsibilities are reflected in the Non-Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Title IX policy. Please familiarize yourself with this policy at the [University’s Office of Equity & Inclusion’s website](https://sites.udel.edu/oei/). You can report any concerns to the University’s Office of Equity & Inclusion at 302.831.8063 or at [titleixcoordinator@udel.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@udel.edu). You can report anonymously through UD Police at 302.831.2222 or the [EthicsPoint Compliance Hotline](https://sites.udel.edu/intaudit/compliance-hotline/).

* Read the [full policy](https://sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/files/2020/09/20200902-NDSM-Policy-final.pdf)
* [File a report](https://sites.udel.edu/oei/)

If, at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am a responsible employee, which means I am directed to report any incident of sexual harassment or misconduct to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will then meet with the student to discuss how the University will respond to the report and the student’s rights and options, to offer resources, and to ensure that the student and the campus community are safe. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in a paper assignment, or in office hours, I promise to protect your privacy—I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator in a confidential manner.

For more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and reporting information, please refer to [www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct). You can also send an email to the Title IX Coordinator at [titleixcoordinator@udel.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@udel.edu). At UD, we provide 24/7/365 crisis assistance and victim advocacy and counseling. Contact 302.831.1001 to get in touch with a sexual offense support advocate, as well as confidential and anonymous counseling services for other concerns.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students who think they may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact one of the AAP liaisons to the [Office of Disability Support Services](https://sites.udel.edu/dss/) (DSS) as soon as possible. In Dover: Amy Shupard, [ashupard@udel.edu](mailto:ashupard@udel.edu). If you will be using accommodations in this course (or if you are in the process of registering for accommodations), please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

**Non-Discrimination**

The University of Delaware does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, disability, religion, age, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law in its employment, educational programs and activities, admissions policies, and scholarship and loan programs as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and University policies. The University of Delaware also prohibits unlawful harassment including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

For inquiries or complaints related to non-discrimination policies, please contact the Office of Equity & Inclusion at [oei@udel.edu](mailto:oei@udel.edu), 302.831.8063.

For complaints related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact the Office of Disability Support Services at [dssoffice@udel.edu](mailto:dssoffice@udel.edu), Alison Hall, Suite 130, Newark, DE 19716, 302.831.4643 OR contact the [U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html).

**Black Lives Matter**

The Associate in Arts Program (AAP) values and celebrates the humanity of each student, staff member, and educator in our community. There is a long tradition of calling for racial justice in American society. Black Lives Matter continues that tradition. We categorically maintain that we care about Black lives. We acknowledge the long history of racist policies and attitudes that persist in American culture, including at the University of Delaware. As part of the University, the AAP is committed to creating and maintaining an equitable and inclusive learning and working environment for each member of our community through both reflection and action.

**Student Hardship Affecting Learning**

Students who have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lack a safe and stable place to live and believe this may affect their performance in the course, are urged to reach out for support. You may notify me and/or your other professors if you are comfortable doing so, and you are also encouraged to reach out to our Student Support and Engagement Coordinators. On the Dover campus this is Lindsey Massey ([lrmassey@udel.edu](mailto:lrmassey@udel.edu)). We will do our best to provide any resources that we may possess. Student and family resources include:

**The AAP Student Support Fund**

This AAP-only fund is here to help if you face an acute financial hardship that might disrupt your college education. The Student Support Fund can assist if you are experiencing food insecurity, difficulty maintaining access to housing, technology, or transportation, or financial strain that may threaten your ability to keep up with schoolwork or remain enrolled. Application is easy. Just fill out the application below and one of our Student Support and Engagement Coordinators will reach out to you as soon as possible. Please be aware that our fund is limited, and student demand may outstrip supply. However, we will do our best to assist you and connect you to alternative forms of financial assistance.Application link: <http://www.udel.edu/0010295>.

### **Student Crisis Fund**

### In addition to the AAP’s fund,the University of Delaware’s Office of the Dean of Students also provides emergency money to eligible UD students who face a serious financial hardship due to unanticipated expenses. AAP students can apply to this fund, too. To find out if you are eligible, please fill out the [Student Crisis Fund Application form](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDelaware&layout_id=24) which you can find here: <http://www.udel.edu/0010296>.

The Office of the Dean of Students will then contact you to discuss further. Please note that it is ok to leave questions on this form blank if you do not know the answer; just fill it out to the best of your ability.

**Mental Health & Well-Being**

In addition to impacting your overall wellbeing, diminished mental health can interfere with optimal academic performance. If this course and/or others are causing or contributing significant mental or emotional stress for you, or if there are stressful issues with other parts of your life, please consider reaching out to someone. Asking for help is a smart and courageous thing to do—for yourself and for those who care about you.

* Contact me: If you are struggling with this course, please come by during student hours or contact me by email.
* Check in with your academic advisor: If you are struggling in multiple classes, unsure whether you are making the most of your time at UD, or unsure what academic resources are available to support you, make an appointment with your advisor through BHSC.
* Connect with the Mental Health Care Coordinator (MHCC): Located on the AAP sites. They are available via email at [rbrandt@udel.edu](mailto:rbrandt@udel.edu) (Dover/Georgetown). The MHCCs can assist you right on your campus. They can also connect you to outside resources and services, if needed.
* TimelyCare: All students enrolled at the University of Delaware now have access to 24/7 virtual mental health care through [TimelyCare](https://sites.udel.edu/counseling/timelycare/). This service is completely free for students. Features include on demand Talk Now virtual support (unlimited); scheduled counseling (limitations apply); health coaching for support with healthy behavior changes (unlimited). All students should register so that when the service is needed, it will be ready to use. You can find the link to the short registration process here: <https://sites.udel.edu/counseling/timelycare/>
* Use the UD Helpline: The UD Helpline is a free service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for any UD student feeling anxious, overwhelmed, or otherwise in need of someone to talk to. The number is 302.831.1001.
* Use UD’s Crisis Text Line: Text “UDTEXT” (or “STEVE” for students of color) to 741741 to connect with confidential text message support.

### **Free Food:** For an up-to-date list of where to find free food in Delaware please see this doc: <http://www.udel.edu/0010297>.

### **WIFI:** For a list of free and affordable WIFI in Delaware please see this doc: <http://www.udel.edu/0010298>.

**Help with Technology:** UD Information Technology, in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Students, makes loaner laptops available to students in need of a short-term loan (e.g., while their own laptop is being repaired). You may apply for one [here](https://sites.udel.edu/askit/loaner-laptops/).

**Free Virtual Tutoring Services**: The College of Arts and Science will cover up to 24 one-hour individual tutoring sessions per student. Special consideration will be given to first generation students or student​s of historically underrepresented populations: <https://www.cas.udel.edu/ssc/ccc/academic-support-resources>

Once you have applied, you can sign up for a tutoring session using this link: <https://www.ae.udel.edu/tutoring-services/individual/>

Once tutoring is secured, you are responsible for communicating with your tutor that your tutoring sessions will be covered by the College of Arts & Sciences.

**Tentative Schedule**

Week 1

W Aug 30 Syllabus

Activity: Introductions (10 points)

Activity: Email Practice (10 points)

Week 2

W Sept 6 Professional Communication in Today’s Digital, Social, Mobile World

Video: “Making Your Writing Correct” (5 points)

Video: “Making Your Writing and Considerate” (5 points)

Activity: Editing Challenge (10 points)

Week 3

M Sept 11 Introduce Topic Proposal

Activity: Examples of Good and Bad Business Writing (10 points)

Activity: Professional Bio (10 points)

# W Sept 13 Read “The Irresistible Power of Storytelling as a Strategic Business Tool”

Activity: Tell Us a Story (10 points)

Week 4

M Sept 18 Video: “Making Your Writing Concise” (5 points)

Video: “Making Your Writing Conversational” (5 points)

Video: “Making Your Writing Concrete” (5 points)

W Sept 20 Read “The Art of the Paragraph”

Read “The Curse of Knowledge”

Activity: Respond to “The Curse of Knowledge” (10 points)

Week 5

M Sept 25 Peer Review: Topic Proposal (20 points)

W Sept 27 Topic Proposal Due

Introduce Correspondence Packet

Writing Routine and Positive Messages (direct, frontload approach)

Week 6

M Oct 2 Video: “Making Your Writing Complete” (5 points)

Video: “Making Your Writing Clear” (5 points)

Video: “Making Your Writing Courteous” (5 points)

Writing Negative Messages (indirect approach)

Activity: Analyze a Negative News Message (10 points)

Activity: Rewrite a Negative News Message (10 points)

W Oct 4 Activity: Analyze Real Business Messages (yahoo, Netflix, Groupon) (10 points)

Activity: Rewrite New Policy Memo (10 points)

Week 7

M Oct 9 Go over AIDA

Activity: Rewrite Tolson Auto Repair Message (10 points)

W Oct 11 Peer Review: Correspondence Packet (20 points)

Week 8

M Oct 16 Correspondence Packet Due

Introduce Internship Application

Video: “Include Keywords in Professional Experience” (5 points)

Activity: US Bureau of Labor and Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook (10 points)

W Oct 18 Video: “Tailor Your Education to Match the Job” (5 points)

Video: “How to Use Achievements on Your Résumé” (5 points)

Activity: Analyze Sample Résumé (10 points)

Activity: Rewrite Sample Résumé (10 points)

Week 9

M Oct 23 Read “More Help for Your Résumés and Application Letters”

Video: “Use Your Objective to Focus the Reader” (which includes an activity to analyze a job posting) (5 points)

Discuss Objective vs. Summary of Qualifications

W Oct 25 Activity: Analyze a Sample Job Posting (10 points)

Relevant Experience (college courses, projects, volunteer work)

Activity: Analyze Sample Follow-Up Message (10 points)

Activity: Rewrite Sample Follow-Up Message (10 points)

Week 10

M Oct 30 Video: “Prepare Your References” (5 points)

Digital Dirt

W Nov 1 Peer Review: Internship Application (20 points)

Week 11

M Nov 6 Internship Application Due

Introduce Progress Report

W Nov 8 Mini-Presentations: Progress Reports (10 points)

Progress Report Due

Week 12

M Nov 13 Video: “Understanding the PARC System” (5 points)

Font, Headings, Columns, and Color

Activity: Find UD business documents (10 points)

W Nov 15 Activity: Analyze Two Flyers (10 points)

Video: “Incorporating Graphics” (5 points)

Video: “Deciding on a Report’s Mechanics” (5 points)

Week 13

M Nov 20 Thanksgiving Break

W Nov 22 Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

M Nov 27 Video: “Exploring Business Reports” (5 points)

Video: “Analytical Reports” (5 points)

Activity: Go over Student and Professional Examples (including UD ones) (10 points)

W Nov 29 Go over the Parts of the Business Report

Week 15

M Dec 4 Activity: Answer Questions about Sample Report (10 points)

W Dec 6 Peer Review: Business Report (20 points)

Week 16

M Dec 11 Business Report Due

Student Evaluations