2111 G: Writing in the World: Introduction to Professional Writing

Distance Studies; Section 650

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Course Description and Objectives

This course aims to introduce you to the basic grammatical and stylistic principles of good, clear, written English within a specific context. That context is professional writing. You will be introduced as well to basic theories and concepts in professional writing, given opportunities to develop skills

Messenger, de Bruyn et al. The Canadian Writer's Handbook: Second Essentials Edition. Toront

your original uploaded Word file; typically any formatting errors etc. which show in the Turnitin 'preview' function will not appear on your uploaded file.

Attendance/Participation (Please <u>note</u> posting requirements)

Obviously, we do not meet formally as a 'class' in a Distance Studies course. Therefore, 'attendance' and participation on the Discussion Board are intertwined. While Distance Studies classes are generally asynchronous, they are not correspondence or self-paced. You must attend class (defined as logging into our Sakai section) and participate by

Students seeking academic accommodation

Remember: A 'Week' in Distance Studies courses begins on Monday and ends on Friday. The initial Thursday/Friday of classes in either term, where applicable, is included in the following full Week 1. If classes in a term are scheduled to *end* on a Tuesday or Wednesday, that is 'Week 13' and all term work is due no later than that date.

Unit/Week One

Introduction: Writing/Rhetoric in a Professional Context

In general, the aim of this Unit is to provide you with an overview of the course, to elucidate some of the assumptions on which the course is predicated, and to introduce you to an historical context within which you can think about the processes and products of 'writing.' Following this discussion, we will take a brief look at Chapter 1 of our text, Locker/Findlay, and establish some key terms and concepts.

Read: Locker/Findlay, Chapters 1, 2 (and 3)

Discussion Topic: In this first Week's

What other qualities or features might you notice that would help you avoid falling into that trap?

Unit/Week Three

Writing Clearly: Introduction to the Grammar and Conventions of 'Standard Written English'

Objectives:

- To encourage you to develop a critical self-awareness of your writing practice
- To understand the distinction between grammatical 'conventions' and 'rules'
- To understand the notion of 'Standard Written English'
- To articulate some basic revision principles answering the question "How can I ensure that my document as a whole will clearly communicate my intended message?"

Read: Locker/Findlay, Chapter 3 and Appendix 'A'

*Diagnostic Paper Submission due midnight Friday Week 3

<u>Discussion Topic</u>: apply the principles articulated in the Unit 3 Lecture notes to the following example. Post a revised version, and explain why you made the changes you did.

"In spite of the fact that the educational environment is a very significant facet to each and every one of our children, some groups do not support reasonable and fair tax assessments that are required for providing an educational experience at a high level of quality."

Unit/Week Four

Writing Positive and Negative Messages

Objectives:

Through the discussions and readings for these two related Units, you should be familiar with the following topics:

- The basic rhetorical principles underlying the drafting of informative, positive, and negative messages
- The formatting of letter, memorandum, and email messages
- The basic principles applicable to trying to take an essentially 'negative' message and give it a 'positive' spin
- An analysis of a case: 'Statstar'

Read: Locker/Findlay, Chapters 7 and 8, and "Statstar" (pdf on 'Lectures' page); *Assignment Case for Assignment 2*: "Globe"

Assignment #1: Negative Message with positive emphasis; up to 1000 words/ 20%. Due midnight Friday Week 6

<u>Discussion Topic</u>: As discussed in the Unit 4 lecture, assume that in the 'Globe' scenario you are instructed to write a purely 'negative' message to Lyn Smith, turning down all her requests. What kind of intangible but positive 'alternative' ('reader benefit'), that might override her obvious anticipated negative response to the main message, can you come up with? Your answer will be contingent in large part on your analysis of her as your 'primary' audience.

Unit/Week Five

Writing Positive and Negative Messages (cont.)

Read: Locker/Findlay, Chapters 7 and 8, and "Statstar" (pdf on 'Lectures' page)

<u>Discussion Topic</u>: refer to Exercise 8.5 on page 200 of your text. As instructed there, compose a brief message to your boss correcting the figures. Use 'correct numbers' (b), and assume the second of the two variations. Post your message, and explain why you wrote it the way you did!

Unit/Week Six

Overview of Basic Principles of Document Design and Use of Visuals

Objectives:

Through this Unit's readings, you should be familiar with the following topics:

- The importance of 'design'
- The concept of 'white space'
- Robin Williams' 'four basic principles of design'
- The concept of 'quadrant design'
- The ways in which 'visuals' can be used to good rhetorical effect
- When and why to use 'visuals'
- Some criteria for effective visuals

Read: Locker/Findlay, Chapter 4

*Assignment #1 due 5 p.m., Friday Week 6.

Assignment #2: (Persuasive Message w/ visual; up to 1200 words/25%) due Friday Week Nine.

Fall Reading Week Feb 18th – 22nd

Unit/Week Seven

Writing Persuasive Messages

Objectives:

Through this Unit's readings, you should be familiar with the following topics:

- The primary and secondary purposes of persuasive messages
- Choosing a persuasive strategy: direct or indirect?
- Analyzing another persuasive rhetorical situation: 'TeknoSport'

Read: Locker/Findlay Chapter 9 and "TeknoSport" (pdf on 'Lectures' page); *Assignment 2 Case*: "Just Clean Your Hands" in Create coursepack

*Download, Write, and Upload Sentence Structure/Grammar Test (15%)

Unit/Week Eight

Writing Persuasive Messages

Objectives:

Through this Unit's discussion and readings you should be familiar with the following topics:

- What we mean by 'rhetorical argument'
- The classical model of rhetorical argument
- Problems with the classical model
- The Toulmin model of rhetorical argument
- The distinction between the formal validity of an argument and its persuasiveness in a more general sense



- The significant differences between resumes and letters of application
- The difference between solicited and prospecting applications
- Some guidelines for drafting resumes
- The distinction between the two basic kinds of resume
- Guidelines for content and organization in letters of application
- Tone in letters of application

Read: Locker/Findlay, Chapter 13