

ENGL 2314: Writing for the Professions

Term

Fall 2024

Instructor

Christen Barron

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Office: Classroom Hall Room 318

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 AM-Noon and 3:30 PM-5:00 PM or [schedule a virtual meeting](#) by appointment

Course Delivery

This course meets in-person twice a week.

Meeting Times and Location

- Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM
- Main Campus | Classroom Hall | Room 219

Catalog Description

This course examines writing and communication in professional contexts. Students analyze and compose in workplace genres and examine the ways these genres fulfill audience expectations, communicate information verbally and visually, and function as responses to rhetorical situations common to the workplace.

What to Expect

This class is hands-on and collaborative. Expect to work independently and with your classmates to analyze and address workplace communication situations in real time. You'll also have weekly opportunities to discuss and practice workplace writing strategies through writing exercises. All course assignments are designed to enhance learning from our in-class sessions, therefore regular class attendance is essential to your overall success in the course.

Course Learning Objectives

After successful completion of the course, you will...

- Gain familiarity with common workplace documents and genres
- Explore strategies for writing and communicating in professional contexts
- Gain familiarity with the communication practices and expectations within the profession of your choice
- Demonstrate ability to collaborate with peers to analyze and address common workplace writing situations

Required Materials and Textbooks

- Equipment: desktop computer, laptop, or tablet with a reliable internet connection
- Software: word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Software: Zoom and Google accounts
- Software: [Canva subscription](#) (subscribe to the free version or use your free account through your university email)
- Textbook: Free Open Access resources posted on Blackboard/linked on syllabus

Course Communication

Important course updates and announcements will be posted regularly on the Blackboard announcements page. You will also receive copies of Blackboard announcements through your campus email account. If you need to contact your instructor directly, please email christen.barron@tamusa.edu through your campus email account. You can expect a response in 1-24 hours during campus business hours. I do not check Blackboard messages!

Labor-Based Grading Agreement

By remaining this course, you agree to be graded on your labor instead of the quality of your writing. This means you'll be graded on the overall work you put towards strengthening your writing skills instead of the quality of a specific piece of your writing. Each assignment in this class is an invitation to practice and strengthen your writing skills. Thus, the more times you practice writing by completing an assignment, the higher your

final grade. You'll still receive constructive feedback on your writing from both myself and your peers, but that feedback won't impact your final course grade.

Labor-Based Grading Breakdown

How is labor measured?

It can be difficult to "measure" labor, so I keep track of your writing practice/labor in the class by awarding you points for each assignment you submit. Obviously, not all writing assignments are created equal, so each assignment receives a point value based on how much time and effort I imagine students will need to complete the assignment. Because I'm grading you on the labor you put into the assignment, you won't earn full credit on any assignments that appear incomplete or unfinished.

How will I know how many points I need to earn a specific final letter grade?

Below is a breakdown of the point ranges for final letter grades

A Range: 450+ points

C Range: 350 – 399 points F: Below 300 points

B Range: 400 - 449 points

D Range: 300 – 349 points

Assignments

Writing Lab Exercises (200 points) are informal weekly assignments designed to help you gain hands-on experience writing in professional/workplace genres. Exercise lengths vary, but expect to write at least one page for each exercise. On Thursdays, we will spend class time brainstorming strategies for these exercises and sometimes we'll finish them during class. Complete all of these exercises to earn a total of 200 points towards your final grade. Writing Lab exercises are due the Sunday following the Writing Lab. See the course calendar for a schedule of labs.

Writing in Your Profession Research Project/Presentation (150 points)

You will spend the second half of the course researching a genre/communication practice relevant to your profession and lead the class in a presentation/mini-lesson on the topic. A detailed explanation of this project and rubric will be provided around midterms. You will sign up for a presentation date when the project is discussed in class. The written portion of this project is due Sunday, November 10.

Midterm Reflection (25 points) is a writing prompt that asks you to reflect on your progress in the course. Specific guidelines will be provided during class and on Blackboard. This assignment is due Sunday, October 20.

Final Reflection (25 points) is a writing prompt that asks you to reflect on your experiences, learning, and performance in the course. Specific guidelines will be provided during class and on Blackboard. This assignment is due Sunday, December 8.

Attendance Class/Participation (50 points)

Your time spent in class is valuable labor, therefore you earn points for attending. You get two free absences to use at your discretion.

Bonus Writing Challenges (50 points)

Throughout the term, I'll announce the limited-time challenges to boost your final grade. To increase your access to these opportunities, attend class and check your campus email regularly.

Late Work Policy

I'm not a fan of rigid due dates, but they do help to keep coursework manageable. Plan to submit Writing Lab Exercises each Sunday to avoid falling behind in the course. I also recognize that everyone in this class is human. We get sick, we have emergencies, and "off" weeks. **As a result, I offer a seven-day "no questions asked" grace period on all assignments except the final reflection and the research project.**

If you find yourself struggling to submit work within the grace period, please let me know so we can work together to find a solution.

Classroom Conduct Policy

Sharing our writing and ideas with others can be a vulnerable act. Please be mindful of the unique perspectives and identities of others. There may be situations in class or on Blackboard when you disagree with the assigned readings, your instructor, or a classmate. I ask that you arrive at each class and assignment with an open mind and use respect when communicating with me and your classmates.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy

Artificial intelligence is a rapidly evolving technology relevant to anyone who writes. In this class, we may experiment with generative artificial intelligence (GAI) writing tools such as ChatGPT. In general, you're expected to write your own responses to assignments in this class. I'll let you know on the assignment sheet if and when you may use ChatGPT (or similar GAI tools) as a resource for completing an assignment. Please contact me for approval if you would like to use ChatGPT or similar tools outside the parameters described above.

University Policies and Resources

[University Policies and Resources](#)

Course Calendar

Below is a *tentative* schedule of course topics and assigned readings. Hyperlinks indicate reading you should complete before attending class.

Week 1: Introduction to Workplace Writing

- Tuesday, August 27: Course Overview, Expectations, Icebreaker
- Thursday, August 29: Writing Lab 1

Week 2: Audience and Purpose in Workplace Writing

- Tuesday, September 3: ["Writing with Impact: Targeting Your Intended Audience"](#)
- Thursday, September 5: Writing Lab 2

Week 3: Plain Language and Ethical/Legal Workplace Considerations

- Tuesday, September 10: ["What is Plain Language?"](#)
- Thursday, September 12: Writing Lab 3

Week 4: Striking the Right Tone in Workplace Writing

- Tuesday, September 17: ["Tone in Business Writing"](#)
- Thursday, September 19: *Screen Up in the Air* (2009)

Week 5: Negative Messages in Workplace Writing

- Tuesday, September 24: Film Discussion/ ["Delivering Bad News Messages"](#)
- Thursday, September 26: Writing Lab 4

Week 6: Positive Messages in Workplace Writing

- Tuesday, October 1: [“How to Give and Receive Compliments at Work”](#)
- Thursday, October 3: Writing Lab 5

Week 7: Writing Evaluations and Peer Feedback

- Tuesday, October 8: Describe, Evaluate, Suggest
- Thursday, October 10: Writing Lab 6

Week 8: Midterm Conferences

- Tuesday, October 15: Conferences
- Thursday, October 17: Conferences

Week 9: Memos, Directives, and Reports

- Tuesday, October 22: [“Writing Memos”](#)
- Thursday, October 24: Writing Lab 7

Week 10: Writing in Your Profession

- Tuesday, October 29: Intro Writing in Your Profession Project/Brainstorm
- Thursday, October 31: In-class work on Profession Project

Week 11: Writing in Your Profession

- Tuesday, November 5: Work on Profession Project
- Thursday, November 7: Profession Artifact Show and Tell (Writing Lab 8)

Week 12: Writing in Your Profession

- Tuesday, November 12: [“How to Make a Good Presentation Great”](#) ; Early Bird Presentations
- Thursday, November 14: Group 1 Presentation

Week 13: Presentations

- Tuesday, November 19: Group 2 Presentation
- Thursday, November 21: Group 3 Presentation

Week 14: Wild Card Week/Thanksgiving Break

- Tuesday, November 26: Wildcard Topic
- Thursday, November 28: Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

Week 15: Presentations/Final Reflection

- Tuesday, December 3: Group 4 Presentation/Intro Final Reflection
- Thursday, December 5: Course Wrap-up

Week 16: Finals

- No class this week. Please ensure all missing assignments are submitted by Sunday, December 8th.