PROFESSIONAL WRITING IN BUSINESS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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OVERVIEW

The first objective of the course is for you to learn and practice various forms of writing for business, government, and non-governmental organizations. These include a résumé, cover letter, formal report, professional presentation, "white paper," grant proposal, etc. In the process, you will also have an opportunity to consider various career options and look ahead to professional life after college.

The second objective is for you to investigate the relationship of a particular career to the whole society in which you live. Over the course of the semester, you will situate that career within a social context, including professional associations, private businesses, government, and a wider social network. You will learn how to think critically about ethical norms within a professional setting as you learn about the institutions of different career paths and as they practice composing a variety of professional documents. Building on this foundation, you will then focus on a sustained research project that includes composing either a "white paper" (i.e., an official report or position paper for business, government, or non-governmental organizations), grant proposal, or some other form of professional writing of your choice.

TEXTS IN BOOKSTORE AND ON-LINE

    Philip C. Kolin, *Successful Writing at Work*, Concise Third Edition
    On-line wiki textbook at < http://pbworks.com/>
    Individual articles, to be distributed via e-mail and wiki or retrieved from library databases

OUTLINE OF CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

    Introduction
        Work ethics and evaluation

    Getting the Job
        Pre-writing: analyzing a job
        Writing: analyzing a job better
        Major Assignment: Resume, cover letter, and analysis

    Internal Communication and Interpersonal Responsibility
        Pre-writing: from the memo to the tweet, scenarios
        Writing: power and authority in organizations
        Major Assignment: Short report

    Collaboration and Networks
        Pre-Writing: pro's and con's of collaboration
        Writing: how collaboration "works" both internally and externally
        Major Assignment: group report identifying a project

External Communication and Public Responsibility
    Pre-Writing: audience, constituencies, and public/private organizations
    Writing: civil society, professional standards, and public responsibility
    Major Assignment: Long Report (e.g., white paper, grant proposal)

Presentations and Multimedia
    Oral presentations on material throughout semester
    Website and social media analysis
    Final oral presentation

HOW THE CLASS RUNS

Not only do different professions have different formats and kinds of writing, but also within professions and even within a single company, writing changes as new technologies, methodologies, and people change. Therefore, it is useless for you to learn a simple template. Rather, you will learn critical thinking skills about workplace writing that will help you become adaptable, flexible, innovative, ethical, and socially responsible.

Each unit includes pre-writing, writing, reading, oral presentation, and a major assignment. The major assignment may be the focus of the unit, but the earlier assignments are designed to prepare you for doing that assignment well and for thinking critically about how such writing is done. Students will sign up for oral presentations on the assigned reading, but all students are expected to participate actively through in-class writing and conversation that responds constructively to the reading and to the presentations on that reading.

Towards the goal of critical thinking skills and innovative thinking, you will read theoretical and practical articles about communication. Most of these you will retrieve on your own from library databases. Some of these articles will be linked to a "wiki" textbook. In addition to reading and writing, etc., you will also contribute to the creation and development of a new "wiki" textbook currently being designed for CSBSJU.

Detailed descriptions of all assignments will be distributed both through e-mail and on the wiki.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

You are expected to come to class everyday having done all the assigned reading and prepared to discuss it. I also expect you to be generous with your classmates, because participation does not just mean talking; it also means listening respectfully and engaging in genuine conversation. If you miss more than three classes, your attendance and participation grade will be reduced by 20% for each day beyond the three that is missed.

Any act of plagiarism can result in an F for the course and can go on your permanent academic record. Please see The College of St. Benedict and St. John's University's official policy on plagiarism stated in the Academic Catalog's section on rights and responsibilities: <http://www.csbsju.edu/Academics/Academic-Catalogs/2009-2011-Catalog/Programs/Rights.htm>.

All students have the right of non-discriminatory access to the programs at the colleges. If you have a disability and require special consideration, you must inform me as soon as possible.

I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time during the semester and will inform you of all changes in a timely manner.

Introduction

Jan. 17 (Tue)   Introductions
In-class discussion: Martin Luther King, Jr. and professional writing?

Jan. 19 (Thu)   reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, ch. 1

Jan. 23 (Mon)   writing: letters to me and to classmates explaining goals and ethical
responsibility to class

Getting the Job

Jan. 25 (Wed)   reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, ch. 5 and CSBSJU Career Center website
Guest from Career Services: Erica Rademacher

Jan. 27 (Fri)   pre-writing: analyzing someone else's job and mock resume/cover letter

Jan. 31 (Tue)   reading and oral presentations:
Francine Russo, "The New Online Job Hunt," *Time* (3 October 2011).
Academic Search Premier.
George Marcoulides and Ronald Heck, "Organizational Culture and
Performance," *Organization Science* 4:2 (1993). JSTOR.

Feb. 2 (Thu)   writing: analyzing a job better

Feb. 6 (Mon)   reading: Class wiki on Getting the Job
Clifford Geertz, "Common Sense as a Cultural System," *Antioch Review*
33:1 (1975). JSTOR.
collaborative activity: discuss and contribute to wiki

Feb. 8 (Wed)   major assignment: resume, cover letter, and analysis of your own job

Internal Communication and Personal Responsibility

Feb. 10 (Fri)   reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, ch. 3

Feb. 14 (Tue)   pre-writing: write a scenarios, draw scenarios out of hats, do scenarios

Feb. 16 (Thu)   reading and oral presentations:
Stanley Deetz, "The Micro-Politics of Identity Formation in the
Workplace," *Human Studies* 17:1 (1994)
Marilyn Cooper and Cynthia Selfe, "Computer Conferences and
Learning: Authority, Resistance, and Internally Persuasive
Discourse," *College English* 52:8 (1990). JSTOR.

Feb. 20 (Mon)   reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, pp. 376-380
writing: analyzing scenarios

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Feb. 22 (Wed)   reading: Class wiki on Internal Communication
                                Successful Writing at Work, ch. 8
                                Stanley Deetz, "Describing Differences in Approaches to Organizational Science," *Organization Science* 7:2 (1996). JSTOR.
collaborative activity: discuss and contribute to wiki

Feb. 24 (Fri)   major assignment: short report

Collaboration and Networks

Feb. 28 (Tue)   reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, ch. 2

Mar. 1 (Thu)   pre-writing (in groups of four): pro's and con's of collaboration/networks

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 3—11

Mar. 12 (Mon) reading and oral presentations:
                                Yochai Benkler, ch.1 of *Wealth of Networks* (wiki)
                                Rick DuFour, "Work Together but only if You Want To," *Phi Delta Kappan* 92:5 (2011). Academic Search Premier.
                                Janice Silva and Kathia Contreras, "The Year We Learned to Collaborate," *Educational Leadership* (October 2011). Academic Search Premier.

Mar.14 (Wed) library and research day

Mar. 16 (Fri)   reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, pp. 380-388
                writing (in groups of four): how collaboration "works" internally and externally

Mar. 20 (Tue) reading: Tapscot and Williams, "Wikinomics" (wiki)
                                Carolyne Burke, "Public Libraries: Building Social Capital through Networking," *Aplis* 18:2 (2005). Academic Search Premier.
collaborative activity: discuss and contribute to wiki

Mar. 22 (Thu) major assignment (in groups of four): report identifying and giving rationale for future research/project

External Communication and Public Responsibility

Mar. 26 (Mon) reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, ch. 9

Mar. 28 (Wed) pre-writing: audience, constituencies, professional associations, and public/private organizations

Mar. 30 (Fri)   reading and oral presentations:
                                Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Introduction (wiki)
                                Introduction to *Social Capital*, ed. McLean, Schultz, and Steger (wiki)

Manfred Steger, "Robert Putnam, Social Capital, and a Suspect Named Globalization" from *Social Capital* (wiki)

Karen Healy, Anne Hampshire, and Liz Ayres, "Beyond the Local: Extending the Social Capital Discourse," *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 39:3 (2004). Academic Search Premier.

Apr. 3 (Tue)   reading: *Successful Writing at Work*, pp. 388-394
                writing: civil society, professional standards, and public responsibility

EASTER RECESS, APRIL 5—9

Apr. 10 (Tue)   reading: Yochai Benkler, *Wealth of Networks*, ch. 9 and 10 (wiki)
                collaborative activity: discuss and contribute to wiki

Apr. 12 (Thu)   individual meetings in my office, SJU Quad 352-B

Apr. 16 (Mon)   individual meetings in my office, SJU Quad 352-B

Apr. 18 (Wed)   major assignment: long report

Presentations and Multimedia

Apr. 20 (Fri)   *Successful Writing at Work*, ch. 6 and 10

Apr. 24 (Tue)   prewriting (in groups): website and social media analysis

SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVITY DAY, APRIL 25

Apr. 27 (Fri)   reading:
                    Mary Hocks, "Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments," *College Composition and Communication* 54:4 (2003). JSTOR.
                    Kathy Reiffenstein, "Speaking Up," *T+D* (May 2010). Academic Search Premier.
                collaborative activity: discussing and contributing to wiki

May 1 (Tue)   oral presentations

May 3 (Thu)   oral presentations

May 7 (Mon)   oral presentations