H. John Heinz School of Public Policy and Management
Professional Writing
Hamburg Hall

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Office Hours: Scheduled upon request

Introduction

Executives, managers, and staff write and present poorly due to unclear thinking, failure to
appreciate audiences’ needs, limited writing skills, weak vocabulary and, worst of all, fear.
This inability to communicate hinders problem resolution and professional growth.

Course Goals

This course is intended to:
1) Provide you with a model for strategic thinking,
2) Increase your appreciation of audiences,
3) Improve your writing and expression of ideas,
4) Increase your vocabulary, and
5) Reduce your fear of writing and presenting while increasing your ability to achieve your
objectives.

Overview

Class time is more productive and enjoyable when all participate. Therefore, class
participation will be recorded and applied to grading. The majority of class time, however,
will be devoted to writing and re-writing. We will write much and edit much. Out-of-class
assignments will include vocabulary development, grammar review, related readings and,
of course, writing. Writing and re-writing, together with the readings of good authors, are
the best ways to improve writing.

Texts


Attendance and Other Matters

Attendance is mandatory. If you miss class, your grade will be lowered. (Legitimate excuses
will be considered.) All assignments must be typed and double-spaced with 1” margins.
Students must type their names on their papers. Papers may be sent to the instructor by e-
mail and attached Word documents. Please name your files using your name first. Cell
phones and laptop computers must be turned off in class.
Course Schedule (subject to modification)

Introductions, review of syllabus, discussion of importance of good writing and strong vocabulary. Assignments - “Warm up” writing #1, grammar review.

Review of assignments, discussion of objectivity, review of strategic thinking models, discussion of audience needs, discussion of etymology. Assignments - “Warm-up” writing #2, grammar review. Ch 1, Ex 11

Review of assignments, discussion of organizational power and corporate communicating, vocabulary review, memo formatting. Assignments - “Memo” writing #1. Ch 2, Ex 10

Review of assignments, vocabulary review, review of executive expectation. Assignments - “Memo” writing #2. Ch 3, Ex 1-2-3-4-5-6-8-9 Ch 18

Review of assignments, vocabulary review, E-Mail, sequencing information. Assignments - “E-Mail” writing #1. Ch 4 Ex 5-8-9-10-12-16-17

Review of assignments, vocabulary review, employee disciplining and related communication, role play. Assignments - “E-Mail” writing #2. Ch 7 Ex 1 to 7 and “Review Exercise”

Review of assignments, vocabulary review, customer communication. Assignments - “Letter” writing #1. Chapters 8-14-16

Review of assignments, vocabulary review, communicating price increases and apologies. Assignments - “Letter” writing #2. Ch 15

Review of assignments, vocabulary review, simplifying product literature. Assignment – Writing an abstract. CH 9

Review of assignments, vocabulary review, cover letters and resumes. Assignment - “RFP” writing. Ch 20

Comment

Styles to be Avoided – Academic, Bureaucratic and Legalistic

Style to be Adopted – Clear, Concise, Coherent, Conversational

Grammar to be Discussed – Action Verbs, Active Voice, Character as Subject,Modifiers, Parallel Structure, Pronoun Reference, Nominalization, and others.

Management Topics to be Discussed – Leadership, Lay-off, Systems of Employee valuation, Emotional Quotient, Crisis Management, Marketing, Fund Raising, Employee Discipline, Job Search Tactics, Resume and Cover Letter Writing, and others.
### Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memo #1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memo #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-Mail #1</td>
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<td>Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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**Total** 100

- **A** - 90% +
- **B** - 80% - 89%
- **C** - Less than 80%
Assumptions

Everyone can improve their writing (that’s right, *their* writing).

Improvement is based on choice and hard work.

Writing is a CRAFT.

Good writing is good *re-writing*.

Collaboration is useful and practiced.

Words are our building blocks.

Good writing reveals; it doesn’t conceal.

Fundamentals are critical.

The English language is ubiquitous.

The English language is wiggly.

Those who write (and present) well advance more quickly (all things being equal) than those who don’t.

Balance sustains life (or, use your right brain *and* your left brain).

“Characters” as subjects make sentences stronger.

Verbs that express action make sentences stronger.

The strong sentence pattern is Subject-Verb-Object.

Active voice is preferable to passive voice.