

**San José State University**  
**Department of English and Comparative Literature**  
**Spring 2016**  
**English 100WB, Written Communication: Business**  
**Section 7**  
**W 9:00 –11:45**  
**BBC 120**

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**Course Description:**

This is a participatory course that offers a practical approach to business communication, emphasizing situations that require both oral and written communication. During the course of the semester, students will develop a rhetorically sophisticated writing style appropriate to upper-division university discourse.

**Required Texts and Materials:**

*The Business Writer's Handbook, eleventh edition, Alred et al*

*A Peacock in the Land of Penguins, Hateley, BJ and Warren Schmidt*

*Course Reader, Maple Press*

*The Everyday Writer, fifth edition, Lunsford, Andrea (recommended)*

A full-volume dictionary

Blank paper/notebook for notes and in-class writing assignments

**Canvas:**

All students are required to regularly check the class Canvas group. Announcements and assignment reminders will be posted in Canvas and students may exchange information, post articles, and share ideas through the system. The syllabus and occasional notes/pertinent articles will also be available on the site.

**Twitter:**

All students are encouraged to tweet (only positive things) about the class. Instructor will occasionally tweet supplemental information regarding reading, writing, or business.

**Prerequisites:** Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST), upper-division standing (56 units), and completion of CORE GE.

This course satisfies the upper division, GE writing requirement.

**Communication and Research Objectives:** Students will develop

- the ability to analyze and interpret communication scenarios and to respond to them using the 4 Cs of effective communication: clear, concise, cohesive, and content rich
- advanced proficiency in both traditional and contemporary research strategies and methodologies necessary for research-informed writing and oral presentations that communicate complex ideas effectively and appropriately to both general and specialized audiences;

**English 100WB Learning Objectives:****Course Goals for Area Z**

**Diversity.** Issues of diversity shall be incorporated in an appropriate manner.

**Writing.** Written assignments should include both in-class and out-of-class writing, giving students practice and feedback throughout the semester. A single final term paper would not satisfy the requirement. Assignments will total a minimum of 8000 words assigned throughout the semester, providing frequent practice and feedback for improving application skills. Course syllabi must reflect assignments that meet the 8000 word minimum.

**Reading.** Readings used in the course should be models of excellence.

**Discipline.** Written Communication II courses are discipline specific. All courses will use language and forms of writing appropriate to the discipline.

### **Pedagogical Approach.**

- Courses shall focus on issues or present perspectives from different academic disciplines.
- Courses shall require students to apply basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking, research, and mathematics) and to utilize knowledge gained in Core General Education courses.

### **Active Learning**

- Each course shall provide for active student participation. The course may not be exclusively lecture format.
- Assignments must utilize library research and oral and written communication skills.
- Courses should promote reflective processes and critical analysis.

**Primary sources.** Course materials (readings, research) must include primary sources appropriate to the discipline (e.g. scholarly journal articles, original artwork)

## **Student Learning Objectives for GE Area Z**

Students shall write complete essays that demonstrate college-level proficiency. Students shall be able to:

1. **Produce** discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in:
  - language use
  - grammar
  - clarity of expression
2. **Explain, analyze, develop, and criticize** ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse
3. **Organize and develop** essays and documents for both professional and general audiences
4. **Organize and develop** essays and documents according to appropriate editorial and citation standards
5. **Locate, organize, and synthesize** information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing

### **English 100WB Content Objectives:**

English 100WB students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to

- \* format, compose, and revise written documents for a variety of organizational situations;
- \* identify and articulate the audience “take-away” message in every communication;
- \* utilize a variety of communication tools, techniques, and modes;

- \* communicate numerical and statistical data appropriately and effectively in both written and oral formats;
- \* employ advanced research strategies and methodologies and incorporate research appropriately and effectively into both written and oral communications for a variety of organizational and rhetorical situations;
- \* appreciate the importance of timely communication in organizational settings;
- \* recognize a variety of organizational communication needs and constraints and employ appropriate communication strategies to meet those needs and/or constraints in a variety of business situations;
- \* analyze various audiences and compile appropriate options and strategies to communicate effectively with those audiences;
- \* evaluate and critique communication strategies and techniques for their effectiveness, including the strategies and techniques of their classmates;
- \* make common-sense communication decisions and use logic to defend those decisions;
- \* recognize when imagination and “vision” are appropriate to business communications;
- \* communicate appropriately and effectively in cross-cultural situations;
- \* create documents and make oral presentations that are ethically and legally defensible.

**Diversity:** Assignments (both reading and writing) shall address issues of race, class, age, and gender when appropriate, and the perspectives of women and diverse cultural groups shall be incorporated into course instruction and materials in an inclusive and comprehensive manner whenever appropriate. At least one graded assignment, oral or written, shall address cross- or inter-cultural, -generational, or -gender communications.

**Writing:** Assignments shall emphasize those analytical and interpretive skills and activities in writing and thinking that produce types of writing useful in business communications, which include but are not limited to the following: both formal and informal correspondence for various purposes and audiences (email, memos, letters); employment application materials (resumes, cover letters, follow-up letters); formal and informal reports; white papers; abstracts, summaries, annotated bibliographies; proposals. Graded writing assignments will be appropriately sequenced throughout the semester and will total a minimum of 8,000 words; at least one of those assignments will be significantly informed by research.

Students shall receive frequent evaluations of their writing from their instructor. In evaluating student writing, instructors shall comment on specific features of individual assignments. Comments shall encourage and acknowledge student success as well as note errors and suggest ways to correct them.

- **Reading:** Assigned reading will address issues of business communications. Instructors may choose from several department-approved Business Communication textbooks that contain models of effective business communication and from several department-approved comprehensive writing handbooks; instructors may also create a short course reader that

contains journalistic and/or scholarly writing in the field of business. Other appropriate reading may include texts that address the global marketplace, online communication, visual communication, and collections of business scenarios.

- **Research:** English 100WB shall provide advanced instruction in both traditional and contemporary research strategies and methodologies, including locating and evaluating materials, using them effectively (e.g., quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing), and citing them properly. At least one substantial writing assignment shall be informed by research. As part of this requirement, at least one class session of English 100WB shall include a presentation by a university librarian.
- **Active Learning:** Class sessions shall provide ample opportunities for active student learning in the following ways: formal and/or informal large- and small-group discussion and collaborative writing and thinking activities designed to develop and provide repeated student practice in exercising those rhetorical, analytical, and interpretive skills that produce stylistically appropriate, intelligent, and critical written and oral responses to business-communication scenarios; both formal and informal oral presentations; organizational role-playing and interviewing simulations.

### **Information available online**

Students are responsible for reading the following information online at

<http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html>

- Course guidelines
- Academic policies (academic integrity, plagiarism, ADA and DRC policies)
- Adding and dropping classes

### **Grading Procedure:**

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU *Catalog* ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

The grading for this course is A – F.

**Grades will be assigned according to the following rubrique :**

**A:** Message is clear, i.e. writing demonstrates clear understanding and appropriate response to the assignment. Paragraphs are well organized and sentences show syntactic complexity and precise word

choice. Tone is professional and appropriate. The piece is free of grammatical errors, superfluous language, and redundancy.

**B:** Message is clear – no details are missing. Tone is appropriate to the message. Paragraphs may be slightly choppy. Language is professional but not as sophisticated or as varied as the language in an A paper. Grammatical errors and redundancy are minimal. Sentences may need tightening.

**C:** Message is weak but exists. Language and/or ideas may be repetitive and not always suited to professional discourse. Writing is clear but lacks energy and variety. Paragraphs likely have organizational issues. Sentences lack variety. Grammar needs work but does not distract the reader from the message.

**D:** Message is severely weakened by grammatical or syntactical errors that distract the reader and cause ‘noise’ or ‘clutter.’ Details may be missing and paragraphs may need fixing. Language is not rhetorically sophisticated and does not demonstrate an understanding of professional discourse. Syntax is not varied.

**F:** Errors in grammar or word choice make the piece very difficult to understand.

### **Grading scale:**

Written assignments (totaling 4500 - 5000 words)

In-class	50 pts
Out-of-class	200 pts
Individual Presentation	40 pts
Rough draft excerpt for revision	15 pts
Formal Report (3000 words)	120 pts
Final Exam	75 pts

**\*In-class assignments are valued at 10 points while out-of-class assignments are worth 20 points.**

**Late work:** Students must be in attendance to complete in-class assignments. Written assignments cannot be handed in late without prior consent of the instructor; any assignment arriving after the class period has ended is considered late.

**Exception to late work rule:** Students may either turn in one reworked assignment or one missed out-of-class assignment at the end of the semester.

**Success:** To succeed in this course, students must participate in class activities, complete assignments both in and out of class, ask questions, and commit themselves to improving the effectiveness of their written and oral communication.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1

2/3 Course overview: syllabus, expectations, success.  
What it means to be a writer

Rhetorical Triangle SLO 1, 2, 3  
5 Rs, 4 Cs  
“Why Firms are Fleeing,” CR

### Week 2

2/10 Effective/Ineffective writing SLO 1, 2, 3, 4,5  
Correct, concise, TBWH (pp. 110, 578)  
Sentence structure, TBWH (pp. 526 – 530)  
Tone

Letters, TBWH SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
Case study (handout)  
\*In-class writing  
\*Intro letter assigned

### Week 3

2/17 Communication strategies SLO 5

Case study SLO 1, 3, 5  
\*in-class writing  
\*Intro letter DUE

### Week 4

2/24 “The Necessary Art of Persuasion,” CR SLO 1, 3, 5  
\*in-class writing

Communication strategies continued SLO 1, 2, 3, 5  
*A Peacock in the Land of Penguins*

Week 5

3/2

E-mails, memos, TBWH  
Good news/bad news  
\*E-mail assigned

SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Grammar matters (handouts)

Week 6

3/9 Job search, Resumes, Cover letters, TBWH

SLO 1, 2, 3

\*resume assigned  
\*cover letter assigned  
\*in-class writing  
\*e-mail DUE

Interviewing, TBWH

Week 7

3/16 Resume workshop

SLO 4

\*cover letter DUE

Blogs  
Formal Reports, TBWH  
Executive Summary, TBWH  
Visuals, TBWH  
\*topic e-mail assigned  
\*blog analysis assigned

SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Week 8

3/23

Library session (mandatory attendance)

SLO 1, 2, 3

\*blog analysis DUE  
\*topic e-mail DUE

Week 9

3/30 SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Week 10

4/6 Press releases, TBWH SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
Proposals, TBWH  
\*Press release assigned  
\*Proposal assigned

Giving presentations, TBWH SLO 2, 5

Week 11

4/13 Research check-in SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Progress Reports, TBWH  
\*Progress Report assigned  
\*Proposal DUE  
\*Press release DUE

Week 12

4/20 Presentations SLO 2, 5  
\*Audience feedback assigned

Week 13

4/27 Presentations SLO 2, 5  
\*progress report DUE

Week 14

11/23 Revision SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
\*audience feedback DUE  
\*1/2 of formal report rough draft DUE

Week 15

5/4 Formal Report workshop SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

“In Defense of Philanthrocapitalism,” CR SLO 1, 2, 4  
\*in-class assignment

Week 16

Preparation for final SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
5/11 \*Formal report DUE  
\*Extra credit opportunity

**Final Exam**

Wednesday 5/18 7:15 – 9:30 a.m.

\*NOTE: Assignments, but not due dates, are subject to change.