Professional Writing
English 292, Spring 2016

Tuesday & Thursday 2:35 PM to 3:45 PM PPHAC 113

Professor: Dr. Crystal N. Fodrey

E-Mail: fodreyc@moravian.edu

Phone: 610-861-1511

Office: Zinzendorf Hall 307

Office Hours: 1:00 to 2:15 TR and by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces key concepts and practices of technical and professional writing. You will learn project development and management, field research, document design and visual rhetoric, professional editing and usability testing. You will plan and create a range of individual and collaborative projects including, but not limited to, technical documentation, proposals, reports, brochures, press/media kits, websites, and others. You can expect to engage in regular reading discussions, daily assignments and activities, on- and off-campus research, technology use, and oral reports.

Note: This is a service-learning course with a required collaborative service-learning project with an actual client partner.

Goals

As part of your development as an ethical professional communicator, you will learn to:

- Understand the role(s) of professional writers through contextual research and analysis
- Collaborate with your colleagues in self-directed project teams
- Analyze rhetorical situations and respond to them through writing
- Establish a client-consultant relationship with a partnering organization to complete projects for the course
- Use technology to plan, develop, and support individual and peer projects
- Establish writing expertise in a range of genres
- Consider design and usability issues as part of your project development

Required Texts and Materials

The only required text that you must purchase—in paper or eBook form, your choice—is the following:

- Alred, Gerald J., Charles T. Brusaw, and Walter E. Oliu, eds. *The Business Writer's Handbook.* 11th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015.

All other course readings are available through Canvas as PDFs or online. You are responsible for printing or saving the readings and bringing them to class. In addition to the required course readings, you should have access to the following materials:

- $15-20 for printing, copying, and production costs
- Dedicated cloud space on Google Drive for the saving of files related to this course
- Computer access with a printer, Internet access, Adobe Reader, and MS Office

Projects

You will complete a series of interrelated projects for this course as well as a number of daily assignments, workshops, and other activities both in and out of class. Your participation in all course activities is taken seriously (this includes all peer reviews, responses, professional writing exercises, and emails). All course projects will be graded once you have turned in a completed project portfolio. I invite you, however, to meet with me at different stages of the project if you have any questions about individual components of your work or documenting your project in a portfolio. On certain class days you will be expected to have key components for your portfolio in draft or final form. Even if I do not collect the document on that day, you are responsible for completing the work so that you can move on to the next task. The pacing of the class is designed to provide some flexibility, but you need to meet key deadlines to maintain project progress.

Evaluation

It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignments and for the final course grade. Grades will consider the following aspects of writing, in the context of a particular assignment: purpose, audience, content, organization, development of ideas, style, ethos, document design, mechanics/readability, and maturity of thought.

You must complete all of the projects and their components to pass the course. For each project, you must submit multiple components (including preliminary assignments, research notes, drafts, etc.). For the specifics of each unit, see our course site on Canvas.

To receive an A in this course, you must accumulate at least 92.5 points; for an A-, 89.5 points; for a B+, 86.5 points; for a B, 82.5 points; for a B-, 79.5 points; for a C+, 76.5 points; for a C, 72.5 points; for a C-, 69.5 points; for a D+, 66.5 points; for a D, 62.5 points; and for a D-, 59.5 points. Please turn in all assignments, even if you believe they are poorly done. The difference between an F grade and 0 is that F carries points toward the final points and is assigned for something turned in, while a 0 carries no points and is assigned when no work is submitted.

In essence, "A" and "B" work meets or exceeds the expectations of the assignment, its intended audience, and is considered to be of professional quality. "C" work minimally meets those expectations and is of average quality. "D" and "F" work does not meet the expectations of the assignment and/or is of poor quality.

Deliverables

Week 2
Memo-in-Context (individual), 10%

Week 5
Project I: Crisis Analysis and Ethics (individual), 15%

Week 9
Project II: Technical Documentation Portfolio (collaborative), 30%

Week 16
Project III: Client Project (collaborative), 35%

Week 16
Project IV: Reflective Memo (individual), 10%

Because genres will vary widely across projects, formatting guidelines will be given for each of the major assignments.

Course Policies

Technology Responsibilities

Because the exchange of information and materials in this class will be largely electronic, familiarity with certain technologies is crucial for participation and success in the course. Thus, you should be able to attend to the responsibilities in the list below. If you need any assistance now or at any point during the semester, please do not hesitate to ask me.

- You are expected to back up all drafts of all files; that is, you should save each new draft under a new filename on your flash drive, cloud space, or via email.
- You are expected to have proficiency with your Moravian College email account and web browsing.
- You are expected to know how to use a word processing program, attach files to emails, and upload files to Blackboard.
- You are expected to check your Moravian College email and our course site on Blackboard on a daily basis for notices and updates. If you need to reach me, please email me. If I don't respond within 24 hours, email me again.
- You are expected to become more proficient with unfamiliar computer technologies and applications.
- You should have access to reliable printing sources (that is, do not expect to print your course materials using the printer in our classroom during class time).

Note: Regarding email communication, please do not send unsolicited drafts of your work via email. These will not be reviewed. If you would like my feedback on a draft, please bring your work to office hours. Trying to get feedback on your work the day before it is due is generally too late. Please plan accordingly.

Collaborative Work

Collaborative work is a major element of this course. You and your team members are responsible for updating one another and me about assignment progress. In addition, you are responsible for negotiating all aspects of your work, including planning, drafting, revising, file managing, and scheduling of tasks.

You will also evaluate your own and your peers' participation in collaborative projects, and thus, you should maintain detailed daily notes and records about your work. I will use these evaluations in my determination of individual grades for collaborative projects. In general, all members of a team receive the same grade. There are instances, however, where one or more team members are otherwise unprofessional and/or unproductive. Should these cases occur, I reserve the right to lower grades for poor performance.

Professional Quality of Work

You are expected to produce high-quality professional documents that are appropriate for specific professional writing situations. Because genres vary widely across projects, specific formatting guidelines will be given for each of the major assignments. Finally, there should be no obvious last minute changes to the work (such as the use of white-out or hand-written information).

In addition, all e-mails written for class should be professional in tone and proofread carefully; they should also utilize standard punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Attendance & Punctuality

Attendance is mandatory. Please try to be here on time. Because of the intense workload of our course, you

must understand that the attendance policy is strict and without exception. You can miss up to three days of class without a grade penalty. Please be advised that I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Use them wisely and save them for emergencies and/or illnesses. Each absence above the allowed number will result in a five percent deduction from a student's final grade if that student remains in the course. For example, a student with a 94% (A) in the class who misses four days of class will earn an 89% (B+) in the course.

Keep in mind that you are working collaboratively with peer and community partners; thus, you will also be required to attend any scheduled out-of-class meetings with your team and client to complete course assignments. Being late to class is disruptive. If you are late on a regular basis, I will suggest that you drop the course. At the very least, excessive tardiness will result in a final letter grade deduction of two points for each tardy above three.

Bottom line: This class is designed to prepare you for the professional world. Just like any job, habitual tardiness and/or absences will not be tolerated.

Late and Incomplete Work
If you must miss a scheduled class meeting, you are not excused from the work due at or accomplished during that class session. You should make arrangements to turn in your work in advance of your absence or before 4:00 PM on that same day. You are responsible for seeking out me and your group members to determine what you have missed—do not expect me or your group members to contact you first. Course facilitations and presentations cannot be rescheduled except in extreme situations.

If a serious and unavoidable problem arises, however, you should contact me prior to the deadline to determine whether or not an extension for the work will or will not be granted. An extension of a deadline is a privilege, not a right, and therefore is based upon my judgment of what is reasonable and fair. Computer problems are not an acceptable excuse for a late assignment, so remember to back-up your work multiple times.

For each day an assignment is late I will deduct 10% of the total grade, including weekends. After three days, I will not accept the assignment, at which point you automatically fail the course.

Courteousness and Cell Phones
Think of this class like a job: you may get along with some of your peers, while you may not get along with others. Just as in the workplace, it is extremely important that we maintain a high level of respect for one another while collaborating on projects, reviewing each other's papers, or discussing assignments. Disrespect for your classmates or for me will not be tolerated.

Keeping in line with the workplace environment of this class, personal cell phone use is not tolerated. By personal cell phone use, I mean making or receiving both calls and text messages. Please turn off your phones before each class and refrain from using these devices during class. I reserve the right to ask you to leave if I see sending /receiving phone calls or text messages; if I do, you will be marked absent for the day and will not be able to make up missed assignments.

Computer Etiquette

This class meets in a computer classroom, which means you will often have the advantage of working on assignments in class. However, this does not give you the right to check your email, post a comment on Facebook, ESPN, etc. If I find myself competing with Facebook or another application for your attention, I will revoke your computer privileges for the semester.

In addition, assignments must be printed and ready to be turned in before class starts. Please do not print assignments during class time and especially not on the day an assignment is due. If you do, I will deduct 10 points from the assignment for this lack of professionalism.

Academic Integrity

All Moravian students are responsible for upholding the academic honesty policy detailed in the Student Handbook, which I highly suggest that you read. You must do your own writing for all the assignments in this course and have a full understanding of all terms and concepts you have used. If I question whether the work you have submitted is your own, I may test you on its content. Additionally, the use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented in the appropriate citation style as described on the assignment sheet for each project.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Writing Support

The Writing Center is a free resource for Moravian students. At the Writing Center, a trained peer tutor will work individually with you on your writing, at any point in the process from brainstorming to editing. The Writing Center is located on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall, a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1592.

English Major Portfolio

In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your senior capstone seminar, please save digital and/or hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.

Information contained in the course syllabus and daily schedule may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. Check Blackboard and your Moravian College email daily to ensure that you do not miss any updates.

English 292—Professional Writing
Tentative Class Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule based on the needs of the class. Please bring *The Business Writer's Handbook* to every class meeting; we will mostly use it as reference for the stylistic elements of professional writing and for examples of the genres of professional writing that we will be working with during class time.

Date	Class Agenda	Homework Due Next Class
Week 1		
Tuesday, January 19	Class overview—syllabus, course calendar, course projects Draft an introduction of yourself to the discussion thread "Class Introductions" on our Canvas course site. You must respond to two colleagues' introductions	**Read** — Allen, "The Case Against Defining Technical Writing" **Bring** an example of what you think counts as technical writing or a technical document to class on 1/21. Be prepared to share and discuss your document with the class. **Read** — Searles, "The Keys to Successful Communication: Purpose, Audience, Tone"
Thursday, January 21	Discuss reading and sample technical documents Purpose, Tone, Audience Introduce Memo-In-Context assignment	**Read** — Gerson and Gerson, "The Importance of Memos, Letters, and Email" **Read** — "Writing Bad News Messages"
Week 2		
Tuesday, January 26	Discuss reading Exercise on Bad News Messages Work on Memo-In-Context	**Read** — "Professional and Technical Writing Ethics" **Read** — Katz, "The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, and the Holocaust"
Thursday, January 28	**Memo-In-Context Due to Canvas** Discuss reading In-class activity on ethics Introduce Project I: Crisis Analysis and Ethics	**Read** — Ruff and Aziz, "Stakeholders and Audiences" **Read** — Parsons, excerpt from *Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practices*

Week 3		
Tuesday, February 2	Screen film *Margin Call* Discuss readings in relation to film	**Read** — Luntz, "The Ten Rules of Effective Language" Review formatting requirements for "Writing Informal Reports" Begin drafting Crisis Analysis
Thursday, February 4	Finish screening film, if necessary Discuss informal reports In-class time to work on Project I materials	**Continue drafting** Project I materials **Bring** hard copies of your drafts for peer review on 2/9
Week 4		
Tuesday, February 9	Peer review and finalize Project I materials	Finalize Project I materials **Read** — Wolfe, "Planning Your Collaboration"
Thursday, February 11	**Project I: Crisis Analysis and Ethics Project due** Introduce Project II: Technical Documentation Portfolio Form project teams and discuss collaborative writing practices; create group contracts	Each individual team member must **research** two ideas about a process for your team's technical instructions and which website(s) would best suit those two processes (see "Process Selection" on the assignment sheet for Project II); **bring** write-ups of these ideas to class on 2/16.
Week 5		
Tuesday, February 16	Discuss elements of writing technical instructions In groups, briefly analyze Quick Reference Card examples. How might this medium (a single, two-sided page) differ/share similarities with written technical instructions on websites? Delegate tasks for the creation of proposal memo Begin drafting proposal memo	**Read** — "Technical Instructions" **Finalize** Project II Proposal Memo **Begin researching** your documentation

Thursday, February 18	**Project II Proposal Memo Due** Discuss segmenting Continue working on technical instructions Continue working on Project II Proposal Memo	Continue project II research and documentation.
Week 6		
Tuesday, February 23	Project II proposal feedback in class Discuss and analyze Instructables community Continue working on your documentation	Read — "Usability" Continue working on Project II
Thursday, February 25	Discuss video documentation Discuss usability testing guidelines Delegate tasks for the usability test and start drafting materials	Begin working on usability documents
Week 7		
Tuesday, March 1	Finalize documentation Finalize usability test	Continue working on usability documents For the next two classes, bring hard copies of your documentation and usability documents for our class testing sessions.
Thursday, March 3	Conduct usability testing for our class	Finalize user-testing results document Start making revisions to your documentation based on your user-testing results and publishing to Instructables
Week 8	SPRING BREAK	
Tuesday, March 8	No Class — Enjoy your break!	
Thursday, March 10	No Class — Enjoy your break!	
Week 9		
Tuesday, March 15	Conduct usability testing for our class	Finalize user-testing results document Start making revisions to your

		documentation based on your user-testing results and publishing to Instructables Finalize Project II Packet
Thursday, March 17	Finalize Technical Documentation Project **Project II: Technical Documentation Project Due**	Read — Bowdon and Scott, "Service-Learning in Technical and Professional Communication" Post your self and peer evaluation for Project II to Canvas by 11:59 pm on 3/17. Read assignment for Project III: Client Project Each student must come to class Tuesday with a list of three potential clients. (If clients for class not yet secured by Dr. Fodrey)
Week 10		
Tuesday, March 22	Introduce Project III: Client Project Form Project III Groups Brainstorm potential clients (if necessary)	Read — Bowdon and Scott, "Refining Your Project" Start contacting clients for participation in Project III (you must secure a client by the end of next week)
Thursday, March 24	Discuss reading Work on Project III Proposal Memo	Continue working on Project III Proposal Memo and client research documents. Be certain to have all your research documents completed by your scheduled appointments with client.
Week 11		
Tuesday, March 29	**Project III Proposal Memo Due** Project III proposal feedback in class Work on Project III components	Read — "Proposals" Schedule and/or confirm client research appointments for interview, observation, or other data collection. Collect other data such as example documents, analysis of existing documents, and information about client.
Thursday, March 31	Discuss elements required of the client proposal Begin drafting client proposal	Research budget and other information needed for the client proposal Work on Client Proposal

Week 12		
Tuesday, April 5	**No Formal Class Meeting**—Dr. Fodrey will be out of town at a conference. Use class time to work on client proposal and other Project III components	Research budget and other information needed for client proposal. Finalize client proposal.
Thursday, April 7	**No Formal Class Meeting**—Dr. Fodrey will be out of town at a conference. Submit draft of Client Proposal to Canvas by 2:35 pm.	Read —Sevilla, "Page Design" Read — Bowdon and Scott, "Designing Your Document" Wait for Dr. Fodrey's feedback on Friday or Saturday. Then, using Dr. Fodrey's feedback, revise proposal and be prepared to email it to your client (you must cc me on the email) at the beginning of class on Tuesday, April 12.
Week 13		
Tuesday, April 12	Email your team's proposal to me and to your client at the beginning of class. Begin working on client deliverables	Work on client deliverable
Thursday, April 14	Secure client approval for Project III Work on client deliverable	Work on client deliverable. First draft of client deliverable due next class meeting to me and to your client. Make arrangements for how and when you will deliver your client's document.
Week 14		
Tuesday, April 19	Work on client deliverable (first draft due at beginning of class) Discuss professional presentations Introduce Project IV: Reflective Memo	Work on deliverables Work on Project IV
Thursday, April 21	Work on client deliverable Work on deliverable presentations	Finalize presentations Work on deliverables

		Work on Project IV
Week 15		
Tuesday, April 26	**Client Deliverable Presentations**	Polish and finalize Project III Materials Work on Project IV
Thursday, April 28	**Client Deliverable Presentations**	Polish and finalize Project III and Project IV Materials Make arrangements to get deliverables to your client
Week 16		
Monday, May 2	**You must submit Project III: Client Project and Project IV: Reflective Memo by 3:00 pm on Monday, May 2** (although you are welcome to submit them before this date)	