

INSS 2303 CRN 28618
Writing for Security Professionals
Online Only Spring 2020

Instructor

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PST Zone

Victoria, BC Canada

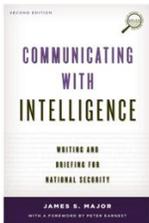
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Course Description

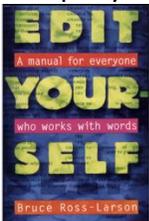
When writing for security professionals, you must address specific stylistic requirements and use lucid prose in order to communicate efficiently and clearly. In this course, you'll use a "learning by doing" model to learn how to convey information to consumers in written form using both the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) paragraph format and the Conclusion Centric report format while employing a writing style that is accurate, brief, and clear. You'll also be reacquainted with the basic rules of grammar, spelling, and syntax. The course will use James Major's book, *Communicating with Intelligence: Writing and Briefing for National Security*, as it is the most comprehensive text available on the topic. While working in groups, you will produce a written analysis of North Korea's Supernotes program and the threat it poses to US national security. You will complete every stage of the intelligence writing process, from initial research through the final written report, as if you were a security professional and I were your supervisor.

Textbooks

1. James S. Major. *Communicating with Intelligence: Writing and Briefing for National Security*, 2nd Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. May 2014. ISBN-13: 9781442226623.



2. Bruce Ross-Larson. *Edit Yourself: A Manual for Everyone Who Works with Words*. W.W. Norton & Company. 1996 (Reissued with new material). ISBN-10: 0393313263.



3. William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition. Longman. July 1999. ISBN-10: 020530902X.



The books listed above are available from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) bookstore, and online from Amazon (www.amazon.com) and Barnes & Noble (www.bn.com). PDFs and supplemental reading materials will be posted on the UTEP Blackboard site.

Course Goals

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- RECOGNIZE the tight connection between thought and language, and explain why good analysis and communication are impossible without sharp writing skills;
- DISTINGUISH between writing for security professionals and writing in other intellectual professions;
- EMPLOY accurate, brief, and clear English prose;
- DEMONSTRATE techniques for clear writing and constructive editing;
- APPLY methods and procedures unique to writing and briefing for security professionals;
- WRITE and PRESENT a coherent analysis of a national security issue in a format typically utilized by security professionals; and
- EVALUATE and UNDERSTAND the various audiences for which security professionals write, and the special demands and requirements of each.

Course Requirements

Students must read the assigned materials and submit assignments prior to associated unit due dates.

- Each student must maintain a high-speed internet connection for the duration of the class in order to access the course website. All course content (except the textbooks) will be accessible via UTEP Blackboard, which can be accessed at <https://my.utep.edu/>.
- Each student must register for a Blackboard account to access the course. Registration requires a valid UTEP email address, which can be accessed at <https://my.utep.edu/>.

Grading Criteria

The grading criteria for the course is explained in the chart below.

Grading Criteria			
Module	Description	Percent of Grade	Due Date
1.	Syllabus Quiz.	2	End of Week 1
1.	BLUF Quiz.	2	End of Week 1
1.	Rewrite a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (IRS Exercise).	5	End of Week 1
2.	Audience and Topic Quiz.	2	End of Week 2
2.	Rewrite a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (HSBC Exercise).	8	End of Week 2
3.	Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity Quiz.	2	End of Week 3
3.	Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity Exercise.	10	End of Week 3
3.	Write a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (Qantas Exercise).	10	End of Week 3
4.	Conclusion Centric Report Format Quiz.	3	End of Week 5
4.	Title Writing Exercise.	10	End of Week 5
4.	Executive Summary Writing Exercise.	10	End of Week 5
4.	Introduction Writing Exercise.	10	End of Week 5
5.	First Draft of Final Paper (Super Notes Paper).	10	Middle of Week 6
5.	Final Draft of Final Paper (Super Notes Paper).	16	End of Week 7

Grading

Please refer to this and the Grading Criteria section of the course syllabus for a comprehensive grade breakdown; do not rely solely on the Blackboard grade report as it is not always an accurate representation of your grade. As always, let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

90 to 100% = A
89 to 80% = B
79 to 70% = C
69 to 60% = D
59% and below = F

Course Schedule, Due Dates, and Assignments

Module 1: Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) Paragraph Format ☒ One Week		
Type	Description	Due Date
Activity	Post Introductions in Student Forum.	End of Week 1
Video Lecture	Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) Paragraph Format.	-
Reading	Major, Chapter 1: What It's All About	-
Reading	Major, Chapter 6: Writing the First Draft: Getting the Words on Paper	-
Graded Activity	Syllabus Quiz.	End of Week 1
Graded Activity	BLUF Quiz.	End of Week 1
Graded Activity	Rewrite a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (IRS Exercise).	End of Week 1

Module 2: Audience and Topic ☒ One Week		
Type	Description	Due Date
Video Lecture	Audience and Topic.	-
Reading	Major, Chapter 4: Writing with Intelligence.	-
Reading	Reading to Write: An Introduction to IC Standards and Style.	-
Reference	MCIIS Style Guide.	-
Graded Activity	Audience and Topic Quiz.	End of Week 2
Graded Activity	Rewrite a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (HSBC Exercise).	End of Week 2

Module 3: Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity ☒ One Week		
Type	Description	Due Date
Video Lecture	Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity.	-
Reading	Major, Chapter 4: Clarity, Conciseness, Correctness, Appropriateness, Completeness, and Coherence.	-
Reference	Ross-Larson, Part 1: What Editors Look For.	-
Reference	Strunk and White, Chapters I-II, IV.	-
Graded Activity	Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity Quiz.	End of Week 3
Graded Activity	Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity Exercise.	End of Week 3

Module 4: Conclusion Centric Report Format ☒ Two Weeks

Type	Description	Due Date
Video Lecture	Conclusion Centric Reports.	-
Reading	How to Write an Executive Summary (Compilation).	-
Reading	Major, Chapter 6: Guidelines for the Preparation of Key Judgments. Pages 97-98.	-
Graded Activity	Conclusion Centric Report Format Quiz.	End of Week 5
Graded Activity	Title Writing Exercise.	End of Week 5
Graded Activity	Executive Summary Writing Exercise.	End of Week 5
Graded Activity	Introduction Writing Exercise.	End of Week 5

Module 5: Writing and Publishing ☒ Two Weeks

Type	Description	Due Date
Video Lecture	Writing and Publishing.	-
Reading	Major, Chapter 9: Revision: Polishing Your Writing.	-
Reading	Major, Chapter 8: Beyond the First Draft: Analytical Papers.	-
Reference	Strunk and White, Chapter V: An Approach to Style.	-
Reference	Ross-Larson, Part II: What Editors Cut, Change, and Compare.	-
Graded Activity	First Draft of Final Paper (Super Notes Paper). Draft will be returned to you for editing NLT [Date TBD].	Middle of Week 6
Graded Activity	Final Draft of Final Paper.	End of Week 7

All readings, activities, references, and associated content (other than the textbook) will be posted on the Blackboard class website.

Late Submissions

All activities are **due by 5 PM PST on the date noted**. Late submissions may be penalized at my discretion. If the assignment is more than 3 days late without my permission, then no points will be given. In rare, documented circumstances that you communicate to me in a timely manner, I may allow assignments to be submitted late.

Really Good Advice:

In my experience, Blackboard frequently does NOT upload your assignments when you think it does. Because it looks to me like you didn't submit your assignment by the due date, your grade for that project will suffer – unless you also emailed your assignment to me when you posted it in Blackboard.

To make sure you don't get penalized for Blackboard's flaws, you should **ALWAYS** email me your assignment at the same time you upload it to Blackboard.

As a reminder, my email address is sue.green@utep.edu

If you have an EMERGENCY that interferes with your coursework, contact me as soon as possible and I will work with you to provide extensions and help as much as I reasonably can.

Detailed Assignments

Activity: Post Introductions in Student Forum

Due: End of Week 1

Post a brief introduction (150 words) in the student forum. The introduction should include details such as why you're pursuing this degree; relevant professional experience, including internships; and other information that you'd like to share with your classmates and instructor. Personal details are welcome but not required.

Graded Activity: Syllabus Quiz

Due: End of Week 1

Take the syllabus quiz posted in Blackboard. The syllabus quiz will cover major topics in the syllabus and is designed to make sure that you have taken notice of important information that, if overlooked, could negatively affect your comprehension of materials and your grade.

Graded Activity: BLUF Quiz

Due: End of Week 1

Take the BLUF quiz posted in Blackboard. This quiz will cover major topics in the readings and is designed to make sure that you have taken notice of important information that, if overlooked, could negatively affect your comprehension of materials and your grade.

Graded Activity: Rewrite a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (IRS Exercise) Due: End of Week 1

Read the provided paragraph about the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation's (IRS CI) mission. (This paragraph is available in Blackboard.) Determine the "bottom line" of the paragraph. Using only the facts and information provided, rewrite the paragraph in the BLUF style.

Graded Activity: Audience and Topic Quiz

Due: End of Week 2

Take the audience and topic quiz posted in Blackboard. This quiz will cover major topics in the readings and is designed to make sure that you have taken notice of important information that, if overlooked, could negatively affect your comprehension of materials and your grade.

Graded Activity: Rewrite a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (HSBC Exercise) Due: End of Week 2

Read the provided paragraph about the HSBC's banking practices and links to terrorism. Determine the "bottom line" of the paragraph. (You may need to reference the original Rolling Stone article, "Too Big to Jail," in order to place the paragraph in context prior to determining the paragraph's bottom line. Both the paragraph and the article are available in Blackboard.) Using only the facts and information in the subject paragraph, rewrite the passage in the BLUF style.

Graded Activity: Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity Quiz

Due: End of Week 3

Take the accuracy, brevity, and clarity quiz posted in Blackboard. This quiz will cover major topics in the readings and is designed to make sure that you have taken notice of important information that, if overlooked, could negatively affect your comprehension of materials and your grade.

Graded Activity: Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity Exercise

Due: End of Week 3

Edit and rewrite the provided passages in order to increase the accuracy, brevity, and clarity of each.

Graded Activity: Write a Paragraph in the BLUF Format (Qantas Exercise) Due: End of Week 3

Read the provided articles about Qantas' safety record. Using only the facts and information provided in the articles, analyze the situation and report your findings in one BLUF-style paragraph.

Important considerations:

- BLUF paragraphs are typically three to five sentences in length. In rare cases, when the information being conveyed is voluminous or complex, they may be as long as seven sentences.
- Each and every report must be tailored to the needs of its customer.

In this case, your customer is a Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary for Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Your customer is specifically interested in the safety of U.S. citizens traveling on this carrier.

Graded Activity: Conclusion Centric Report Format Quiz

Due: End of Week 5

Take the conclusion centric report format quiz posted in Blackboard. This quiz will cover major topics in the readings and is designed to make sure that you have taken notice of important information that, if overlooked, could negatively affect your comprehension of materials and your grade.

Graded Activity: Title Writing Exercise

Due: End of Week 5

Write an appropriate BLUF-style title for each of the following reports: “Meth in Mexico: A Turning Point in the Drug War?” and “Criminal Commodities: Cocaine.”

Graded Activity: Executive Summary Writing Exercise

Due: End of Week 5

Write a one-paragraph executive summary for Report 1, “Mexico Security Memo: The Evolution of a Sinaloa Enforcer Group.” This executive summary should be five to seven sentences in length.

Write a multi-paragraph executive summary for Report 2, “Meth in Mexico: A Turning Point in the Drug War?” This executive summary may include as many paragraphs as you deem necessary. Paragraphs in this executive summary should be between should be three and five sentences in length; longer paragraphs (up to seven sentences) are acceptable but must be justified by the complexity or amount of information presented.

Graded Activity: Introduction Writing Exercise

Due: End of Week 5

Write a one-paragraph introduction for each report. Mexico Security Memo: Los Zetas Strike in Sinaloa Territory” and “Mexico Security Memo: Increased Violence Likely in Guanajuato”. Each introduction should be three to five sentences in length.

Graded Activity: First Draft of Final Paper (Super Notes Paper)

Due: Middle of Week 6

Read the Vanity Fair article “North Korea’s Dollar Store.” Rewrite it as a Conclusion Centric Format Report that includes the following sections: Title, Executive Summary, Introduction, Background (if appropriate), Substantiation, Context (if appropriate), and Outlook. The paragraphs in the report should be in the BLUF format, and each sentence and paragraph should be accurate, brief, and clear. As you decide which information to include in your report and which to omit, consider the needs of your customer: what will the customer need/want to know, based on the customer’s level and reason for requesting the report? For this report, your customer is Senior Advisory to an Undersecretary at the Department of the Treasury who has a strategic interest in North Korea’s apparent ability to evade US sanctions.

After you’ve submitted this first draft, I will provide editorial feedback and return the paper to you for further edits NLT beginning of Week 7.

Group Activity: Submit Final Draft of Final Paper (Super Notes Paper) Edit Due: End of Week 7
and rewrite your final paper per my feedback and resubmit.

Wikipedia

Do NOT use Wikipedia in your bibliography. Information you find in Wikipedia might be wrong – and if your facts are incorrect, then your analysis will be wrong too. Anything you find in Wikipedia, you can find in another source (unless, of course, the information from Wikipedia was wrong), and I want to see those other sources. **If you use Wikipedia in your references, the affected assignment will be penalized.**

That said, you CAN use Wikipedia as a starting point for research. Go there, read about an issue and explore it further by using the primary sources (references) at the bottom of the page, by looking for information at the library, or by doing other web searches.

Communication

You must get into the habit of checking Blackboard regularly to make sure you don't miss any important weekly announcements or events noted on the calendar. You can send messages to your fellow classmates or to me through Blackboard or email. Please include the course number in the subject line of all correspondence.

The best and quickest way to reach me is via my UTEP email (suegreen@utep.edu). If you send email through Blackboard, I won't receive it or respond to it as quickly.

I check my email regularly, but I may not respond to e-mails on weekends. I will inform you in advance if I am required to be away from my computer and am therefore unable to respond to messages.

Time Management

The standard figure recommended across the board by American universities is to budget approximately three hours for every credit hour taken. You will likely spend nine hours each week studying and completing assignments. Therefore, you should expect to devote 12 hours per week to this course. Bear in mind that this is an estimate.

3 hours online
+ 9 hours studying / preparing
<hr/>
12 hours of coursework per week

Technical Assistance

If you have technical difficulties with Blackboard, please directly contact the help desk.

Hours:	Monday - Friday	7AM - 8PM
	Saturday	9AM - 1PM
	Sunday	Closed
Email:	helpdesk@utep.edu	
Phone:	(915) 747-4357 (on campus) or (915) 747-5257 (off campus)	

Required Software

You must have access to a computer with the following software installed to work efficiently in this course. Computers in the campus labs should already have the necessary software. These programs may already be installed on your computer.

Adobe Acrobat Reader. You can get the program by going to <http://get.adobe.com/reader/> and clicking on the icon that says "Download Now." Follow instructions to install the reader.

Microsoft Office, iWork, NeoOffice or other compatible software. You must have access to word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet software for this course. Don't utilize some obscure software that won't convert; if I can't open your documents, they won't be graded. Microsoft Office is available for use on the computers in the campus labs. PC and Mac users can purchase Microsoft Office from the UTEP bookstore for a nominal fee. Mac users can purchase iWork components from Apple's App Store. Mac users can download NeoOffice free from NeoOffice (<http://www.neooffice.org>).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Statement

Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information or wording: it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your own name that you did not do yourself. You may not submit work for this class that you did for another class. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> for further information.

Disabilities Statement

I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please email or call me during the first two weeks of class to discuss any needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Disabled Student Services Office in the East Union Building, Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes. The Disabled Student Services Office can also be reached in the following ways:

Web: <http://www.utep.edu/dsso>

E-mail: dss@utep.edu

Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY

Fax: (915) 747-8712

General Guidelines for Online Courses

Being Successful in an Online Course: Online Learning is not a Spectator Sport.

It is everyone's responsibility to participate as fully as they can so everyone can get the most from the experience. Here are some simple rules to follow to ensure your participation and engagement in the learning process:

- Ask questions: If you don't know the answer, someone else will. The HELP board is the forum for asking questions related to content OR any problems you are having.
- Please ensure that you have clearly indicated the subject of your message, preceded by your last name (Example: "Rodriguez, Patriot Act Summary").
- Reach out to others: Offer a fact, article, link or other item that can help others learn something you can share.
- Be appropriate: The online classroom is not the place for insulting or insensitive comments, attacks, or venting. Inappropriate behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Be diplomatic: Tolerance and respect of each other's opinions should be upheld, even when strong differences of opinion arise. When sending messages on emotionally charged topics, ensure that they are constructive instead of destructive. Remember, there is a person at the other end.
- Stay focused: Stay on topic to increase the efficiency of your learning.

Communicating Effectively Online: When we converse, we expect other people to observe certain rules of behavior. The same is true online. Here are a few pointers to help you communicate safely and effectively.

- IDENTIFY YOURSELF and clearly summarize the contents of your message in the subject line of your e-mail AND your discussion board postings.
- Avoid using all capital letters. USING ALL CAPS MAKES IT LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING! IT'S ALSO MORE DIFFICULT TO READ.
- Avoid using sarcasm in your postings and e-mail messages. Sarcasm does not necessarily translate well in the online world, and you may offend someone accidentally.

General Guidelines:

- a) You may WITHDRAW from the course by the withdrawal date with a grade of "W". Withdrawal is *your* responsibility and must be coordinated through the registrar's office; you will receive a failing grade if you just stop logging on.
- b) Please be ON TIME with your assignments. Late assignments, even with documented reasons, may be graded lower at the discretion of the instructor.
- c) WORK TOGETHER to help achieve your goals. Don't hesitate to ask questions when you don't understand something.
- d) I will attempt to maintain the standards outlined in this syllabus throughout the course. If a change becomes necessary, it should be for an equitable reason, and I will inform the students via e-mail as soon as possible.
- e) I am here to assist you. Please e-mail or call me.