

English 202D.Business Writing

Molly Lehman

Email: molly.lehman@psu.edu

Office: Burrowes 39

Office hours: Mondays, 9-11 a.m. and Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Welcome to BCOMM!

BCOMM focuses on methods and genres of writing and communicating in contemporary business, including for-profit, non-profit, and government sectors. Consistent with shifting expectations in professional business discourse, the work in this course combines traditional writing projects with multimedia and digital elements.

This is not a course in writing in accounting, finance, or any other specific business discipline. Rather, our goal is to provide you an introduction to the ways that people write in the business workplace.

BCOMM is structured with an emphasis on community-based writing and will expect you to form team-based partnerships with local businesses. This is because the most effective way to learn to write is to write for real audiences, integrating real-world concerns with writing practices. The limits of this course are the limits of your imagination.

What do I need for BCOMM?

Your textbook bundle should include the following items:

- *The BCOMM Guide to Business Writing*, 2nd edition. Pearson custom book for our course.
- Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book*, 3rd edition. Peachpit Press: 2008.

All other materials will be available via ANGEL. ***You cannot pass the quizzes for this course if you do not purchase the textbook.***

What will I learn in BCOMM?

We divide the learning goals for this course into two areas:

Rhetorical knowledge:

- ▶ Know the rhetorical conventions of common business communication genres.
- ▶ Identify and analyze your audience to determine how best to address them.
- ▶ Evaluate business writing for purpose and effectiveness, and apply those insights to your own writing.
- ▶ Communicate in an ethically responsible and culturally sensitive manner.

Process knowledge:

- ▶ Employ technology to design documents effectively.
- ▶ Integrate quantitative information and other sources in your writing, proceeding from the assumption that numbers, like words, possess rhetorical power.
- ▶ Collaborate effectively with peers and business leaders to create effectively written documents and deliverables.
- ▶ Show competence in fundamentals of business style and design.

How will I be graded in BCOMM?

Your grade in BCOMM will be based on individual activities (60%) and team-written materials (40%).

Assignment	Type	Percent of Final Grade
Quizzes (2% each × 7 + extra 1%)	individual	15%
Participation	individual	5%
Correspondence Portfolio	individual	15%

Company Profile	individual	15%
Pitch/Proposal	team	20%
Oral Progress Report	team	5%
Final Deliverables	team	15%
Evaluative Report	individual	10%

You will receive a letter grade on each assignment. For team projects, the entire team will receive the same grade, although I may award additional credit in cases where a particular team member has shown extraordinary performance. Likewise, I may give one team member a lower grade if that team member has not contributed equally to the specific assignment. I reserve the right to disband or reconfigure teams to best meet the learning outcomes of this course.

Rubrics are made available for each assignment so that you may assess your own performance. Ultimately, the standards that would be applied in the “real world” will be applied to the assignments for this class.

How are letter grades on individual assignments calculated into a final course grade?

In BCOMM, we use the University Faculty Senate grade scale as follows:

Grade	Grade-Point Equivalent
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
D	1.00
F	0

Each letter grade you earn is multiplied by its weighted average—for example, discussions leader counts for 10% of your final grade, so the multiplier is .10.

At the end of the semester, your weighted scores are totaled. The following ranges determine how that total is calculated into a final course grade:

A	3.835 - 4.000
A-	3.505 - 3.834
B+	3.175 - 3.504
B	2.835 - 3.174
B-	2.505 - 2.834
C+	2.175 - 2.504
C	1.830 - 2.174
D	1.500 - 1.829
F	0.000 - 1.499

Can you give me an example to illustrate this process?

Sure. The following example shows how each letter grade on individual assignments is translated into a number, weighted, and then totaled for a final course grade.

Assignments	% Final Grade	Grade	% x Grade
Quizzes	15%	C = 2.00	.30
Communication portfolio	15%	B+ = 3.33	.50
Company profile	15%	B+ = 3.33	.50
Pitch/Proposal	20%	A- = 3.67	.73

Progress report	5%	C+ = 2.33	.12
Final deliverable	15%	A- = 3.67	.73
Finale evaluative report	10%	B = 3	.30
Participation	5%	A = 4	.20
			<hr/>
			3.38 = B+

Professionalism

It goes without saying that we strive for a professional atmosphere in this course as we would in the workplace. As such, I expect you to meet the following basic standards of professionalism:

- **Attend class.** Your class participation grade will be affected if you fail to attend class regularly. While an occasional absence may be necessary, more than a few absences will obviously interfere with your ability to make a positive contribution to the class.
- **Arrive on time.** Arriving after class has begun draws undue attention to you and distracts the rest of us. If you must—for a legitimate reason—arrive late, enter the room as unobtrusively as possible.
- **Keep your cell phone turned off.** If you must check your voicemail or text messages, quietly leave the room to do so.
- **Participate.** Come to class having read the assigned text material. Your contributions to our discussion will demonstrate your preparedness.
- **Submit assignments on time.** This means you must be aware of all due dates.
- **Assume responsibility for your final project team’s successful and productive functioning.** Be an individual everyone on your team appreciates.

Attendance

Attendance in this course is required. While it is understood that emergencies/University-sanctioned activities may arise which result in you missing one or more classes, frequent absences will negatively impact final grades. If attendance is a chronic problem—i.e., if you have three or more unexcused absences—your participation grade will be affected, down to and including an F.

Special attendance situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis. In these cases, it is important that you keep me apprised in such circumstances.

Guidelines for Submissions

All assignments will be submitted online, in the appropriate drop box on ANGEL, and must be uploaded by 11:59 p.m. EST on the due date that appears on the course schedule.

- **Naming Your Submission.** Before uploading your final draft to the drop box, click on “Save As” and name your file with *your last name*. Assuming your submission has already been formatted as a .doc or .docx file, the appropriate extension should automatically appear after your name in the file label (e.g., “LastName.doc”).
- **Submitting to the Appropriate Drop Box.** All assignment drop boxes are clearly labeled. Be sure to submit your assignment to the appropriate drop box.
- **Submitting Multi-part Assignments.** For any assignment that requires you to submit multiple documents, please save all the documents in a single file, uploading only one file.
- **Late submissions** will receive a reduced grade.
 - After 10 days, the assignment automatically receives a grade of zero, although the assignment must still be completed and submitted by the end of the semester in order for you to receive a grade for the course.
 - All assignments must be completed and submitted by the last day of classes in order for you to receive a passing grade for the course.

Ethics and Additional Support

Academic Integrity

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of

academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing me, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest may be subject to academic sanctions, including being reported to the University's Office of Student Conduct for possible further disciplinary sanction.

Accommodation and Alternate Formats

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If any student anticipates needing any type of accommodation in this course, or has any questions about physical access, s/he should notify me as soon as possible.

On-Campus Writing Support

Peer writing tutors at Penn State Learning are available in two locations: 220 Boucke and 113 Pattee Library (Reserve Reading Room). In a typical thirty-minute writing tutorial, peer tutors read constructively; listen actively; ask questions about the rhetorical situation; discuss matters such as unity, coherence, development, style, and mechanics; and offer encouragement to help students improve as writers. *Tutors do not edit or fix papers for students.* The goal is to help students become better writers, not just turn in better papers.

Schedule

Date	Topic for the Day	Due
Week 1: Introduction/The Writing Process		
Aug. 27	Introduction to the course Pre-test and survey	
29	Discuss pre-test and the writing process	<i>BCOMM Guide to Business Writing</i> , Ch. 1-2
30	Netflix tiny writing exercise	
Week 2 -3: Everyday Communication		
Sept. 3	Writing everyday communication	
5	Workshop on everyday communication	Quiz 1: <i>BCOMM Guide to Business Writing</i> , Ch. 1-3
7	Workshop <i>your</i> everyday communication	
10	Writing everyday communication	
12	Workshop on everyday communication	Quiz 2: <i>BCOMM Guide to Business Writing</i> , Ch. 4
14	Workshop <i>your</i> everyday communication	
Week 4 - 5: Company Profiles		
17	Introduction to writing company profiles	Communication portfolio
19	Workshop on company profiles	
21	Workshop on company profiles	
24	Library: researching your company	
26	Workshop <i>your</i> company profile	
28	Company profile peer review	Draft of company profile
Week 6 - 9: Proposals		
Oct. 1	Yelp tiny writing exercise	Updated draft of company profile Select teams and choose client.
3		
5		
8	Introduction to teams/group work	<i>BCOMM Guide</i> , Ch. 6.5-6.6 Final company profile due
10	Introduction to proposals	
12	Proposals	Quiz 3: <i>BCOMM Guide to Business Writing</i> , Ch. 5
15	Introduction to numbers	
17	Review of Chapter 7; team meeting	
19	Group activity to prepare for Monday presentations; team meeting	Quiz 4: <i>BCOMM Guide to Business Writing</i> , Chapter 7
Week 10-11: Document Design		
22	Team presentations	Pitch
24	Team presentations	Pitch
26	Team scoring session	Draft of Proposal
29	Document design: PARC	Read Williams, pp. 11-85
31	Document design: Color and Type	Read Williams, pp. 91-193
Nov. 2	Workshop on document design	Quiz 5 (WORTH 20 POINTS): Williams Revised Proposal

Week 12-16: Reports		
5	Short reports	Read BCOMM, Chapter 6
7	Workshop on writing progress reports	
9	Workshop	Quiz 6: BCOMM Guide, Chapter 6
12	Team meeting—held with instructor	Progress report
14	Team meeting—held with instructor	Progress report
16	Team meeting—held with instructor	Progress report
19	Thanksgiving Break—No Class	
21	Thanksgiving Break—No Class	
23	Thanksgiving Break—No Class	
26	Blog and Pinterest tiny writing exercise	
28	Post-test	
30	Workshop. Review evaluative reports	
10	Final Talks	Final Talk
12	Final Talks	Final Talk
14	Final Talks	Final Talk. Final Deliverables Due 12/17