Workplace Writing RWS 3355
University of Texas at El Paso
Spring 2018 ONLINE

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Office Hours: By appointment via Skype. Arrange by email 24 hours in advance.

Technical Support:
UTEP Help Desk: (915) 747-5257;
UTEP Support Center:
http://bbsupport.utep.edu/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8318

Prerequisites: RWS 1302 or ESOL 1302 Junior standing recommended.

Course Description:
The primary goal of RWS 3355 is to develop students’ effective communication in professional contexts. This effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities as well as knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process. This class presents an approach to communication that helps students determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different situations within the workplace. Students will produce a variety of documents and presentations in English and Spanish while gaining more confidence and fluency in written, visual, and oral communication.

Learning Outcomes:
• Develop an efficient and effective writing process that includes strategies for invention, researching, drafting, revising, and editing
• Determine and analyze workplace rhetorical situations
• Understand the generic conventions of documents commonly used for workplace communication
• Create effective documents in genres commonly used for workplace communication
• Conduct research within the context of the workplace that will inform your writing
• Consider the ethical dimensions of composing and working within and with organizations
• Recognize and respect various cultural attitudes toward and conventions for workplace communication,
• Gain proficiency in the use of online tools necessary for effective workplace communication and the conventions that attend them

Required Texts:
ISBN:
This text is available at the University Bookstore as well as online rental at Amazon.com and other online sources. You will need the text
beginning the first day, so Do NOT order books that will take several days or weeks to arrive.

**Online Programs:**
Since this is an online course, the class will utilize online and computer-based tools. Thus, you will be expected to be proficient in the use of computers and the Internet. If any of the following tools are new to you, you should begin familiarizing yourself with them as soon as possible. To be successful in this course, and indeed in current or future workplaces, you will need to stay abreast of new technology and be a self-learner. There are many resources available – from Instructional Support Services at UTEP to YouTube videos – that offer information about and instruction in web technologies. You must also have reliable access to the Internet.

**Blackboard is Required.** Blackboard will be the main interface for our course. This is where you will find all documents, course materials, resources, and instructions; participate in online discussion groups; submit all assignments; check your grades; and much more. You have access to Blackboard via the MyUTEP feature on the UTEP home page. When you login, you will see the modules for all your classes. **Understanding how to navigate and effectively use Blackboard and all of its tools is necessary for success in this course.** If you are having difficulty with Bb access, call the Help Desk 747-HELP. If you need more training on Bb there are modules within Bb for self-paced training.

**Skype (suggested):** I will conduct office hours via Skype for those students who would like to conference with me F2F. Oftentimes, employers will suggest a Skype interview if you are applying from another, far away location. Additionally, when traveling for business, Skype is one way to attend meetings. Thus, learning how to use Skype effectively and professionally will help with your future workplace communication goals. If you are not already on Skype, you can sign up here: http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/home. My Skype ID: treedonnh@gmail.com

**Learning Modules:**
The course is delivered in learning modules. You may access these by going to “Learning Modules” in the sidebar. Each module begins with a checklist of readings, activities, and due dates. You can use these to make sure that you complete all items in a module by their due dates. All learning modules are ordered sequentially, meaning that you should progress through them in the order in which they appear. **All items at 11:30 PM Central time, on dates according to the Bb Calendar.** It is important to adhere to these due dates, since others’ completion of the module is often dependent upon your timely contribution. **If you are having difficulty accessing any content, try switching your browser.**
Course Policies:
Attendance: Yes, attendance counts in an online course! You will demonstrate your attendance by completing discussion posts and taking quizzes. If you have not logged in to the course for more than 14 days, I may withdraw you from the course.

Due Dates: Assignments must be completed before their deadlines, unless prior arrangement is made.

Online “Netiquette”:
1. Think of you audience. Remember that all students enrolled in this class (and the instructor) can see and read what you write.
2. Don’t write things that you would not say in person.
3. Use an appropriate tone and vocabulary. This is a formal writing class, so for example, you should avoid writing in all capital letters and also avoid using texting shortcuts.
4. Everything you write in the course should be in standard English.
5. When you respond to a classmate, be careful to respond to their message and ideas and not the person.
6. Blackboard is not a public platform. All course content is private and confidential and only for our class. You need formal permission from your instructor and classmate/s if you would like to copy any content or to post it outside of our class forum.

Discussion Posts: You will be responsible for two or more discussion post(s) each week. These responses must be at least 300 words in length and provide a full and thoughtful response to the prompt. You must also respond to at least one other person’s post for each discussion session. Replies to others’ posts must be at least 100 words in length and offer an insightful and detailed response. Be sure to read everyone’s responses before posting. Avoid repetition of what someone else has already said. Add something new to the discussion. Do not copy another classmates’ response on a discussion board. No credit will be received for yes/no answers. Posts should justify positions and provide specific examples. Students must demonstrate that they have read the assignment and their classmates’ comments carefully and thoughtfully.

Be sure to post in a timely fashion to receive credit for the discussion. Pay close attention to the posted deadlines.
Ideally, conversations will begin to take place, and any additional comments beyond what is required will have no word limits or other restraints (except that they must follow the rules of netiquette).

Announcements: Be sure to check announcements every day you log into the course. This is how I will notify the class of
important changes to the course, assignments, due dates, projects, etc.

**Academic Integrity**
The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Visit the Office of Dean of Students. Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs.

**Copyright and Fair Use:** The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. Students are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend students nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject students to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

**Accommodations:** Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to visit the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in room 106, Union East Building or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. There are also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center, Counseling Center, Military Student Success Center and Academic Advising Center.

**University Writing Center:** UTEP’s University Writing Center (UWC) offers free writing tutoring assistance for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help to understand any writing assignment and help work on comprehending difficult textbook material. Note: To facilitate revision, I encourage you to visit the writing center at least 12 hours before the assignment is due.

**Military Students:**
If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active or reserve) please visit the Military Student Success Center. I also recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if
you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Email: You may email me at any time to ask a question or to discuss course material. I will also email you from time to time regarding course issues. *If Blackboard is down for any reason, please check your email for instructions and attachments.* You may email me at the email address listed on this syllabus or via Blackboard.

Assignments: You will complete major assignments and several smaller assignments over the course of the semester. All major assignments will be submitted in the learning module where they are assigned. Do not copy and paste your assignment into the text box. This will change the format. Instead, attach it by clicking on “Browse My Computer” below the text box. Late work will not be accepted unless arranged in advance. The following is a list of major assignments, brief descriptions, and point values. Detailed assignment sheets are available on Blackboard in Major Assignments. Minor assignments can be found in the Blackboard modules and will include readings, quizzes, discussion posts, and other activities.

200 points Module Completion: Short weekly assignments, quizzes, discussion posts, and participation in class activities. Activities within modules should be completed in order. Each module is worth 15-20 points.

100 points Discussion Posts /Comments
150 points Chapter Quizzes
125 points Routine/ Positive Letter: Letter that uses a neutral tone and is intended to convey information or present a perspective on an issue.
125 points Sensitive/ Negative Letter: Letter that is intended to convey sensitive or negative information.
250 points Job Application Portfolio: This portfolio will include a posting for a job position for which you qualify now; an analysis of the organization, job position, and audience for the application; a cover letter; and a resume.
250 points Proposal/ Report: The proposal will include a cover letter, executive summary, analysis of a business situation requiring a solution, proposed solution with implementation of timeline and costs, and references pages.

Grades: You must complete all major assignments to pass the course. The following grading system will be used:
900 – 1000 points = A 800 – 899 points = B
700 – 799 points = C 600 – 699 points = D
Below 600 points = F
Important Dates for this Semester:
January 16      First day of class
January 31      Census Day
March 12-16     Spring Break
March 30        Cesar Chavez Day- No class
May 3           Last Day of Class
May 7-11        Final Exams
May 16          Final Grades Due

Please make note of office hours and email, and reach out to me if you need to. I look forward to helping you become better writers this semester!