

English 202D: Business Writing

Semester: Summer 2026

Section: 101

Times: MTWThF 11:10AM-12:25PM

Location: Willard Bldg 071

Instructor: Phillip Zapkin

Email: pzz17@psu.edu

Office Location: Burrowes 017

Office Hours: MTh 12:45-1:45PM

or by appointment



"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.

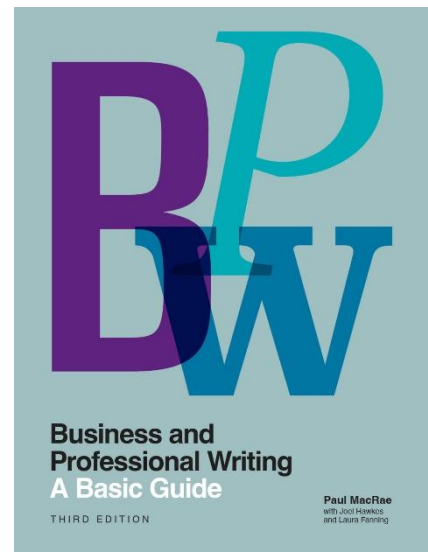
Required Textbook

MacRae, Paul with Joel Hawkes and Laura Fanning. *Business and Professional Writing: A Basic Guide*. 3rd ed., Broadview Press, 2025. ISBN: 9781554816460.

Course Requirements and Grading

Project	Grade Weight
Correspondence Packet (CP)	15%
Social Media Advertisement (SMA)	15%
Job Application Documents (JAD)	20%
Incident Report (IR)	20%
Peer Reviews	15%
Participation	15%
Total	100%

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 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, discussion forum posts, writing conferences, and attendance.

- Writing Conferences: Coming to discuss your work, writing, or ideas with me during office hours will add 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:

Letter Grade	Point Range
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 3 classes with no penalty to your grade. Each class missed beyond those 3 will cost 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 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 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

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: *BPW=Business and Professional Writing*, *CA=Canvas*, *LIL=LinkedIn Learning*

Week 1

Mon. 18 May: Introductions; What is rhetoric?; Course goals; Canvas

Due by 11:59PM

- "Professional Introduction" discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- On CA, read:
 - Syllabus

- Correspondence Packet assignment sheet
- Problems with AI page
- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Introduction to Business and Professional Writing” (pp. 15-22”
 - “The Seven Cs of Good Professional Communication” (pp. 33-60)
- On CA, watch:
 - [“5 Key Principles for Business Writing”](#)

Tues. 19 May: Syllabus; Introduce Correspondence Packet assignment; 5 key principles of business writing

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Business Communication versus Academic Writing” (pp. 25-27)
 - “Emails and Memos” (pp. 155-60)
 - Letters: “Introduction” and “Good-News and Neutral Letters” (pp. 165-68)
- On CA, read:
 - “Gmail - Update to your BritBox subscription”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Positive/Neutral Messages”](#)
 - [“Audience Awareness”](#)
 - [“Logging into LinkedIn Learning”](#)
- On LIL, watch:
 - [“Making Your Writing Concise”](#)
 - [“Making Your Writing Conversational”](#)

Wed. 20 May: Writing routine/positive messages; Business audiences

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Bad-News Letters” (pp. 169-77)
- On CA, read:
 - “Boston College Assistant Professor of the Practice”
 - “ENGL Position Letter”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Negative Messages and Bad News”](#)
 - [“Direct vs. Indirect Rhetoric”](#)
- On LIL, watch:
 - [“Delivering Bad News”](#)

Thurs. 21 May: Writing negative messages

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - Formatting for Correspondence: “Introduction” and “Memos and Emails” (pp. 137-42)
- On CA, read:
 - “Formatting a Memo Sample”
 - “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:

- [“Formatting a Memo”](#)
- [“Writing a Professional Email”](#)

Fri. 22 May: Email and memo format; Analyzing negative messages

Due by 11:59PM

- “Lesson from Negative Message” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Persuasive Letters” (pp. 181-97)
 - The Eighth C: “Introduction,” “Grammar Language,” “Parts of Speech,” and “Sentences and Clauses” (pp. 63-75)
- On CA, read:
 - “Crash Course in Rhetorical Appeals”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“The AIDA System”](#)
 - [“Rhetorical Appeals”](#)
 - [“Submitting a Project and Downloading Feedback”](#)

Week 2

Mon. 25 May: *No Class; Memorial Day*

Tues. 26 May: Writing persuasive messages; AIDA; Classical appeals

Homework for Next Class:

- CP peer review draft
- In *PBW*, read:
 - Copy-Editing (pp. 99-108)
- On CA, (re-)read:
 - Correspondence Packet assignment sheet
 - “Revision Strategies”
 - “PWR Grading Standards”
 - “The Writing Instructor’s Approach to Grading”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Peer Reviewing”](#)
 - [“Grading and Standards”](#)

Wed. 27 May: Revision; CP peer review

Due by beginning of class

- CP peer review draft

Due by 11:59PM

- CP peer review feedback

Homework for Next Class:

- On CA, read:
 - Social Media Advertisement assignment sheet
- In *BPW*, read:
 - Digital Media and Marketing: “Introduction” (pp. 261-63)
 - “Social Media” through “Internet Security” (pp. 270-81)
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Writing for Digital Spaces”](#)
 - [“Online Advertising: Crash Course Media Literacy #7”](#)

Thurs. 28 May: Introduce Social Media Advertisement assignment; Composing for digital audiences

Homework for Next Class:

- **Correspondence Packet final draft**
 - In *BPW*, read:
 - Basic Document Design: “Introduction” and “Modular Design” (pp. 111-17)
 - “Graphics” (pp. 126-35)
 - On LIL, watch:
 - [“Understanding the PARC System”](#)
-

Fri. 29 May: PARC system and basics of document design

Due by 11:59PM

- **Correspondence Packet final draft**

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Lists” through “Headings” (pp. 117-26)
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Serif and Sans Serif Fonts”](#)
- On Canvas, look at:
 - “Alpha Kappa Delta Phi Christmas Bakesale”
 - “Axis THON pasta Fundraiser”
 - “Pie A Kappa”
 - “Tarot Readings”
- On LIL, watch:
 - [“Understanding the Importance of Type”](#)
 - [“Understanding the Importance of Color”](#)

Week 3

Mon. 1 June: *Meet in Pattee W140*; Media Commons lesson on image editing

Due by 11:59PM

- “Visual Design Element Analysis” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Websites” (pp. 263-70)
 - On LIL, watch:
 - [“Social Media Marketing Foundations”](#) (whole course)
-

Tues. 2 June: *Meet in Pattee W140*; Media Commons lesson on video editing

Homework for Next Class:

- On CA, watch:
 - [“It Starts on TikTok”](#)
 - [“The New Kid”](#)
 - [“Check In On Those Around You”](#) (Content warning: suicide)
-

Wed. 3 June: Video advertising analysis

Due by 11:59PM

- “Video Rhetoric Analysis” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- On CA, look at:
 - “Cookies for a Cause”

- “Dunkin Donuts Donut Giveaway”
- “The Haunted House”
- “The Shining”

Thurs. 4 June: Analyze student SMA samples

Homework for Next Class:

- SMA peer review draft
- On CA, re-read:
 - Social Media Advertisement assignment sheet

Fri. 5 June: SMA peer review

Due by beginning of class

- SMA peer review draft

Due by 11:59PM

- SMA peer review feedback

Homework for Next Class:

- **Social Media Advertisement final draft**
- On CA, read:
 - Job Application Documents Assignment Sheet
 - “Career Coaches on the Biggest Mistakes People Make in the Job Search”
 - “Accounting Analyst I - Sheetz, Inc”
 - “Accounts Payable Assoc - Ward Trucking, LLC”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Searching for Jobs”](#)
 - [“Critically Reading Job Ads”](#)
- On LIL, watch:
 - [“Find the Right Job Postings”](#)

Week 4

Mon. 8 June: Introduce Job Application Documents assignment; Searching for and analyzing job ads

Due by 11:59PM

- **Social Media Advertisement final draft**

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - Resumes (pp. 213-228)
- 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”](#)
 - [“Creating Borders in a Resume”](#)
 - [“Putting a Physical Address on Resumes”](#)
- On LIL, watch:
 - Chapter 2—[“Customizing the Basic Resume Components”](#) (4 videos)

Tues. 9 June: Basics of resume design

Due by 11:59PM

- “Question About Resume Design” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- On CA, read:
 - “Human Resources Generalist - Bobby Rahal Automotive Group”
 - Bobby Rahal Resume_Untailored
 - On CA, watch:
 - [“Tailoring Targeted Resumes”](#)
 - On LIL, watch:
 - Chapter 3—[“Upgrading Your Resume”](#) (3 videos)
-

Wed. 10 June: Tailoring a resume; Bobby Rahal resume tailoring practice

Due by 11:59PM

- “Bobby Rahal Resume Tailoring Practice” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- On CA, read:
 - “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”
 - “Formatting A Business Letter Sample”
 - On CA, watch:
 - [“Discussing Future Activities in Job Application Documents”](#)
 - [“Demographic Information in Job Applications”](#)
 - [“Formatting a Business Letter”](#)
-

Thurs. 11 June: Analyzing sample tailored resumes; Business letter format

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Cover Letters” (pp. 201-11)
 - 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”](#)
 - [“I am confident that I can”](#)
-

Fri. 12 June: Writing and tailoring application letters

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”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Overcoming Adversity Narratives in Job Applications”](#)

Week 5

Mon. 15 June: Analyzing sample application letters

Due by 11:59PM

- “Best Application Letter Sentence” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Electronic or Scannable Resume” (pp. 228-32)
 - 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”
 - “7 Steps To AI-Proof Your Resume And Land More Job Interviews”
 - “Bosses Horrified as ‘AI Native’ College Graduates Hit the Workplace”
-

Tues. 16 June: AI and the application process

Homework for Next Class:

- 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’”
 - “Bosses are firing Gen Z grads just months after hiring them—here’s what they say needs to change _ Fortune”
 - “Gen Z in the Workplace_ Guide to Navigating Dynamics”
 - On CA, watch:
 - [“Succeeding in an Interview”](#)
 - [“How to Dress for a Job Interview”](#)
 - [“Body Modifications and Job Interviews”](#)
 - [“Asking a Hiring Committee About Their Concerns”](#)
 - On LIL, watch:
 - [“How to Rock an Interview”](#) (whole course)
-

Wed. 17 June: Interviewing and professional behavior

Due by 11:59PM

- “Interview Anxiety” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- JAD peer review draft
 - On CA, re-read:
 - Job Application Documents Assignment Sheet
 - In *PBW*, read:
 - The Eight C: “Conjunctions” through “Review of Commas, Semicolons, and Colons” (pp. 75-92)
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Thurs. 18 June: JAD peer review

Due by beginning of class

- JAD peer review draft

Due by 11:59PM

- JAD peer review feedback

Homework for Next Class:

- **Job Application Documents final draft**
- On CA, read,
 - Incident Report assignment sheet
- In *PBW*, read:
 - Informal Reports: “Introduction” (pp. 313-14) and “Incident Reports” (pp. 326-29)
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Zapcorps Incident”](#)
 - [“Informal Reports”](#)
 - [“Incident Reports”](#)
 - [“Why You Should Report All Injuries & Near Misses”](#)
- On LIL, watch:
 - [“Formal and Informal Reports”](#)

Fri. 19 June: No Class; Juneteenth

Week 6

Mon. 22 June: Introduce Incident Report assignment; Incident reports and informal reports

Due by 11:59PM

- **Job Application Documents final draft**

Homework for Next Class:

- In *PBW*, read:
 - “Progress Reports” and “Problem-Solving Reports” (pp. 314-25) and “Proposal Reports” (pp. 329-36)
- On CA, read:
 - “GSHPA_Incident Form Report”
 - “Office of Risk Management_Incident Report Form”
 - “Recognized Student Organizations_Incident Report Form”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Structure of Informal Reports”](#)
 - [“Summary”](#)

Tues. 23 June: Summary and detailed descriptions

Due by 11:59PM

- “In-Progress Summary” discussion forum post

Homework for Next Class:

- On CA, read:
 - “Zapcorps Employee Handbook”
- On CA, watch:
 - [“Objectivity and Subjectivity”](#)
 - “The Rhetoric of Policy Documents”

Wed. 24 June: Objectivity and language choices; Reading policy documents

Homework for Next Class:

- In-progress IR draft
- On CA, re-read:
 - Incident Report assignment sheet

Thurs. 25 June: IR Workshop

Due by beginning of class

- In-progress IR draft

Homework for Next Class:

- IR peer review draft
 - In *PBW*, read:
 - “Grammar Odds and Ends” (pp. 92-95)
-

Fri. 26 June: IR peer review

Due by beginning of class

- IR peer review draft

Due by 11:59PM

- IR peer review feedback

Homework:

- **Incident Report final draft**

Week 7

Mon. 29 June: IR final draft due

Due by 11:59PM

- **Incident Report final draft**