

## ENGLISH 202D: BUSINESS WRITING

**Instructor:** Phillip Zapkin

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**Office Location:** Burrowes 017

**Office Hours:** T 12-1PM and  
W 12-2PM in person, or by appointment

### Fall 2025

- Section 048
  - TuTh 3:05-4:20PM
  - Paterno Library E302
- Section 049
  - TuTh 4:35-5:50PM
  - Chambers 205



"In response to your request for better communications,  
I'm going to increase my lengthy explanations by 50%."

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 202D introduces students to the conventions, genres, and strategies of business communication. In particular, this course focuses on skills in critical analysis, reader-centered writing, and professional discourse.

This course is a General Education: Writing/Speaking (GWS) course that fulfills the Effective Communication and Critical and Analytical Thinking learning objectives.

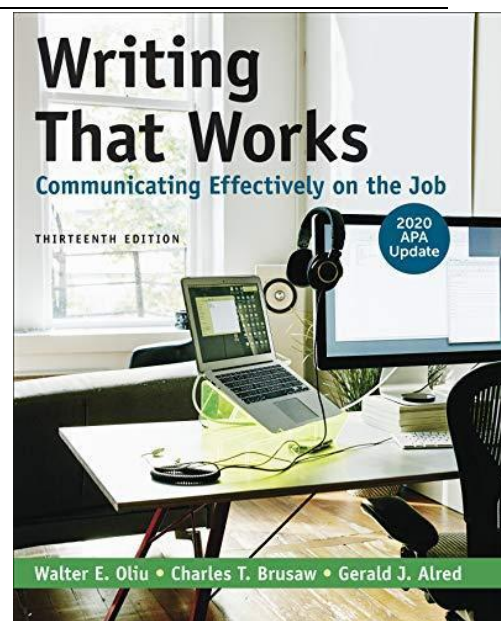
### REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Oliu, Walter E., Charles T. Brusaw, and Gerald J. Alred. *Writing That Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job*. 13<sup>th</sup> ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-319-36152-5.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Project	Grade Weight
Topic Approval Proposal (TAP)	15%
Correspondence Packet (CP)	15%
Job Application Documents (JAD)	20%
Funding Request Pitch (FRP)	20%
Peer Reviews	15%
Participation	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*\*\*You must hand in *all* major projects to pass this course\*\*\*



- Assignments will be due at the time specified in the schedule. Submitting a project after the deadline will result in the loss of 1 full letter grade per late day; submitting peer review feedback late will result in the loss of 1 point per day late.
- Each project (except the FRP) will be peer reviewed and you will review a partner's draft before the submission deadline. Use the feedback you get to improve your project. Peer review feedback will be graded out of 10 points.
- Each project should be grammatically and stylistically polished and exhibit correct formatting. Grading will reflect the seriousness with which these matters are frequently viewed in the professional world.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Participation is crucial to our classroom community—this is an interactive class where what you get out depends on what you put in. The participation grade is a holistic and comprehensive grade evaluating your contributions over the semester to full class discussions, group work/discussions, writing conferences, and attendance.

- Writing Conferences: Coming to discuss your work, writing, or ideas with me during office hours will add  $\frac{1}{3}$  letter grade toward your participation grade per visit. Especially if you're nervous about talking in class, this can be a great way to simultaneously get useful feedback and boost your participation score.

### **GRADING SCALE**

This class uses the LionPATH standard grading scale to determine final course grades:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Range</b>
A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99
B	84-86.99
B-	80-83.99
C+	77-79.99
C	70-76.99
D	60-69.99
F	0-59.99

### **POLICIES**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

You are allowed to miss 2 classes with no penalty to your grade. *Each class missed beyond those 2 will cost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter from your overall course grade.*

- [Excused absences](#) do not count against you. In order for an absence to be excused you must notify me as early as possible beforehand (at least 24 hours). Reasons for excused absences include: religious holidays, military service, university required activities (i.e., participation in a university sports team), or severe illness or injury.
- Excessive absences—even excused—are unacceptable (see [Policies and Rules, 42-27](#)). Students with a (long term) health issue or emergency situation should contact their advisor and to discuss the situation (including potentially [withdrawal options](#)).

- If you miss class, *it is your responsibility to make up the missed material*. Ask a classmate to take notes for you and then come to office hours and/or email me.
- Unless I explicitly grant you an extension, you must still meet assignment deadlines, regardless of attendance.
- Be aware: Students can fail a class for non-attendance regardless of the quality of written work done.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. According to Penn State policy [G-9: Academic Integrity](#), an academic integrity violation is "an intentional, unintentional, or attempted violation of course or assessment policies to gain an academic advantage or to advantage or disadvantage another student academically." Unless your instructor tells you otherwise, you must complete all course work entirely on your own, using only sources that have been permitted by your instructor, and you may not assist other students with papers, quizzes, exams, or other assessments. If your instructor allows you to use ideas, images, or word phrases created by another person (e.g., from Course Hero or Chegg) or by generative technology, such as ChatGPT, you must identify their source. You may not submit false or fabricated information, use the same academic work for credit in multiple courses, or share instructional content. Students with questions about academic integrity should ask their instructor before submitting work.

Students facing allegations of academic misconduct may not drop/withdraw from the affected course unless they are cleared of wrongdoing (see [G-9: Academic Integrity](#)).

Attempted drops will be prevented or reversed, and students will be expected to complete course work and meet course deadlines. Students who are found responsible for academic integrity violations face academic outcomes, which can be severe, and put themselves at jeopardy for other outcomes which may include ineligibility for Dean's List, pass/fail elections, and grade forgiveness. Students may also face consequences from their home/major program and/or The Schreyer Honors College.

### **STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCES**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides [contact information for every Penn State campus](#). For further information, please visit [Student Disability Resources website](#).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See [documentation guidelines](#). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

### **COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- [Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park \(CAPS\)](#): 814-863-0395
- [Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses](#)
- Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400
- Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

### **REPORTING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY CONCERNS THROUGH THE REPORT BIAS SITE**

Penn State University has adopted a "[Protocol for Responding to Bias Motivated Incidents](#)" that is grounded in the policy that the "University is committed to creating an educational environment which is free from intolerance directed toward individuals or groups and strives to create and maintain an environment that fosters respect for others." That policy is embedded within an institution traditionally committed to [academic freedom](#). Bias motivated incidents include conduct that is defined in [University Policy AD 91: Discrimination and Harassment, and Related Inappropriate Conduct](#). Students, faculty, or staff who experience or witness a possible bias motivated incident are urged to report the incident immediately by doing one of the following:

- Submit a report via the [Report Bias webpage](#)
- Contact one of the following offices:
  - University Police Services, University Park: 814-863-1111
  - Multicultural Resource Center, Diversity Advocate for Students: 814-865-1773
  - Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity: 814-865-5906
  - Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs: 814-865-0909
  - Affirmative Action Office: 814-863-0471
- Dialing 911 in cases where physical injury has occurred or is imminent

### **COVID STATEMENT**

While COVID-19 cases have decreased substantially since fall of 2021, COVID-19 remains a pandemic. More transmissible variants are a major concern. Penn State urges everyone to continue to take steps to protect not only themselves, but their colleagues, friends, and the campus by practicing good hand hygiene, staying home if you are sick, being up to date on vaccinations and boosters, and wearing a mask indoors. There is evidence that masks are effective in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 (e.g., Li et al., 2020, Lima et al., 2020, Talic et al., 2021) and everyone is strongly encouraged to wear masks while indoors.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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This schedule is subject to change by me. I will notify you ahead of time by email and/or Canvas announcement of any changes.

Readings Key: WTW=Writing that Works, CA=Canvas, LIL=LinkedIn Learning

### WEEK 1

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#### ❖ Tu. 26 Aug.: Introductions; Course goals and expectations; What is rhetoric?; Canvas

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - By 11:59PM ET: "Professional Introduction" Discussion Forum Post
    - On CA, read:
      - Syllabus
      - Topic Approval Proposal Assignment Sheet
      - Funding Request Pitch Assignment Sheet
      - Problems with AI Page
    - On CA, watch:
      - ["Brainstorming"](#)
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#### ❖ Th. 28 Aug.: Syllabus; Introduce Topic Approval Proposal assignment; Begin finding groups and brainstorming potential topics

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - In WTW, read:
      - "Writing Systematically" pp. 4-13
      - "Writing Persuasively" pp. 21-29
      - "Keeping Your Audience in Mind" pp. 42-43
    - On CA, read:
      - "Carefree Catering Memo\_Before"
    - On CA, watch:
      - ["5 Key Principles for Business Writing"](#)
      - ["Audience Awareness"](#)
      - ["Logging into LinkedIn Learning"](#)
      - LIL: ["Making Your Writing Concise"](#)
      - LIL: ["Making Your Writing Conversational"](#)
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### WEEK 2

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#### ❖ Tu. 2 Sept.: Key Principles of Business Writing; Anticipating Audience Needs; Carefree Catering Memo Revision

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - In WTW, read:
      - "Collaborating on Content" pp. 75-88
      - "Planning and Writing Proposals" pp. 403-408
    - On CA, read:
      - Background Information and Problem sections from "Sample TAP Draft 1"
      - Background and Problem sections from "Sample TAP Draft 2"
    - On CA, watch:
      - ["Collaborative Writing"](#)
      - ["Hedging Phrases"](#)
      - LIL: ["Determining the Three Elements of a Strong Purpose"](#)
      - LIL: ["Designing the Content of Your Message"](#)
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❖ Th. 4 Sept.: Collaborative Writing; Background and Problem Statements

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Conducting Research” pp. 94-129
  - On CA, read:
    - Personal Qualifications and Motivation, Research Plan, and Strategic Schedule sections from “Sample TAP Draft 1”
    - Personal Qualifications and Motivation, Research Plan, and Schedule sections from “Sample TAP Draft 2”

WEEK 3

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❖ Tu. 9 Sept.: Qualifications, Research Plans, and Schedule

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - One member of your group must post draft to “Background and/or Problem Statement” discussion forum
  - Individual feedback Response to “Background and/or Problem Statement” discussion forum

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❖ Th. 11 Sept.: *Remote Class*; Discussion Forum Post “Background and/or Problem Statement”

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- Due by beginning of class:
  - One member of your group must post draft to “Background and/or Problem Statement” discussion forum
- Due by 11:59PM:
  - Individual feedback Response to “Background and/or Problem Statement” discussion forum
- Homework for Next Class:
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Designing Letters” pp. 263-268
  - On CA, read:
    - “Formatting A Business Letter Sample”
    - Opening and Conclusion sections from “Sample TAP Draft 1”
    - Opening and Conclusion sections from “Sample TAP Draft 2”
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Formatting a Business Letter”](#)
    - [“Submitting a Project and Downloading Feedback”](#)

WEEK 4

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❖ Tu. 16 Sept.: Business Letter Formatting; TAP Introduction and Conclusion

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - By Beginning of Class: TAP Peer Review Draft
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Revising a Document” pp. 46-48
    - “Proofreading” pp. 61-62
  - On CA, (re)read:
    - Topic Approval Proposal Assignment Sheet
    - “Revision Strategies”
  - On CA, watch:



- [“Peer Reviewing”](#)
- [“Grading and Standards”](#)

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#### ❖ Th. 18 Sept.: Revision strategy; TAP Peer Review

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- Due by beginning of class:
  - TAP Peer Review Draft
- Due by 11:59PM:
  - TAP Peer Feedback
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Topic Approval Proposal**
  - On CA, read:
    - Correspondence Packet Assignment Sheet
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Routine and Positive Messages” pp. 277-287
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Positive/Neutral Messages”](#)

#### WEEK 5

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#### ❖ Tu. 23 Sept.: Introduce Correspondence Packet assignment; Writing Routine and Positive Messages

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- Due by 11:59PM:
  - **Topic Approval Proposal**
- Homework for Next Class:
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Writing Emails, Memos, and Letters” pp. 243-264
    - “Sensitive and Negative Messages” pp. 287-298
  - On CA, read:
    - “ENGL Position Letter”
    - “Formatting a Memo Sample”
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Direct vs. Indirect Rhetoric”](#)
    - [“Formatting a Memo”](#)
    - [“Writing a Professional Email”](#)

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#### ❖ Th. 25 Sept.: Formatting Emails and Memos; Writing Negative Messages

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - On CA, read:
    - “Jack Dorsey’s Layoff Letter to Twitter Staff”
    - “Microsoft Executive Stephen Elop’s Email to Employees”
    - “Okta is Laying Off 400 Workers, Read the CEO’s Memo”
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Negative Messages and Bad News”](#)
    - LIL: [“Delivering Bad News”](#)

#### WEEK 6

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#### ❖ Tu. 30 Sept.: Analyzing Negative Messages

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - On CA, read:
    - “Crash Course in Rhetorical Appeals”

- On CA, watch:
  - [“The AIDA System”](#)
  - [“Rhetorical Appeals”](#)

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❖ Th. 2 Oct.: The AIDA System; Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - By Beginning of Class: CP Peer Review Draft
  - On CA, reread:
    - Correspondence Packet Assignment Sheet
    - “Revision Strategies”

WEEK 7

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❖ Tu. 7 Oct.: Revision strategy; CP Peer Review

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- Due by Beginning of Class:
  - CP Peer Review Draft
- Due by 11:59PM:
  - CP Peer Feedback
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Correspondence Packet**
  - On CA, read:
    - Job Application Documents Assignment Sheet
    - “Career Coaches on the Biggest Mistakes People Make in the Job Search”
    - “Bosses are firing Gen Z grads just months after hiring them—here’s what they say needs to change \_ Fortune”
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Conducting the Job Search” pp. 497-505
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Searching for Jobs”](#)
    - [“Critically Reading Job Ads”](#)
    - LIL: [“Find the Right Job Postings”](#)

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❖ Th. 9 Oct.: Introduce Job Application Documents assignment; Searching for Jobs

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- Due by 11:59PM:
  - **Correspondence Packet**
- Homework for Next Class:
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Preparing an Effective Resume” pp. 505-533
  - On CA, read:
    - “Guidelines for Resumes and Application Letters”
    - “Generic Resume Model”
    - “Kevin O’Leary’s biggest resume ‘green flag’”
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Generic Resume Design”](#)
    - [“Creating Multiple Columns in a Resume”](#)
    - LIL: Chapter 2—[“Customizing the Basic Resume Components”](#) (4 videos)



## WEEK 8

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### ❖ Tu. 14 Oct.: Generic Resume Design

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Post to “Job Call Key Words, Skills, and Company Values” discussion forum
    - Feedback Response to “Job Call Key Words, Skills, and Company Values” discussion forum
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### ❖ Th. 16 Oct.: Remote Class; Discussion Forum Post “Job Call Key Words, Skills, and Company Values”

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- Due by beginning of class:
  - Post to “Job Call Key Words, Skills, and Company Values” discussion forum
- Due by 11:59PM:
  - Feedback Response to “Job Call Key Words, Skills, and Company Values” discussion forum
- Homework for Next Class:
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Promoting Your Skills for a Successful Job Search” pp. 492-497
  - On CA, read:
    - “Aurora Program Leader Job Call”
    - “Aurora Resume\_Untailored”
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Tailoring Targeted Resumes”](#)
    - [“Demographic Information in Job Applications”](#)
    - LIL: Chapter 3—[“Upgrading Your Resume”](#) (3 videos)

## WEEK 9

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### ❖ Tu. 21 Oct.: Tailoring Resumes; Aurora Resume Tailoring Practice

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - On CA, read:
      - “How to Use AI to Write Your Résumé”
      - “How to Make a Resume with AI”
      - “The résumé is dying, and AI is holding the smoking gun”
      - “Parminder Knowledge\_JAD Job Ad and Generic Resume”
      - “Parminder Knowledge\_JAD Tailored Resume”
      - “Rachel Jobseeker\_JAD Job Ad and Generic Resume”
      - “Rachel Jobseeker\_JAD Tailored Resume”
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### ❖ Th. 23 Oct.: Designing Resumes for AI; Analyzing Sample Resumes

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Writing an Effective Letter of Application” pp. 533-539
  - On CA, read:
    - “Application Letter Template”
    - “How a Tenacious Summer Analyst Applicant Got Laughed at by Goldman, Morgan, and Everyone Else on Wall Street”
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Writing and Tailoring Application Letters”](#)

## WEEK 10

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### ❖ Tu. 28 Oct.: Writing and Tailoring Application Letters

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - On CA, read:
    - “James Learner\_JAD Job Ad and Generic Resume”
    - “James Learner\_JAD Application Letter”
    - “Parminder Knowledge\_JAD Job Ad and Generic Resume”
    - “Parminder Knowledge\_Application Letter”

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### ❖ Th. 30 Oct.: Analyzing Sample Application Letters

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Doing Well in the Interview” pp. 543-548
    - “Sending Follow-up Correspondence” pp. 548-551
  - On CA, read:
    - “Career Experts on the Best Way to Answer ‘Why Do You Want to Work Here’?”
    - “Job-seekers are Missing ‘Something Very Basic’ in Interviews, Says Hiring Expert of 20 Years”
    - “3 Job Interview Red Flags, According to a Recruiter Who’s Interviewed ‘Thousands’”
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Succeeding in an Interview”](#)
    - [“How to Dress for a Job Interview”](#)
    - LIL: [“How to Rock an Interview”](#) (whole course)

## WEEK 11

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### ❖ Tu. 4 Nov.: Job Interviews

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - JAD Peer Review Draft
  - On CA, reread:
    - Job Application Documents Assignment Sheet
    - “Revision Strategies”

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### ❖ Th. 6 Nov.: Revision Strategy; JAD Peer Review

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- Due by Beginning of Class:
  - JAD Peer Review Draft
- Due by 11:59PM:
  - JAD Peer Feedback
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Job Application Documents**
  - On CA, reread:
    - Funding Request Pitch Assignment Sheet
  - In WTW, read:
    - “Writing Informal Reports” pp. 313-331
  - On CA, watch:
    - [“Synthesizing Researched Sources”](#)

## WEEK 12

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### ❖ Tu. 11 Nov.: Introduce Funding Request Pitch assignment; Informal Reports

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- Due by 11:59PM:
    - **Job Application Documents**
  - Homework for Next Class:
    - In WTW, read:
      - “Preparing and Delivering Presentations” pp. 453-474
    - On CA, read:
      - “3 Tricks to Get People to Actually Listen to Your Presentations”
    - On CA, watch:
      - LIL: “[Speaking Confidently and Effectively](#)” (whole course)
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### ❖ Th. 13 Nov.: Crash Course on Public Speaking

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - On CA, watch:
      - “[Designing an Effective Powerpoint](#)”
      - “[Academic Presentations](#)”
      - “[How Economic Inequality Harms Societies—Richard Wilkinson](#)”
      - LIL: “[Powerpoint: Eight Easy Ways to Make Your Presentation Stand Out](#)” (whole course)
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## WEEK 13

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### ❖ Tu. 18 Nov.: Designing a Powerpoint; Presenting with Powerpoint; FRP Sign Ups

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - On CA, watch:
      - “[The Best Pitch Ever! The Best of Shark Tank](#)”
      - “[Shark Tank / Fairy Shoes / Worst Pitch Ever](#)”
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### ❖ Th. 20 Nov.: Analyzing Shark Tank Pitches

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - In WTW, read:
      - “Listening” pp. 474-476
    - On CA, watch:
      - “[Active Listening](#)”
      - LIL: Chapter 4—“[How to Actively Listen](#)” (6 videos)
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## WEEK 14

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### ❖ Tu. 25 Nov.: No Class: Thanksgiving Recess

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### ❖ Th. 27 Nov.: No Class: Thanksgiving Recess

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## WEEK 15

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### ❖ Tu. 2 Dec.: Critical Listening; Q&A Sessions

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### ❖ Th. 4 Dec.: Optional Class; FRP Rehearsals

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## WEEK 16

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### ❖ Tu. 9 Dec.: FRP Presentations

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - **FRP Visuals**

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❖ Th. 11 Dec.: FRP Presentations

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- Due by 11:59PM:
  - **FRP Visuals**
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Funding Awards Sheet**

WEEK 17

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❖ Mon. 15 Dec.: Funding Awards Sheet Due

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- Due by 11:59PM:
  - **Funding Awards Sheet**