



ENGL 306: INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONAL WRITING



CRN 59734 Sec 001 • Spring 2019 • M/W/F 10:30am–11:20am • HEAV 227

INSTRUCTOR



Allegra W. Smith



Heavilon Hall 209



Weds 12pm–2pm
Thurs 11am–1pm
and by appointment



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I'm here to help you out. If you're struggling with course content, projects, or deadlines, please come see me sooner rather than later! You can send me an email or schedule an appointment using my [online scheduling link](#).

REQUIRED TEXTS

Covert, A. (2014). *How to Make Sense of Any Mess*. CreateSpace. ISBN 1500615994. \$16–24.

Redish, J. (2012). *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works*. Morgan Kaufmann. ISBN 0123859301. \$25–40.

All other materials will be made available on Blackboard or through the Purdue Libraries at [lib.purdue.edu](#).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In English 306, Introduction to Professional Writing, students study texts, contexts and concepts important to the practice of professional writing and produce documents for both print and digital distribution. While the course addresses practical skills such as how to write memos, emails, proposals and reports, class discussion focuses on rhetoric, ethics, and information design. As professional writers, you will be expected to analyze organizations and institutions to develop effective communicative practices. Therefore, the class is organized with an eye towards future action: While you will be reading what others have done, we will be developing strategies for communicating effectively. Students will use appropriate communication technologies.

One fundamental question addressed in this class is: What do professional writers do? Through the course, students read definitions of professional & technical writing from academic and professional perspectives. You will research and report on the variety of experts who call themselves professional writers. And students create a variety of documents common in professional and technical writing as they develop an awareness of genre. Reading and writing assignments have been designed to help students gain greater insight into the issues and challenges of professional writing in a variety of workplace contexts. Course projects are also designed to prepare students to research—both formal and informal, primary and secondary—across media and contexts.

TL;DR

This course is about exploring the variety of work that professional writers do, and how you fit into that landscape. We'll play with different writing tasks, genres, technologies, and styles to learn by doing, designing, and discussing.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Note that these are just brief descriptions; each project has multiple required components, and full assignments will be provided in class. See the Course Calendar for due dates.

- **Group Rhetoric Presentation** (10% of final grade)
A 7–10 minute presentation, with two other classmates, defining a rhetorical term, tracing its history and application, and providing examples of how it’s useful to us as professional writers today.
- **Resource Presentation** (10% of final grade)
A 3–5 minute individual presentation of a resource related to professional writing (more generally, or in a specific field—like scientific and technical writing, web development, nonprofit communications, etc.), given in front of the class.
- **Module 1: Writing Audit Report** (15% of final grade)
A research report and presentation that analyzes the communications strategies of a company or organization that interests you, in addition to providing recommendations.
- **Module 2: Media Kit** (10% of final grade)
A group of materials—a press release, a fact sheet, and a flyer—designed to communicate with a company or organization’s external publics, like journalists and community members.
- **Module 3: Documentation** (10% of final grade)
A short set of instructions that teach, guide, or support the work of others—created after conducting some informal research to understand your target users.
- **Module 4: Informational Interview Website** (15% of final grade)
After conducting an interview with a working writer in a field that interests you, you will create a website that explores their literacy practices—how they research, write, design, and communicate.
- **Module 5: Portfolio** (15% of final grade)
A suite of documents (résumé, cover letter, elevator pitch) that will be targeted toward a job posting of your choice, plus a five-year-plan memo that explains your professional and personal goals as a writer, as well as your specific strategies for reaching those goals.
- **Short Assignments, Course Participation & Professional Ethos** (15% of final grade)
Memos reflecting on course content and readings will be assigned periodically, as well as short homework tasks that will build toward larger writing projects. The reputation you build as a member of our class. Being habitually late or absent, or using your cell phone or other devices instead of participating in discussion and activities, will hurt your professional ethos.

| percentage | letter grade |
|------------------|--------------|
| 100–97 = A+ | 4.0 = A |
| 96–94 = A | 3.7 = A- |
| 93–90 = A- | 3.3 = B+ |
| 89–87 = B+ | 3.0 = B |
| 86–84 = B | 2.7 = B- |
| 83–80 = B- | 2.3 = C+ |
| 79–77 = C+ | 2.0 = C |
| 76–74 = C | 1.7 = C- |
| 73–70 = C- | 1.3 = D+ |
| 69–67 = D+ | 1.0 = D |
| 66–64 = D | 0.7 = D- |
| 63–60 = D- | 0.0 = F |
| 59% or below = F | |

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Writing is a dynamic and interactive subject: to learn how to be a better writer, you must participate in discussions and hands-on activities. For this course to be a success, everyone's participation is necessary. For that reason, attendance is required. You will be allowed four (4) absences, regardless of documentation or excuse (with the exception of university-sponsored activities). If you have five (5) absences, I will lower your final grade by one full letter grade. If you have six (6) or more absences, I will lower your final grade by two full letter grades. In-class activities cannot be made up.

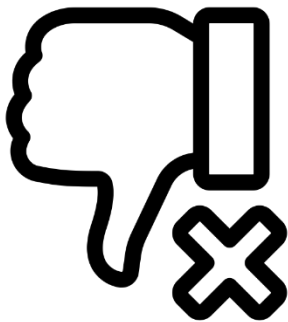
Please be on time for class and remain for the whole class period. If you are more than ten (10) minutes late to class, or if you leave class more than five (5) minutes early, you will be counted absent for that class period. Three (3) tardies will count as one absence. Please respect me and your colleagues: arrive on time for class and participate fully in discussions and activities.



CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Please refrain from any unauthorized uses of technology during our class sessions. In this case, "unauthorized" means unrelated to the learning activities taking place during the class period. I will expect computers and laptops to be used for classroom activities only. Failure to abide by these guidelines may have a negative impact on a student's participation grade. Repeat offenders may be asked to leave the class.

Since folks may need emergency access to cell phones, you may receive calls during the class period—but please minimize distraction for other students in the class and take only necessary calls.



DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

In this course, we will sometimes discuss topics that are sensitive or personal. These could be about any number of things—our backgrounds, our experiences, our identities that uniquely incorporate race, ethnicity, social class, gender identity and expression, sexuality, religion, (dis)ability, etc. Please enter these discussions mindfully and kindly, and do not belittle or insult your fellow students who may think differently than you do. **As your ENGL 306 instructor, I reserve the right to ask you to leave class if you are behaving in a way is patently offensive, or that disrupts or distracts your fellow students from the work at hand.**



ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

Disabilities: Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. It is best to schedule a meeting or stop by my office hours early in the semester. You are also encouraged to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) at drc@purdue.edu or by phone (765-494-1247).

Basic Needs Statement: Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) for support. Furthermore, please notify your instructor if you are comfortable with doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.



MENTAL HEALTH NOTE

Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765) 494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.



PURDUE HONOR PLEDGE & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a Boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together—we are Purdue. For more information, see the [Office of the Provost](#).

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information that is submitted provides the greatest opportunity for the university to investigate the concern.



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

To report an emergency, call 911. To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, sign up for Purdue Alert text messages at www.purdue.edu/ea. There are nearly 300 emergency telephones that connect directly to the PUPD, both outdoors across campus and in parking garages. If you feel threatened or need help, push the button and you will be connected immediately.

If we hear a fire alarm during class, we will immediately suspend class, evacuate the building, and proceed outdoors. Do not use the elevator. If we are notified during class of a Shelter in Place requirement for a tornado warning, we will suspend class and shelter in the basement of the building. If we are notified during class of a Shelter in Place requirement for a hazardous materials release, or a civil disturbance (including a shooting or other use of weapons), we will suspend class and shelter in the classroom, shutting and locking the door and turning off the lights. Please review the Emergency Preparedness website for additional information: <http://www.purdue.edu/emergency/>.
