

BTW 250 (F2): PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

MW, 3:30–4:45 PM, FALL 2021, EB 069

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OFFICE HOURS: MWF, 11:00–11:50 am or By Appointment
OFFICE LOCATION: EB 220 or Zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Business writing is problem solving. Although it is often formulaic and practical in its structure, it is also creative and passionate in its expression of a writer's desire to make change, imagine a new project, or communicate with others about anything from the daily goings on of an organization to a new idea that only they understand. In this class, we will do this work by exploring a number of different genres that might help us accomplish these goals and learning to both imitate and reimagine those genres. This work will also ask us to attend to audiences who think differently than we do but might have an important say in whether or not a project is funded. As we complete each major writing assignment, we will also consider how we can both take responsibility and collaborate effectively to reach our goals. You will have to write a lot in this class, but I challenge you to find ways to make the writing work for you and your goals.

This course teaches students to apply the principles of successful professional communication to workplace writing tasks. Students will also practice editing and supervising the writing of others. Assignments replicate typical business cases and situations, including a report that requires students to compile and interpret research. Credit is not given for both [BTW 250](#) and either [BTW 261](#) or [BTW 263](#).

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing and completion of campus Composition I requirement. This course satisfies the General Education Criteria for: [Advanced Composition](#).

To meet the requirements for an Advanced Composition credit, this course must focus heavily on teaching analysis and synthesis, requires the creation of multiple drafts throughout the semester, and must challenge students to create 20-30 pages, or 5000-7500 words, minimally of original and complete composition. Credits: 3

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

By the end of this class, students should be able to do the following:

1. Compose effective business communication in written and/or multimodal forms.
2. Adapt content and form to specific professional conventions, audiences, and situations.
3. Take part in collaborative work to compose effective professional communication.
4. Identify and make use of resources to compose goal-oriented texts.
5. Develop and follow a recursive process of investigation, task definition, drafting, feedback, revision, and editing.

In addition, you will be expected to

- Utilize effective strategies for revising and editing

- Collaborate with texts and peers to produce effective and engaging writing

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this class. Occasional readings might be posted on Moodle (I will give you notice before they are due), but most of the class will consist of hands-on practice and reflective writing.

GRADING

Onboarding Process: 20%
Career Research: 20%
Collaborative Analysis: 20%

Performance Review: 20%
Team Meetings: 10%
Low-Stakes Assignments: 10%

GRADING POLICY

Major assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale corresponding to letter grades based on the below table. Most homework and peer group work will be graded on a credit/no-credit basis. Occasional assignments will be graded on a points scale (e.g., 10 points) and will be noted accordingly. All assignments will be weighted together for the final course grade according to the above point system.

A+	98-100%	C	73-76%
A	93-97%	C-	70-72%
A-	90-92%	D+	67-69%
B+	87-89%	D	63-66%
B	83-86%	D-	60-62%
B-	80-82%	F	≤ 59%
C+	77-79%		

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

Unless directed otherwise, submit formal writing assignments in 12-point Times New Roman font, and follow the specific instructions for each genre. If citations are needed, we will follow the citation guidelines set forth by either the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the American Psychological Association (APA). Please ask me if you have questions about citation practices.

Please be conscientious about file type and file names. **You must submit files in Word format (.doc, .docx, or .rtf).** Other file types, such as .pages, .wps, and .pdfs, are **not** accepted **and will be marked as zeros**, unless needed accommodations are discussed with me in advance. UIUC students can download Microsoft Office 365 [here](#).

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

In Business and Technical Writing (BTW) 250, you will complete roughly 25 pages of writing that undergo the drafting and revision process and that will reflect various genres often seen in business settings. Each assignment will include 3 or 4 Deliverables or pieces of the assignment.

Note: Due dates are not in order. Please plan accordingly.

1. Onboarding Process: Just as you would introduce yourself to a new company and become familiar with their policies and expectations, you can use this assignment to introduce yourself to me and your classmates and become familiar with the expectations of the class. At the core of this assignment is the **Literacy Narrative**, a 750-1000 word exploration of how you have come to understand reading and writing and their relationship to your chosen carrier. The narrative will be accompanied by an **Introductory Email to a Mentor** of approximately 250 words and **Strengths and Goals Memo**, using a standard Memo style to express what you feel your strengths are as a writer and your goals for this class. You will also begin to research genres that are common in your field and find examples to imitate for the **Career Research Bibliography**. Be sure to consider your audience for each and continually link your writing to your chosen career.

Due Dates:

Literacy Narrative	MLA-style Essay	750-1000 words	February 2
Introductory Email to Mentor	Email (include in final portfolio)	150-250 words	--
Strengths and Goals Memo	Memo	400-500 words	February 7
Career Research Bibliography	Bibliography (MLA or APA)	5-15 sources	--
Final	Portfolio	1300-1750 words	February 14

2. Career Research: Many of you have already applied and been hired for a job or internship in your field. For this assignment, we will look at a different job, one you might apply for after you graduate, and analyze it for the skills and expertise you might need when you apply. Using the annotation methods we have worked on in class, start by **Annotating a Job Description** for a job for which you might want to apply, then reflecting on the requirements. You will then use your Career Research Bibliography from the Onboarding Process to learn how to write in two new genres through imitation. For this **Imitation Exercise**, you will carefully study the examples you researched, develop a **Genre Presentation** teaching the genres you've identified to the class, and write two samples that show your understanding of at least two of the genres you will be expected to write in for your future career. Finally, use that job description and your research to write a **Cover Letter** applying for the job. Attention to detail will be important for these assignments.

Due Dates:

Genre Presentation	Presentation	5-8 minutes	February 21 or 23
Annotated Job Description	Reflection Memo & Annotated Document	250-500 words	February 28
Cover Letter	Cover Letter	300-500 words (1 page)	March 2
Genre Imitations	--	800-1000 words	March 7
Final	Portfolio	1350-2000 words	March 21

3. Collaborative Analysis: Any career will require some teamwork, including management positions in which you will be responsible for others who work for your team. For the Collaborative Analysis, we will explore what that kind of teamwork might look like for us and for an organization of our choosing. Each group will choose an organization to research, after which you will collaborate on a **Teamwork Agreement** and a **Research Proposal**. Based on these two documents, you will put together a **SWOT Report** detailing how an organization functions and where they might improve. Finally, you will write a **Team Evaluation** on what you, individually and as a team, did well and where you might have fallen short. Like it or not, these kinds of projects will follow you through your career. Take this opportunity to figure out how they might work well and even be fun.

Due Dates:

Teamwork Agreement	Memo	250-500 words	March 21
Research Proposal	Email	500-1000 words	March 30
SWOT Report	Report	1000-2000 words	April 6
Team Evaluation	Letter (include with final portfolio)	400-500 words	--
Final	Team Portfolio	2150-4000 words	April 20

4. Performance Review: This assignment is an opportunity to reflect on your own writing and progress and to present that progress to the class, just as you would an employer. Starting with a **Revised Strengths and Goals Memo**, you will collect materials from the semester into a **Reflective Portfolio** that showcases your work and what you can offer a potential employer. Alongside your work, you will include a short report much like the SWOT Report but analyzing your own work rather than an organization's. Finally, you will fill out the **Performance Review Form** and complete an **Exit Interview**, consisting of a one-on-one meeting with me about your progress and short presentation to the class, showing them why you are the ideal candidate for your chosen career. Although most of this work consists of revision, not new content, you should approach this assignment as you would an interview with an employer. Dress for success and show us where you shine.

Due Dates:

Revised Strengths and Goals Memo	Memo (include in final portfolio)	500-750 words	--
Reflective Portfolio	Portfolio & Report	3-4 work samples & 500-750 words	April 25
Performance Review Form	Form (include in final portfolio)	100-250 words	--
Exit Interview	Meeting & Presentation	2-5 minutes	May 2 or 4
Final	Portfolio	3-4 work samples + 1100-1750 words	May 11

LATE WORK: I will accept work within 24 hours of the day and time that each assignment is due, but you will lose 10% of your final grade on that assignment. I will not accept work more than 24 hours late, unless you notify me in advance.

PEER REVIEW: For each of the 4 major writing assignments, you will work with other students in class to investigate the methods used by the writer and provide feedback that the writer can use to revise his or her paper. See the Peer Review Instructions on Moodle for more detailed instructions. Peer review days are mandatory, except in extreme circumstances. You will not be able to make up this work, so be sure to come to class on the days marked on the schedule.

LOW-STAKES ASSIGNMENTS & PARTICIPATION

Throughout the semester, we will complete a number Low-Stakes Assignments, including freewrites, drafts, revision reflections, and class activities. I will explain each of these assignments as they are assigned. Each should contribute to your final paper in some way and will be graded accordingly.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all class sessions is expected and is part of your overall course grade. There is no participation grade for this class, but absences will be counted based on your participation in class activities. If you are not present to complete class activities or you are not engaged with your fellow students and the class material in class discussions, you can be counted absent even if you are physically sitting in the classroom. Please see the Etiquette and Expectations page for more information on what I expect. You are expected to attend *all* peer review days and Biweekly Team Meetings and can lose points off your final score if you are not present.

Your participation in class activities will count toward the Low-Stakes Assignments grade. If you miss a class without telling ahead of time, you will not be given an opportunity to complete the activity for that day and receive credit. (Absences excused per the Student Code of Conduct are not counted.) Please contact me immediately if there is anything preventing you from attending these sessions so we can troubleshoot the issue. For example, the University has

technological support if you are having trouble with equipment, broadband access, and more. Participation additionally includes more than speaking during these synchronous classes; it also means contributing as a member of our writing community through discussion forums, peer review, and more.

For students who add the course after the beginning of the semester: You are still required to complete all assignments and work since the beginning of the semester. You will be excused from any class activities that were assigned before you added the course.

It is your responsibility to obtain notes and other materials from a classmate for any class period missed.

The Religious Observance Accommodation Request form is available at <https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/students/religious-observances/>. Submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students (helpdean@illinois.edu) by the end of the second week of the course; in the case of exams or assignments scheduled after this period, students should submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible.

WRITERS WORKSHOP

The Writers Workshop provides free, one-to-one help to all UIUC writers. The Workshop's tutors—some of whom are current or former RHET instructors—can help with any kind of paper, in any class, at any stage of the writing process. Tutors can help students with anything related to their writing, including brainstorming, organizing, grammar, citing sources, and more. Bring a draft to revise or come for help with getting your ideas together. The Workshop is currently offering online tutoring by appointment. You can schedule a 50-minute appointment by visiting <https://writersworkshop.illinois.edu/>. The Workshop also sponsors writing groups and provides hands-on presentations about academic writing skills.

Information: <https://writersworkshop.illinois.edu/>
Schedule an appointment: <https://illinois.mywconline.com/>
Call: 217-333-8796

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

According to the Student Code, "It is the responsibility of each student to refrain from infractions of academic integrity, from conduct that may lead to suspicion of such infractions, and from conduct that aids others in such infractions." Please know that it is my responsibility as an instructor to uphold the academic integrity policy of the University, which can be found Article 1, Part 4 of the University Student Code.

Often unintentional plagiarism happens when students are unclear about documentation expectations, so please see me when you are confused. Intentional plagiarism often happens when students feel desperate, so also contact me when you are confused or in a crunch, rather than resort to unethical measures that can severely impact your academic success.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM: Through imitation, you can learn the forms, methods, and conventions utilized by writers and their discourse communities. The words and phrases used by the writer,

however, are their own. Any copied wording or phrasing or any repeated passages that are not properly quoted and cited will be considered plagiarism, resulting in a 0 on the paper in question. Do not hesitate to speak with me if you have any questions regarding this matter. Please keep in mind:

- Any source consulted must be included on your Works Cited page, even if you have not quoted it directly.
- All paraphrased and summarized information must be distinct from the material paraphrased or summarized and must be cited correctly, including an in-text citation.
- Most of what can be found directly online will not qualify as a reputable sources. We will discuss source viability further in class.

STUDENTS AND ACCOMMODATION

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact me and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-1970, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or go to the [DRES website](#). If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting “Sign-Up for an Academic Screening” at the bottom of the page.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response recommendations can be found at the following website: <https://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/>. I encourage you to review this website and the campus building floor plans website within the first 10 days of class. <https://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/building-emergency-action-plans/>.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should self-identify themselves to me to ensure protection of the privacy of your attendance in this course. See <https://registrar.illinois.edu/academic-records/ferpa/> for more information on FERPA.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND REPORTING

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. I am required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University’s Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options. A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:

<https://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential>. Other information about resources and reporting is available here: wecare.illinois.edu.

INCLUSIVITY

The effectiveness of this course is dependent upon the creation of an encouraging and safe environment. Exclusionary, offensive or harmful speech (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) will not be tolerated and in some cases subject to University harassment procedures. We are all responsible for creating a positive and safe environment that allows all students equal respect and comfort. I expect each of you to help establish and maintain an environment where you and your peers can contribute without fear of ridicule or intolerant or offensive language.

STUDENT RESOURCES (COMMUNITY OF CARE)

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the Student Assistance Center (1-217-333-0050) or online at <https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral/>. Based upon your report, staff in the Student Assistance Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe. Further, as a Community of Care, we want to support you in your overall wellness. We know that students sometimes face challenges that can impact academic performance (examples include mental health concerns, food insecurity, homelessness, personal emergencies). Should you find that you are managing such a challenge and that it is interfering with your coursework, you are encouraged to contact the Student Assistance Center (SAC) in the Office of the Dean of Students for support and referrals to campus and/or community resources. The SAC has a Dean on Duty available to see students who walk in, call, or email the office during business hours. For mental health emergencies, you can call 911 or contact the Counseling Center.

ETIQUETTE AND EXPECTATIONS

- You are required to bring any assigned materials for class each day. It is important that you be able to engage fully in each class.
- Cellphones should be turned off or put away during class. I expect you to actively participate in class and hope you will respect your classmates enough to stay off your phones.
- You are expected to be *active listeners* in this class. Show your engagement with the course material and in class discussions by looking interested, taking notes, and asking questions.
- Please be ready for class on time. I will make sure to end class on time each day, so do not start packing up early. It can be disruptive to your fellow students and to me.
- Consider all communication directed to me – or any professor – as a professional correspondence. Compose them accordingly:
 - Write in complete sentences with appropriate punctuation. They should not look like text messages or informal emails to friends.
 - Proofread.
 - Be mindful of tone. Written correspondence often comes off as more brusque than intended. Adjust your writing to assure professionalism and politeness.
 - Do not ask questions about information you can easily find on your own. In particular, there is no need for any teacher to repeat information from the syllabus.
- Read all emails sent out by the instructor or by your classmates. I send out important information regularly, so please check your email and the class announcements page frequently.

COVID-19 POLICIES

GENERAL: Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community. Students are also required to follow the campus COVID-19 protocols.

Students who feel ill must not come to class. In addition, students who test positive for COVID-19 or have had an exposure that requires testing and/or quarantine must not attend class. The University will provide information to the instructor, in a manner that complies with privacy laws, about students in these latter categories. These students are judged to have excused absences for the class period and should contact the instructor via email about making up the work.

Students who fail to abide by these rules will first be asked to comply; if they refuse, they will be required to leave the classroom immediately. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, the non-compliant student will be judged to have an unexcused absence and reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action. Accumulation of non-compliance complaints against a student may result in dismissal from the University.

FACE COVERINGS: All students, faculty, staff, and visitors are required to wear face coverings in classrooms and university spaces. This is in accordance with CDC guidance and University policy and expected in this class.

Please refer to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's COVID-19 website for [further information on face coverings](#). Thank you for respecting all of our well-being so we can learn and interact together productively.

BUILDING ACCESS: In order to implement COVID-19-related guidelines and policies affecting university operations, instructional faculty members may ask students in the classroom to show their Building Access Status in the Safer Illinois app or the Boarding Pass. Staff members may ask students in university offices to show their Building Access Status in the Safer Illinois app or the Boarding Pass. If the Building Access Status says "Granted," that means the individual is compliant with the university's COVID-19 policies—either with a university-approved COVID-19 vaccine or with the on-campus COVID-19 testing program for unvaccinated students.

Students are required to show only the Building Access Screen, which shows compliance without specifying whether it was through COVID-19 vaccination or regular on-campus testing. To protect personal health information, this screen does not say if a person is vaccinated or not. Students are not required to show anyone the screen that displays their vaccination status. No university official, including faculty members, may ask students why they are not vaccinated or any other questions seeking personal health information.