

WR 321 *Business Writing*: Winter 2020

MWF 1-1:50 pm, 348 McKenzie Hall, CRN 25961

Instructor: Bjorn Smars

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Office: 223 PLC

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Office Hours: MWF 11 am to 12 pm & by appointment

Your ongoing enrollment in this course indicates that you have read this syllabus and accept its requirements and expectations.

Course Description:

This course introduces writing in the business field, covering a variety of forms, styles, and purposes. The weekly writing and reading assignments include proposals, memos, analyses, letters, and a formal report. The course emphasizes an awareness of audience and purpose in the preparation and production of business documents.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to achieve the following outcomes:

- Produce written work that is relevant to the purpose and context in which they are written and appropriate for the audience to which they are addressed.
- Produce written work that proceeds logically and connects ideas effectively, according to genre, purpose, and context.
- Produce written work that displays adherence to the conventions of its context (academic or professional), including
 - control of grammar, spelling, diction, syntax, and punctuation;
 - use of appropriate tone, style, and diction; and
 - appropriate formatting, media, design, and documentation of sources.
- Revise the content and organization of written work by reevaluating the reasoning and the context of the document and by responding to critiques from peers and instructors.

Required Texts:

Business Communication for Success, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing Edition, 2015.

[Click on this link to download this textbook \(Links to an external site.\)](https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/) or copy/paste the following URL into your web browser's search bar:

URL: [https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/ \(Links to an external site.\)](https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/)

Assignments & Grading:

- Resume & Cover Letter 15%
- Follow-up Letter 5%
- Informal Memo 10%
- Group Project, Negative Letter 10%
- Graphic Analysis 10%
- Collection Letter 5%
- Project Proposal 10%
- Presentation 10%
- Formal Report 20%
- Other Homework/Participation 5%

All versions must be turned in on the dates specified to receive full credit for each assignment. Assignments are turned in to Bjorn via Canvas.

In order to pass the course, you must complete all versions of each assignment (including peer reviews and presentations).

Course Policies

Registration

The only way to add this class is through DuckWeb. The last day to add this or any writing class is the Friday of week one.

Attendance and Contributions

Attendance and Allowed Absences

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed THREE absences but are responsible for anything missed during that class session and for making sure work is turned in on time, even if the work is due on the day you are absent. If you are absent beyond THREE class sessions, your final grade will be reduced by ONE THIRD of a letter grade for each absence (an A becomes an A-, a B- a C+, etc.). **SIX UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC FAILURE.**

Please note that we can negotiate absences that are outside of your control, but you will need to meet with me to discuss those details.

What Constitutes Excused Absences

If you must miss class due to school-related sports events (for athletes, marching band members, etc.) or events that you are legally obligated to attend (military trainings, jury duty, etc.), I ask that you contact me about the specific date(s) you will need to miss at least a week in advance of the event, if possible. These events will be excused absences, but I need to know about them in advance. **I reserve the right to determine what constitutes an excused absence beyond these parameters.**

Punctuality

Punctuality is also mandatory. Class begins promptly at 1:00. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to see me after class and verify that your attendance accurately reflects a late mark versus an absence. If you are late for more than THREE class sessions, the FOURTH late arrival will be considered an absence, and every late arrival after that will be considered an absence.

Contributing to the Class

Class attendance means more than being physically present in the classroom. It requires that you pay attention and contribute to class proceedings. This class emphasizes the communication of ideas both in writing and in discussion, so your active participation is essential. You will have reading and/or writing assignments due for nearly every class session to prepare you to participate fully in class activities, which may include discussions, in-class writing, small group work, and presentations. Anything less than full and informed involvement in all of these activities can count against your course grade.

To this end, you can ensure that you are prepared to attend class by

- Reading the assigned texts carefully in advance of class
- Bringing the assigned texts to class

- Contributing valuable comments to class discussion and participating in class activities.

If you are worried about speaking up in class, see me early in the term.

Observance of Religious Holidays

Students who observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances must inform instructors in advance of the holiday. Students are responsible for making up missed work according to a schedule determined with the instructor.

Late Work

Most assignments for this class will be due at 11:59 pm on the established due date. Each assignment will have a 30-minute grace period in which the assignment will not be considered late and will therefore not receive a grade penalty.

For every day an assignment is late, it will earn a grade penalty of 1/3rd of a letter grade. For example, if an assignment is 1 day late, it will go from earning an A to an A-, and so on.

I occasionally grant extensions on assignments, depending on the circumstances. **However, all requests for assignment extensions must come to me in writing (via email or Canvas messenger) at least 12 hours before the due date.** For example, if you email me with a request for an extension at 8 pm when the assignment is due at 11:59 pm, you **will not** be granted an extension. In order to be granted an extension, you **must** email me by or before 11:59 am on the due date.

I reserve the right to grant and deny requests for extensions as I see fit.

Technical Difficulties

These things happen. However, technical difficulties are not an excuse for failing to produce your assigned work on time. Back up your files. There are computer labs all over campus; make use of them if you experience difficulties with your computer, printer, or internet access.

Electronics

Please turn off cell phones and music during class. However, you may use your laptop for classroom purposes only. We will use your laptops/tablets occasionally in class, so please bring them with you to class every day.

Accessible and Inclusive Learning Environments

Your success in this class is important to me. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or that form barriers to your inclusion, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies that can enable you to succeed in this course.

I encourage you to visit and/or contact the Accessible Education Center to determine how you could improve your learning as well. **If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met.** You can visit their website at <https://aec.uoregon.edu/Links to an external site.>, visit them in person at Oregon Hall 164, call them by phone at 541-346-1155, or email them at uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Incompletes

Please see me if circumstances arise that make it difficult for you to complete the course. All requests for the grade "Incomplete" must be approved in advance and are granted only when coursework has been satisfactory and some minor but essential work cannot be completed due to unavoidable circumstances beyond the student's control.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult our textbooks and the library's guides to citation for information on documenting and using sources and to identifying and avoiding plagiarism. In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course is the standard practice of the Composition Program. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources. See also the *Code of Student Conduct* on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website.

Assignment Submissions

You will be submitting your work via Canvas. This means that all assignments (unless stated otherwise) will be due **in digital form** and must be submitted to Canvas by the due date. **All assignment submissions must use the Microsoft Word file type (.doc or .docx) or be a PDF.**

Canvas cannot read Apple's Pages file types. If you have a Macbook, you need to either use Microsoft Word or Google Docs, or you will need to convert your files from Pages to Microsoft Word or PDFs **before you submit the assignment.** The University of Oregon provides all current students with free access to Microsoft Office (including Microsoft Word); [more information about downloading Microsoft Office 365 can be found at this link.](#)Links to an external site.

Assignment Formatting

All written work must be typed and formatted according to the assignment's particular instructions. **When not specified**, double-space, use 12-point *Times New Roman* font and one-inch margins. Include the following information on upper left corner of the first page:

Your Name

WR 321

Bjorn Smars

Description of the assignment (Informal Memo, Graphic Analysis, etc.)

Word count

Date due

Your original title for the assignment (centered)

Insert your last name and page numbers in the header on subsequent pages of each document (Name 2, etc.). Generally, use MLA format for quoting and citing sources. If you have grammar questions or documentation concerns, ask in class and/or consult Purdue's Online Writing Lab.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Students who are victims of sexual violence: if you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541.346.SAFE to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at <http://safe.uoregon.edu/Links to an external site.> Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is encouraged to seek help by contacting Renae DeSautel, Sexual Violence Response and Support Services Coordinator, desautel@uoregon.edu. She will keep your information confidential. In addition, the UO Ombudsperson, Brett Harris 541.346.6400 or ombuds@uoregon.edu),

can provide assistance. You can also contact any pastor, priest, imam, or other member of the clergy. All of these people, including all UO faculty members, have an obligation not to reveal your name or other specific information without your permission, although faculty members do have to provide “general information” (nothing that identifies anyone) that will help us create a safer campus.

Basic Needs

You have a right to food and shelter. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support. Furthermore, if you are comfortable doing so, please let me know about your situation so I can help point you in the right direction for assistance.