

Business Communication English 302, Section 28 Fall 2006 Policy Document

Instructor: Quinn Warnick

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Class hours: T/Th 12:40–2:00 p.m.

Class location: T: 3379 Food Science
Th: 37 Ross Hall

Office hours: T/Th 2:00–4:00 p.m., or by appt.

Course website: <http://courses.engl.iastate.edu>

Textbooks and Materials

- Harty, Kevin. *Strategies for Business and Technical Writing*, fifth edition. New York: Pearson Longman, 2005. (ISBN: 0321241959)
- Alred, Gerald J., Charles T. Brusaw, and Walter E. Oliu. *The Business Writer's Companion*, fourth edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2005. (ISBN: 0312412354)
- A portable memory device for computer files.
- Approximately 200 sheets of paper for printing additional reading assignments posted to the course website.

English 302 Overview

English 302 will help you understand the theory, principles, and processes of effective communication typically encountered in the workplace. Business communication is changing rapidly to keep up with technological advancements; hence, this course will focus not just on written communication, but will also cover oral, visual, and electronic communication. In today's workplace, your success will depend on more than being able to write well; you will also be expected to deliver persuasive oral presentations, create visually appealing documents, and navigate unfamiliar software programs.

During the next sixteen weeks, you will work individually and with your classmates to address several common workplace communication problems. Some of these assignments will require you to respond to specific scenarios, while others will allow you to tailor your work to your own academic or professional discipline. Whatever the case, you should carry out your work in a professional manner, as you would in a place of business. By the end of the semester, you should have developed the communication skills to apply for, secure, and retain a professional position in your chosen field.

English 302 FAQ

How should I contact my instructor?

The best way to contact me is by email (warnick@iastate.edu). I do my best to respond within twelve hours of receiving email. To meet with me in person, drop by during my office hours (T/Th 2:00–4:00) or email me to set up an appointment.

What should I do if I can't make it to class?

There are no excused absences (see my attendance policy), so you don't need to explain to me why you won't be in class. It is your responsibility to contact one of your classmates to find out what you missed.

What is my course grade so far?

I believe you should always know where you stand with respect to your grades. All grades are entered on the course website, and you can monitor your progress at any time by signing in to your account.

Will spelling, grammar, and punctuation affect my grade?

This is an English class, so you will be expected to adhere to the conventions of standard English. However, I hope you will come to see that little things like spelling and punctuation can have a big impact in the workplace, not just in the classroom.

Do you have a stapler?

No.

Five Simple Things You Can Do to Succeed in this Course

1. Do the readings. We won't always have time to discuss all of the readings in class, but that doesn't mean they're not important. Your ability to succeed on the reading quizzes and the major assignments will be greatly improved if you take the time to thoroughly review and comprehend the assigned readings.

2. Raise your hand. Participating in class discussions is a quick way to earn some easy points, not to mention the fact that lively discussions make class more enjoyable for everyone.

3. Find a friend. When you miss a class and need to find out what we did, your classmates should be your first resource. Find someone you can trust and exchange contact information so you can contact each other when the need arises.

4. Check the website. Changes and additions to the syllabus may be sent via email, but they will always be added to the website. The course website is always the final word on where we will be meeting, what is due, etc.

5. Come see me. I am required to hold four office hours per week. These time slots exist for the sole purpose of meeting with you about English 302, so take advantage of them. When a minor

English 302 Objectives

General Objectives. Iowa State University has identified six learning outcomes for all sections of English 302. Through readings, class discussions, and assignments, you will learn to:

- understand and apply rhetorical principles to business communication.
- understand and implement principles of effective document design in preparing business documents.
- understand the influences of organizational settings in the composition of business communication.
- understand the generic requirements of selected workplace documents.
- participate in the collaborative planning and executing of a project.
- understand the ways in which ethical issues influence research and application in your discipline.

Specific Objectives. In addition to the university's general objectives, I have established specific goals for this section of English 302. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- understand the role of visual rhetoric in persuasive communication.
- adapt persuasive techniques to both written documents and oral presentations.
- use various software programs to enhance your written and electronic documents.
- successfully navigate the job application and interview process.

Class attendance and participation

You will complete much of your work for this course in small groups, and you are expected to fulfill your fair share of group work and to interact courteously

with your peers at all times. Classes are conducted in a discussion/workshop format; therefore, regular attendance and active participation are important. My attendance policy is simple: you may miss three classes (for any reason) without penalty. Each additional absence (for any reason) will lower your course grade by 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., from C+ to C), and six or more absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Because our time in class is limited, promptness is important. Three tardies will be counted as one absence.

Software and Technology

One aim of this course is to increase your electronic literacy. Hence, many of your assignments will be submitted electronically, via the course website. In addition, the major assignments will require you to use, at minimum, word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation programs. Our course will meet regularly in a computer lab, which will provide opportunities to learn from and share with your peers. However, you will not be able to complete all computer work in class, so you will either need your own computer or arrange to use one of the on-campus computer labs.

Grading and Evaluation

Overview. Four major assignments and a final portfolio will constitute the bulk of your grade for this course. In addition, a midterm exam, several smaller assignments, and regular participation in class discussions will influence your final grade. Major assignments will be penalized one letter grade (from B to C) for every class period they are late. All units must be completed for you to receive a passing grade at the end of the semester. Shorter assignments will normally be graded on a ✓, ✓+, ✓- scale. Because these short assignments relate directly to the topic of discussion each day, they will receive no credit if they are turned in late.

Grading Scale. All major assignments will be evaluated using the following scale:

A	94 – 100
A-	90 – 93.99
B+	87 – 89.99
B	84 – 86.99
B-	80 – 83.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	74 – 76.99
C-	70 – 73.99
D+	67 – 69.99
D	64 – 66.99
D-	60 – 63.99
F	0 – 59.99

Five Things You Can Do to Annoy Your Instructor

1. Let your cell phone ring in class.

When you come to class, turn your cell phone off. If you are expecting an emergency call, let me know in advance and set your phone to vibrate.

2. Send me an incomplete email message.

I have no idea who hotchacha@iastate.edu is. When you email me, make sure to sign your name and put the words “English 302” in the subject line.

3. Ignore directions. You will have a great deal of leeway on most assignments in this course, but when I ask you to do something a certain way, it’s for a reason. Ignoring directions, even small ones, signals to me that you don’t take your work seriously.

4. Fail to proofread. Every modern word-processing program has a built-in spell-check function. Use it. Then check your work for mistakes the software program didn’t catch. Repeat as needed.

5. Ask me “Did we do anything important in class on Tuesday?”

No matter what we did, the answer will always be the same: Yes, what we did was important, and yes, you’re digging

Grading Criteria. All major assignments will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- A** *Superior Accomplishment.* Shows excellent analysis of the assignment and provides an imaginative and original response. Successfully adapts to the audience, context, and purpose of the assignment. Contains no mechanical errors and requires no revisions. The assignment is ready to be presented to the intended audience.
- B** *Commendable.* Shows judgment and tact in the presentation of material and responds appropriately to the requirements of the assignment. Has an interesting, precise, and clear style. Contains minor mechanical errors and requires revision before the assignment could be sent to the intended audience.
- C** *Competent.* Meets all the basic criteria of the assignment, and provides a satisfactory response to the rhetorical situation. There is nothing remarkably good or bad about the work, and equivalent work could be sent out in the professional world following revisions to the organization, style, or delivery of the assignment.
- D** *Needs Improvement.* Responds to the assignment, but contains significant defects in one of the major areas (context, substance, organization, style, or delivery). The assignment could not be presented to the intended audience without significant revision.
- F** *Unacceptable.* Provides an inadequate response to the assignment or shows a misunderstanding of the rhetorical situation. Contains glaring defects in one or more of the major areas (context, substance, organization, style, or delivery). The assignment could not be presented to the intended audience.

Weighted Assignments. Major units and shorter assignments will be weighted as follows:

Diagnostic Memo	50 points	5%
Correspondence Unit (multiple deliverables)	100 points	10%
Website Analysis and Recommendation Report (group project)	100 points	10%
Midterm Exam	100 points	10%
ABC Case Study Response	100 points	10%
Visual Promotional Mailer (group project)	100 points	10%
Individual Presentation on Special Topic	100 points	10%
Quizzes (ten quizzes throughout the semester)	100 points	10%
Class participation and contribution to group work	100 points	10%
Final Project: Job Application Portfolio (multiple deliverables)	150 points	15%
TOTAL	1000 points	100%

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious legal and ethical breach, and it is treated as such by the university. I do not tolerate plagiarism in any form; **if you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the course and I will report the incident to the university.**

Plagiarism occurs when a writer, speaker, or designer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, images, or other material without fully acknowledging its source by quotations marks, in footnotes or endnotes, and in lists of works cited. All work you submit in this class is to be 100% your own work (in collaborative contexts, generated 100% by you and your teammates). As is true of all work done at the university, any secondary sources (articles, images, music, interviews, websites or other electronic media—any content beyond a student's own) must be cited. Some cultures allow un-cited borrowing; in American education, each student must cite every source used. For more information, visit: <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/commons/resources/facultyguides/plagiarism/dishonest.html>

Occasionally students will *unintentionally* plagiarize material because they have failed to keep track of their sources as they acquire them and use them. In such cases, students claim they were unaware of university's policies on academic dishonesty, feign ignorance concerning what constitutes plagiarism, or try to convince me that their motives were pure. I am not in a position to judge your intentions; as a result, I am obligated to report all cases of plagiarism (regardless of the circumstances) to the university. If you have any questions about plagiarism and how it relates to your work or the work of your team, please talk to me *before* you turn in an assignment. Once plagiarized work has been submitted for a grade, I have no choice but to enforce this policy.

Disability Accommodation

Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form from the Disability Resources office, located in the Student Services Building, Room 1076 (515-294-6624).