English 3413: Specialized Professional Writing

Fall 2011

Office: MH 4.03.06
Office hours: T-Th 9:30-10:45 a.m., 3:15-4:00 p.m. and by appointment
Office Tel: (210) 458-5390
e-mail: diane.abdo@utsa.edu

Textbooks


Course Description

This course is writing intensive. It is designed to provide students the opportunity to master strategic writing for public relations, advertising, sales and marketing, as well as writing for other specialized professions. It also examines the legal and ethical considerations of writing for the public.

You may find this type of writing to be difficult at first because it is unlike academic writing; however, as a future professional writer, you must develop the skill to write for any purpose and audience. This course will provide the opportunity and challenge to develop that skill.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed to familiarize you with a variety of writing approaches you may need to communicate in your profession. You will have the opportunity to hone your writing and editing skills through a series of “real world” based assignments. In summary, the objectives of this course are to assist you in:

- applying course material to assignments/tasks in other courses and in your profession;
- polishing your oral and written communication skills;
- learning to respond to a majority of professional writing tasks

Course Requirements

You are expected to attend class, complete assignments, work within groups and participate in class discussions. Writing assignments will be done in class and out of class. Out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned. Each student is allowed one late paper assignment without penalty, <b>except for the final paper assignment of the semester and any group paper</b>.

Any late paper assignment shall be submitted the following class day, after which time it will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late. (Note: Rough drafts are subject
Late assignments are accepted up to one week of the assigned due date.

All final out-of-class assignments must be typed (double-spaced) and submitted with research materials, prewriting, and revisions attached.

**Attendance**

Please arrive on time and attend class regularly. Late arrival disrupts the flow of lectures, class discussions, and oral presentations. Sharing individual ideas with the class and working in groups are vital aspects of the educational process, but this process cannot take place without you.

Therefore, the attendance policy for this class is as follows:

- Attendance is required. After three absences, two points will be subtracted from your overall average for each absence.
- Students are responsible for all material covered in and assigned for class.
- Only those students in class when quizzes begin or assignments are collected will be eligible for credit.
- Make-ups are not allowed for in-class work unless the absence was the result of an emergency, which must be documented.
- Group projects: Students will forfeit two points from the project grade for each absence from a group meeting (in-class or out-of-class).

**Professionalism**

Classroom decorum requires extending professional courtesy to every member of our educational community. Please follow these requirements:

- Turn off all electronic devices before you enter the classroom.
- Never leave the classroom during class unless you are responding to an emergency.
- Never enter the room during an oral presentation.
- If you arrive late for class, quietly take a seat in the back or near the door.
- Never walk in front of a speaker or someone conducting the class, meeting, or discussion.

**Evaluation**

**Grade values:**
Your grades will be determined using the following percentages:

- Quizzes/ In-class and out-of-class assignments 40%
- Major writing assignments 60%
Grade Values:

- **A**: 92-100%
- **A-**: 88-91%
- **B+**: 86-87%
- **B**: 82-85%
- **B-**: 78-81%
- **C+**: 76-77%
- **C**: 72-75%
- **C-**: 68-71%
- **D+**: 66-67%
- **D**: 62-65%
- **D-**: 60-61%
- **F**: below 60%

**Disability Services**

UTSA provides special services for students with disabilities. You will find additional information at [http://www.utsa.edu/diability/students.htm](http://www.utsa.edu/diability/students.htm).

**Academic Dishonesty**

Professional honesty begins in the classroom. Using another person’s work as if it were your own can ruin your educational career in the same way that it can ruin your professional career. Please visit the following website to access information on academic dishonesty: [http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html](http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html).

**The Roadrunner Creed**

The University of Texas at San Antonio is a community of scholars, where integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, and innovation are fostered.

As a Roadrunner, I will:

- Uphold the highest standards of academic and personal integrity by practicing and expecting fair and ethical conduct;
- Respect and accept individual differences, recognizing the inherent dignity of each person;
- Contribute to campus life and the larger community through my active engagement; and
- Support the fearless exploration of dreams and ideas in the advancement of ingenuity, creativity, and discovery.

Guided by these principles now and forever, I am a Roadrunner!
The University of Texas at San Antonio Academic Honor Code

A. Preamble
The University of Texas at San Antonio community of past, present and future students, faculty, staff, and administrators share a commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge. We honor the traditions of our university by conducting ourselves with a steadfast duty to honor, courage, and virtue in all matters both public and private. By choosing integrity and responsibility, we promote personal growth, success, and lifelong learning for the advancement of ourselves, our university, and our community.

B. Honor Pledge
In support of the ideals of integrity, the students of the University of Texas at San Antonio pledge:

“As a UTSA Roadrunner I live with honor and integrity.”

C. Shared responsibility
The University of Texas at San Antonio community shares the responsibility and commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge and adheres to the UTSA Honor Code.

Finally. . .

You are invited and encouraged to consult with me to discuss assignments, review drafts, practice editing, brainstorm for approaches to writing. No appointment is needed for conferences during my office hours.

I prefer meeting with you in person; however, if you need to contact me by email, please use the email address provided in this syllabus.

Also, the Writing Center is an excellent resource. You may access the services of tutors by visiting them in JPL 2.01.12D.

Have a great semester!
Specialized Professional Writing  English 3413
Professor Diane Abdo  Tentative Syllabus/Fall 2011
Email:  diane.abdo@utsa.edu  MS 4.03.06/ 210-458-5390
Office Hours: T-Th 9:30-10:45 a.m., 3:15-4:00 p.m. (and by appointment)

August 25
Course introduction
Diagnostic writing

August 29 & September 1
Strategic Writing: pp 37-39
“What do professional writers do?” assignment due
Profile interview assignment preparation (provide interview resources)
Section I—Strategic Writing (pp 1-10)
Section II—Strategic Writing in Public Relations (pp 41-64)

September 6 & 8
Profile draft due
Strategic Writing in Public Relations (cont.)
Profile assignment due
Discussion of public relations analysis assignment

September 13 & 15
AP Stylebook introduction/practice
Draft of public relations analysis assignment due
Pitches (pp 65-69)
Pitch writing collaboration
Public relations analysis assignment due

September 20 & 22
Pitch writing collaboration (cont.)
Public Relations/Media kit writing assignment due
Speeches (pp 92-97)
Discussion of speech writing assignment

September 27 & 29
Interviewing
Speech teamwork
Speech presentations

October 4 & 6
Speech presentations (cont.)
Newsletter and Magazine Stories (pp 87-94)
Best Newspaper Writing
October 11 & 13
Discussion of Feature Writing
Best Newspaper Writing

October 18 & 20
Conferences (MH 4.03.06)
Feature layout/Editing
Best Newspaper Writing

October 25 & 27
Feature writing draft due
AP Stylebook quiz
Editing

November 1 & 3
Feature assignment due/presentations
Strategic Writing in Advertising pp 119-132
Discussion of advertising assignment

November 8 & 10
Print Advertisements pp 133-138
The Law and Strategic Writing pp 34-36
Guest speaker
Law quiz
Strategic Writing in Sales and Marketing/Proposals and Marketing Plans (pp 165-173)

November 15 & 17
Proposals and Marketing Plan (cont.)
Brochures pp 187-198

November 15 & 17
Team meetings/Strategic Message Plan
Strategic Message Planner due
Brochure drafts due
Collaborative critiques of brochure design and text

November 22
Brochure draft due
Editing
Sales Letters and E-Blast Fundraising Letters pp 177-186

November 29 & December 1
Brochure due
Discussion of marketing materials
Blogs pp-109-111
December 6
Blog writing

Note: December 8 and 9 are student study days. Classes do not meet.
Final Exam: Wednesday, December 14, 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

This syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate. I will make my best efforts to communicate any changes to the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.