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To: English 321 students

From: Darold <u>Leigh</u> Henson, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of English. Web site: http://english.missouristate.edu/faculty/henson.htm. Email: dlhenson@missouristate.edu.

Subject: English 321.899 syllabus (course description with policies and procedures). A separate document gives the schedule of assignments.

English 321.899, Writing II: Beginning Technical Writing

   This course policy is like an employee handbook, so you will need to print it, study it, and refer to it often. Also, access and print the schedule of assignments found in the Course Information section of Blackboard (Bb). At least every other day, check the announcements in Bb.

COURSE PURPOSE

   As educated people, we would like to think that subject-matter expertise and writing expertise are two different things, but the reality is that readers in business and industry typically judge a professional employee's expertise by the quality of that person's writing. Readers tend to think that errors in basic writing skills—lack of clarity, impreciseness, and language errors—diminish and undermine the writer's overall credibility as a subject-matter expert. Thus, it makes sense to see writing on the job as inseparable from professional/technical expertise. As a professional employee, you will be only as good as you write. Good writing will help you get a job and advance in your career; inferior writing will hinder you.

   This course emphasizes the knowledge and skill needed for effective written communication in any academic major field leading to any profession, literally from a(ccounting) to p(rofessional/technical writing) to z(oology). Communication know-how will help you obtain employment, contribute significantly to your employer's operation, and advance in your career. Writing has this potential because language is the means by which you demonstrate what you know and can do. Most importantly, writing is a thinking activity, so it can even help to expand and refine your subject-matter expertise, including how to solve problems.

   This course emphasizes problem-solving in several ways. A major problem area of writing is the question of who a document's readers are and how they should be addressed. On the job, typically, you will be required to communicate with people who do not share your level or kind of expertise: "the technically uninformed." Yet your audiences will be quite important to you, for example, supervisors, upper management, peers, customers, prospects, or the public. Addressing these kinds of readers will require you to take great care in determining communicative purpose, suitable format, effective content and visuals, logical organization, as well as appropriate, precise, and nonsexist language. English 321 will give you direction and practice in communicating with "technically uninformed" audiences because the readers of your projects (your classmates and the instructor) most likely do not share your major field or if so do not share the same kind and degree of your knowledge and skill in it.

WORKING DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL WRITING

In addition to careful attention to the reading audience, professional/technical writing is much concerned with clearly naming and defining things, ideas, and procedures. Definitions can range from parenthetical text to a single sentence to a paragraph or more. Lengthy definitions are called extended definitions; any textbook is an example of an extended definition.

Here is this instructor's formal, one-sentence definition of the subject of English 321: **professional/technical writing is a form of rhetoric that adapts specialized information accurately, ethically, and precisely to help readers make decisions, solve problems, or perform tasks.** One-sentence formal definitions have three parts: the term being defined, the category to which it belongs (here, rhetoric), and the details that distinguish the term being defined from other terms that belong to the category.

Each part of a definition is important. Sometimes the term *professional writing* is used to refer to the writing done by people who earn a living as writers in business, industry, government, education, etc. This field is rapidly growing and offers numerous, well-paying jobs, as indicated by searching any job advertisement Web site, such as Monster.com. (The main professional association of professional/technical writers is the Society for Technical Communication: http://www.stc.org/). The term *technical writing* often refers to writing on the job performed by employees in other professions—people who earn their living as subject-matter experts (whether degreed or otherwise highly trained), not as people who earn their living mainly by writing. This second definition, of course, is the one that applies to most students in English 321. The term *rhetoric* refers to the parent body of knowledge (theory) that provides the key ideas needed by professional employees to create effective communication. In any field, theory is important because it provides the concepts that enable professional employees to solve problems and perform tasks. (This course will emphasize only the most practical theory and its application.) The term *adapts* is important because a professional/technical writer often functions as an intermediary between subject-matter experts and the reader-consumers of technical information. Thus, technical writers are like translators.

Additionally, professional/technical writing requires careful attention to the **visual elements** ranging from page layout to graphics, including data graphics (graphics that present numeric information), to typography (fonts). Professional/technical writing also **quantifies information** whenever possible, for example, providing such details as measurements and statistics. For information on the importance of writing on the job—whether by professional writers or employees in other professions—see the Web site of the National Commission on Writing: http://www.writingcommission.org/. For more information on the nature of professional/technical writing, see Chapter 1 in the course textbook. For more information of the importance of definitions, see Chapter 9 of the textbook.

TEXT

Mike Markel. *Technical Communication: Situations and Strategies*, 8th ed. NY: St. Martin's Press, 2001. The assignment schedule identifies the various chapters assigned at certain times, often as background for a writing project. Folders for discussing these chapters will be available in the Discussion Board section of Blackboard to allow questions and answers. The publisher offers a supplemental Web site, and you might find it useful:

http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm/.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS

- To gain a better understanding of writing in the professions, including its rhetorical, ethical, visual, and language principles and practices (theory and its application)

- To increase skill with online collaborative communication and learning

- To develop a body of knowledge and range of skill needed to address writing-related problems and compose professional writing that is both effective and ethical. Areas for developing writing expertise include audience analysis, defining communicative purpose, addressing political and ethical issues, choosing media, conducting research, designing documents, creating graphics, applying specifications for page format and typography, and using computer technology as well as appropriate language

Improving written communication takes hard work, patience, and persistence. To a large extent, what you learn will depend on how effectively you do the writing projects and other required work. This work includes interaction with classmates and the instructor, just as your job will often require you to seek help from fellow employees and supervisors. Typically, most students experience gradual improvement, with the best results toward the end of the semester.

As you read an assignment or work on a writing project, you will have questions. They are a logical consequence of reading and attempting to follow the written directions/outline guide. Only by **reading and studying** the assignments, **posting questions**, and **following and participating in discussion threads** will you understand and fulfill performance expectations.

REQUIRED WORK AND RELATED PROCEDURES

This course attempts to use practical assignments that directly relate to your field and/or other subject-matter interests, rather than just exercises. The assignments give you a reasonable degree of freedom in selecting the subject matter for each. You are encouraged to communicate with the instructor about the subjects you will choose for the writing projects. These projects are described below, and there will be separate assignment sheets and outline guides that will present further information about these projects. These directions and requirements will be posted in the Assignments section in Blackboard well in advance of due dates for rough drafts. Submit rough drafts in RTF format so that they can be accessed with any word processing program. Submit final copies to the instructor in Word DOC or RTF (sometimes additionally in PDF as specified by the directions and requirements for an individual project).

For each project, a folder will be available in the Discussion Board section of Blackboard for you to post questions about the directions and requirements. You should post questions about directions and requirements as your first effort to get answers from classmates rather than first email a question to the instructor. Many questions will be answered with a close reading of the directions/requirement and outline guides provided by the instructor. Students are required to monitor these folders and post responses to classmates' questions as a major part of this course. By relying on one another as the first line for asking and answering questions, you gain useful experience with online collaboration. The instructor will also monitor this activity and respond to the answers to questions. Thus, the instructor will confirm, deny, or clarify your classmates'

answers to your questions. This activity is a key part of your course grade.

Note: learn to rely on helping one another through questions and answers in appropriate Discussion Board folders because the instructor cannot spend 24/7 monitoring these activities, and there may be a few times when the instructor is offline for one or two days at a time.

Standards for Online Communication

In all communication, including discussion forums and email, please use the kind of language appropriate for professional and business situations. This language should be clear, correct, and courteous. For email subject lines, use language that clearly specifies the content of the message. Close email messages with your first and last names and the name of the course (Eng. 321.899). Here are online references that discuss online writing and netiquette http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html. Please conduct yourself in accordance with University policies and procedures (begin looking on the MSU Web at http://www.missouristate.edu/student.asp) and with "The Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities," which can be found on the MSU Web at http://www.missouristate.edu/judicial/12331.htm.

Final copies will be submitted using the Digital Dropbox in Bb and email. Use email to submit projects as attachments when you cannot use the Digital Dropbox successfully or when you are unsure whether you have used the Digital Dropbox reliably. Email the project (as an attachment) whenever you have the least doubt about using the Digital Dropbox. The deadlines for submitting rough drafts, for emailing edited rough drafts to their authors, and for submitting final copies will be specified in the schedule of assignments. To ensure participation in peer editing, final copies cannot be submitted more than 12 hours before their deadline. Graded copies will be emailed to students. All email communication between instructor and students should be with BearMail as a way to ensure that we are communicating directly and confidentially with the person whom we are supposed to be. Students should use an email setup that saves sent messages (the email function of Blackboard does not save messages). Graded papers will be returned in time for students to apply feedback to the next project. Typically, about a week is required for papers to be graded.

Writing Projects

In addition to the following descriptions, the individual directions/requirements/outline guides for each project will specify the kinds and numbers of sources required.

Project 1, job application letter and resume (100 points): First, you will find a job ad for an entry-level position in your field—one that requires a bachelor's degree in your field or related field. Even if you intend to earn a graduate degree before you work in your field, this assignment requires you to face the hypothetical problem of finding a job in your field with a bachelor's degree if you had to. With the job ad in hand, you will then compose a resume and a job application letter whose contents are directly and specifically developed according to that particular job ad.

Project 2, formal report analyzing an example of an instructions document (125 points): This project requires you to choose a user's manual for a device, appliance, or computer hardware or software that you have access to because part of the assignment requires you to

apply the directions for a major task, consisting of at least six steps. This activity is called a usability test. Find a device that has some technological complexity, for example, a cell phone, DVD player, or digital camera.

Project 3, proposal for major written project and corresponding research (125 points): This assignment is based on your decision to do one of four major project options (project 6 below). This decision requires some exploratory research, including communication with at least one academic subject-matter expert (SME) in your field (an academic advisor or other instructor in your field). At the end of Project 3, paste an email you have received from an instructor (academic SME) to show that person's input to your request for help in choosing a subject for research (for projects 3, 4, and 6). (It is not enough for you just to paste your email requesting help). The pasted email message from the academic SME should be copied directly from your email program and should show its headers: date as well as name and email address of sender. Project 3 requires you to describe a plan of research beyond the preliminary research done as the basis for your choice of major project option and its subject. Well in advance of the due date for this proposal, you will be required to provide the instructor with a paragraph describing your choice of major project option and subject to get approval for them (feel free to communicate with the English 321 instructor to get feedback even before this paragraph is due). Thus, you will need to begin the exploratory research leading to your choice of project option as early as the second week of the semester.

   Study and understand the descriptions of course projects thoroughly: these descriptions are the key to understanding how projects 3, 4, and 6 are closely interrelated. Project 3 proposes which of four project options (and its subject) you will do for projects 4 and 6. The four options for project 6 are described in this course policy: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4. Project 4 is a progress report; project 6 is the final report.

   For students who are not technical/professional writing majors, option 6.1 is the most strongly recommended. The reason for this recommendation is that option 6.1 is the best opportunity for you to study and learn information of significance as you enter and advance in your chosen profession. For it, you will find a problem, issue (controversy), or need faced by practitioners in your field today. (In effect, option 6.1 is similar to an independent study.) An example of a need could be additional education/training (professional development) in a certain area. To find a problem, issue, or need, you should use different kinds of sources besides Google and Yahoo!, etc. (Also, use the research worksheet as described below.)

   For any of the four options that you are considering, find and communicate (email can be used) with academics (instructors in higher education). Ask them for suggestions of subjects. Ask them for the titles of journals and magazines that practitioners read in the field of interest to you. Often these journals, magazines, and newsletters are published by professional associations, which you can often find by using Internet searches. These publications contain articles on practitioners' current concerns.

   Determining the project 6 option and subject calls for research. While you begin to carry out this decision process, you should access and use the research worksheet for this course posted in the folder for project 4. While you may begin to fill out this research worksheet as part of the work to determine your project 6 option (and subject) and part of the work for project 3, the research worksheet will not be submitted with project 3. The research

worksheet, however, should be completed as the basis for Project 4, the progress report.

Project 4, formal progress report on major project (150 points): This assignment will be based on the completion of a research worksheet that will ensure a comprehensive research effort to identify a wide range of sources. Project 4 requires email communication with a Missouri State University reference librarian to verify that you sought this kind of expert's help (more information is in the research worksheet). Your request for help from an MSU research librarian should not be your first research step in using the MSU library resources. Rather, this request should demonstrate that you have begun using them. Your request should specify which databases and keywords/keyphrases you will have used prior to the request. Your request should then ask for recommendations of other databases and keywords/keyphrases that would be appropriate to research. Of course, you can also ask for other kinds of recommended sources and other kinds of help. At the end of Project 4, paste an email you will have received from an MSU reference librarian to show that person's response to your request for help (not just your email requesting help). This pasted email message should be copied directly from your email program. The pasted email should show its headers: date as well as name and email address of sender. Project 6 will not require you to use all of the sources identified by the research worksheet or only these sources because you may discover other sources after you complete project 4.

Project 5, a two-fold brochure that contains technical information and corresponding transmittal memo explaining the brochure's development (150 points): A two-fold brochure uses a letter-sized sheet of paper (8.5" x 11"), typically turned sideways (called horizontal or landscape orientation). Such a brochure thus has three panels on each side. This assignment requires you to find a client needing this kind of document. The client can be a business, including your own, or nonprofit organization, including a school or school-related organization. The client could be you, the student, if you have a need for such a document that would persuade (promote, sell, convince, etc.), inform, or instruct a certain kind of reading audience. You will compose this brochure using such a program as MS Publisher or MS Word and convert the brochure to PDF. For the brochure, you will submit the original file (MS Publisher, DOC, or RTF) and the PDF.

Project 6, the major project: one of four options (each 300 points): These options are intended to give you choices so that you can pursue a project that you really, really care about and can benefit from. These options have been created as a result of many years of teaching experience, student feedback, and refining the design of this course.

All projects are based on research, with both secondary and primary sources (described below) required. This research is the basis of certain assignments leading to project 6, so this research should be started no later than the end of the second week of the semester. Use of source material requires at least one sentence of direct quotation from a given source. The quotation is placed within a paragraph (not used as a lead or topic sentence as is sometimes the case in essays and journalistic writing). Source material is used to present and/or support ideas that are important, controversial, or surprising. Also, source material is used to present statistical information. Additionally, a direct quotation from a source will be followed by a parenthetical textual citation and an entry in the list at the end of the report (Works Cited).

The report for each of the three options requires you to include an email reply from a practitioner in a field related to the subject being researched (more information is in the

research worksheet and the directions sheets for project 6 options). If you use a full-time practitioner who is a relative, you must also use another full-time practitioner who is not a relative. At the end of Project 6, paste an email you have received from a non-relative practitioner to show that person's response to your request for help (not just your email requesting help). This pasted email message should be copied directly from your email program. The pasted email should show its headers: date as well as name and email address of sender. The directions/outline guides will specify the other types and numbers of sources required for textual citation and end citation (Works Cited).

6.1: A major written research report on a problem, controversy (issue), or need faced by practitioners in the student's field (2,000 to 2,500 words with sources cited). Here, need could be the requirement or necessity for professional development (ongoing training) in some career area. This option #1 is the one most highly recommended option for non-professional/technical writing majors. (Of course, a professional/technical writing major or minor could also usefully do this option.) The reason for this recommendation is that this option affords a great opportunity for students to identify and study a subject directly related to their individual career paths that they might not otherwise know about or be able to study in depth during their other coursework, including even their major-field coursework. In addition to information from a practitioner who is not a relative, a variety of at least eight secondary sources (books, articles, and credible Web sites) must be used.

6.2: A combination of a professional document(s), such as a manual (something more extensive than a two-fold brochure), plus a formal, documented report on the project (with sources cited). A student choosing this option must find an actual client (business or non-profit organization) that has a need for a specific document. This option is geared for majors in professional/technical writing and others who feel they have the knowledge, skill, and desire to choose a real-world project. The professional document(s) must be at least 1,000 words and more extensive than a two-fold brochure, and the formal report will have to be from 1,000 to 1,500 words. This option could be fulfilled by doing a part of a long document such as a Help file for a software program or other kind of instructions material or manual. In addition to information from at least one practitioner who is not a relative, a variety of at least four secondary sources (books, articles, and credible Web sites) must be used in the report, including some about the conventional features of the type of professional document being created.

6.3: A feasibility study of two organizations' potential need for professional documents (2,000 to 2,500 words with sources cited). This option is geared for professional/technical writing majors or other interested students who cannot easily find a client needing a professional document or who are unsure whether they have the necessary expertise to do a document for a client. Students doing this option will have to locate and communicate with at least two businesses or nonprofit organizations. This communication with businesses or nonprofits will explore what kinds of documents might be needed as well why and how these documents might be developed. Students will be required to research the conventions of one of these types of documents and assess what kinds of skills a student would need to work effectively on such a document. In addition to email communication from managers in at least two businesses or nonprofit organizations, a variety of at least eight secondary sources (books, articles, and

credible Web sites) must be used.

6.4**:** A feasibility study for a major decision or purchase involving the analysis of technical information (2,000 to 2,500 words). This project could be used to research making a decision between two distinct options or purchasing something (actual or speculative) in the near or distant future, such as a computer system, other piece of equipment, house, car, boat, airplane, etc. Students will be required to investigate at least two options, that is, two of the kind of thing to be purchased, e.g., two houses, comparable cars from two manufacturers, etc. The research will involve identifying and applying appropriate criteria as the basis for recommending one option over the other. In addition to information from at least one practitioner who is not a relative, a variety of at least eight secondary sources (books, articles, and credible Web sites) must be used.

All four project options above require advanced approval by the instructor, inclusion of at least one visual: diagram, chart, or data graphic (table, bar graph, line graph, or pie chart), and use and citation of the specified number of sources. The procedure for using the visual is to introduce it in a logical place in the report, to present the actual visual, to cite the source of the visual beneath the visual, and then to discuss the visual's important details (see the chapter titled "Creating Graphics" in the textbook). In this online course, email communication will be the main method of obtaining information from subject-matter experts (SMEs) (instructors, reference librarians, and practitioners); but if possible, also use face-to-face interviews and/or phone conversations. Email messages with headers will be copied and pasted into reports to verify the requirement of communicating with these SMEs. The directions/requirements/outline guides for each project will specify the kinds and numbers of sources required.

You cannot use the same document for more than one of the projects. Other course content will include the study of visual design, such as page formatting, and writing style.

Peer Editing of Rough Drafts

Peer editing (200 points) of rough drafts: Editing classmates' rough drafts provides a good opportunity for you to learn from one another. The instructor will answer specific questions about directions and requirements as indicated above in paragraph 2 of Required Work, but time does not allow the instructor to read and critique complete rough drafts. The instructor will check to be sure peer editing is done thoroughly. As advanced students, you have the ability to help one another understand directions and requirements and the ability to help one another with language skills. Also, your responsibility as a member of this online course requires you to participate in peer editing, which will provide classmates with feedback they can use to strengthen final copies. Thus, for the purpose of peering editing, you are required to post a rough draft of all assignments except for projects 4 and 6 (you may post rough drafts for project 6, but doing so is not required). Project 4 does not lend itself to peer editing because much of the content is presented in tabular form. Project 6 will not have required peer editing because there will not be time much time for it.

For each project that requires peer editing, there will be a Bb folder for you to upload your rough draft of that project. **For rough draft submissions and editing, use RTF format so that students can access and edit regardless of word processing program being used.** The schedule of assignments specifies deadlines for uploading rough drafts and for returning

edited rough drafts. **Give your rough draft an appropriate name that includes your first and middle initials and last name, for example, prj1-rd-rksmith.**

When you have uploaded your rough draft, find the next available classmate's rough draft, download it, and post a message in the appropriate Discussion Board folder to let viewers know you are editing a particular draft, giving the name of the person whose rough draft you have chosen for peer editing. Once you have downloaded a rough draft, <u>rename it</u> to include your name, for example, proj1-rd-rksmith-edbytrwilliams. Edit/critique rough drafts to the best of your ability. This editing should evaluate how well your classmate has followed directions/requirements, including the specified formatting of pages and how well the writing complies with formal, clear, coherent, and correct language. Editing requires you to assume the role of an English teacher. Focus on constructive criticism (avoid vague, useless feedback, for example, merely writing "good job." **To do the editing, insert corrections and comments in appropriate places—within and between sentences, between paragraphs, and at the end of the draft--, and use bold type to distinguish the editing from the original text**. You might also consider using **colored bold text**.)

After you finish editing a rough draft, email the edited copy to the author as an attachment in RTF format and "cc" the instructor. The instructor will check to be sure peer editing is done thoroughly. To encourage you to revise drafts carefully, final copies should not be submitted more than 12 hours before their deadlines (unless you have made a special arrangement with the instructor). Rough drafts may be submitted more than 12 hours prior to rough draft deadlines. Deadlines for submitting and returning rough drafts and for submitting final copies are found in the schedule of assignments. Deadlines are Central Daylight Savings Time and Central Standard Time when those are in effect.

Discussion Board Forums

Other online participation in the community of the course (instructor and online classmates) (100 points): Course participation includes discussion from activity relating to the writing projects (1-6) and the reading assignments, including discussion of ethics cases posted after the deadline for the major project.

All of the preceding work—writing projects, peer editing, and participation in the discussion forums as described in this Course Policy—must be completed for you to qualify for a passing grade in the course.

Final Exam

Final exam (100 points): The final exam is intended for those students who could mathematically raise their grade based on all of the work described above. More information about the final exam appears later in this course policy in the grading section.

FORMAT SPECIFICATIONS
(a first-level heading)

This section describes the page layout and typography required for reports (not the job application letter or resume of project 1 or the two-fold brochure of project 5). Unless otherwise specified, submit final copies either as MS Word DOC or RTF files. For the brochure part of

project 5, you will submit the original file (MS Publisher, DOC, or RTF) <u>and</u> the PDF.

Page Design/layout and Typography (a second-level heading)

Use one-inch margins all around. For body copy, use a serif 12-point type (for example, Times Roman). Use headers to include page numbers in upper right-hand corner, omitting header and number only for page one. (Learn the difference between a header and a heading.)

Titles and Headings: (a third-level heading) For letter and memo formats, follow the examples in the textbook to be specified by the instructor. For all documents except letters and one-page memos, use the format described below and demonstrated by this course policy/description. *Note:* this format combines top-of-the-page memo headings and formal report internal headings.

Titles should be centered in 14-point bold upper and lower case sans serif type (for example, Arial). Center first-level headings, using a 12-point sans serif type face (for example, Arial) in bold **ALL CAPITALS.** For second level headings, align flush left with space above and below, and use bold 11-point sans serif type face upper and lower case. For third-level headings, align flush left at the beginning of the first line of text and follow with a colon. For third-level headings, use same point size and type face as the body copy (12-point serif) in upper and lower case as needed, but use bold rather than regular type style used for body text. Heading language often may be adapted from outline guide language.

EVALUATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

The following sections cover various requirements and standards.

Deadlines, Penalties, and Dropping the Course

Deadlines for final copies are specified in the schedule of assignments: The teaching and learning activities of this course are designed to simulate workplace conditions and to foster good work habits. **Consequently, deadlines and results count, not just time on task.** Although late papers will be accepted for one week after the due date, they will receive penalties according to the extent of their delinquency. After a missed deadline, papers submitted within twenty-four hours will receive a "one day late" penalty (minus ten percentage points). For example, a "one day late" paper that would have earned a 92% would receive an 82%. For every other 24-hour period of lateness beyond the first 24 hours (including weekend/vacation days), an additional six percentage points will be deducted. For example, a paper that would have received a 95% but that is submitted 34 hours after the deadline would receive a 79% (95 minus 16 = 79). **Do not wait till too close to the deadline to submit papers and risk having some kind of computer or Internet connection problem because such a problem will not excuse a late paper. Moreover, if you are not sure whether Bb's Dropbox feature works for a submission, be sure also to submit a project to the instructor's BearMail address well before the deadline.**

Writing well requires time to compose and revise, including the use of questions-answers and peer editing. Quite simply, projects cannot be rushed. Thus, you will not be allowed to submit a project more than 12 hours in advance of a deadline (unless there are special circumstances for an individual project in your situation).

Ordinarily, graded papers will be returned before a next major paper is due. In this way, you can learn from mistakes and avoid them in subsequent assignments. Students are required to save graded papers.

Dropping the Course: If you stop doing the coursework but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class, you will receive a failing grade and will also be financially obligated. To drop a class anytime after the first week, you must follow University procedure (see *Missouri State Undergraduate Catalog*: http://www.missouristate.edu/recreg/chnsched.html).

Grading

Evaluation will be strict but fair: Criteria used for grading papers will correspond to criteria used to judge writing on the job. A writer's main goals are to be correct, clear, coherent, and concise. The grading scale is as follows:

A=100% to 90%; B=89% to 80%; C=79% to 70%; D=69% to 60%.

You are responsible for keeping track of your grades and for calculating what grade you are earning at any given time in the course. At any time during the semester, you can calculate your course grade by determining your percent of the number of points possible at that given time (the instructor will not post grades on the Bb Grading Book feature). For example, after four projects, you have earned the following:

Possible Points	Your Grade	Your Points Earned
Project 1 = 100	92%	100 X .92 = 92
Project 2 = 125	82%	125 X .88 = 110
Project 3 = 125	90%	125 X .90 = 112.5 = 113
Project 4 = 150	78%	150 X .78 = 117

In this example, you have earned 432 points with 500 possible. Your percent is 86.4 (432 divided by 500 = 86.4), so your grade at that time is a B.

Below are the scales for the course with and without the 100-point final exam.

Pre-Final Exam Scale (based on the total number of possible points for the course requirements prior to the final exam)			**Scale with the Final Exam** (with 100 points added to the pre-final exam scale)	
A = 90%	1250--1125 points		A = 90%	1350--1215 points
B = 80%	1124--1000 points		B = 80%	1214--1080 points
C = 70%	999--875 points		C = 70%	1079--945 points
D = 60%	874--750 points		D = 60%	944--810 points

If you have earned 1125 points or more based on all work prior to the final exam (including points for peer editing and discussion board participation), then you have earned an A in the course. (See appropriate content above for how to calculate the number of points earned.) If you have not earned at least 1125 points, you can calculate whether you could take the final exam in

scale, you would need 95 points on the final exam to raise the grade (1215 minus 1120 = 95). If you have earned 1100 points prior to the final exam, you would need 115 points—more than the final exam is worth--, so you do not qualify to take the final exam as a way to try to raise your grade.

Criteria for grading are described as follows:

Correctness: This standard means accuracy in content and conformity to directions and requirements and to standard, formal English. Avoid errors in sentence construction (for example, fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, dangling/misplaced modifiers, and problems with lack of parallelism), errors of grammar usage (especially subject/verb agreement and pronoun usage), and errors in mechanics (spelling, capitalization, and punctuation). Writing errors such as these weaken clarity and credibility. If you see that writing errors are reducing the quality of your writing, take rough drafts to the University's Writing Center for help:
 http://www.missouristate.edu/writingcenter/. Be sure to understand, however, that questions about a project's directions and requirements should be posted to the Discussion Board forums and/or emailed to the instructor rather than directed to Writing Center personnel. **Readers judge professional expertise by the quality of a person's writing, and correctness is critically important to quality**.

Clarity: Be direct. Pay close attention to the reading audience and adapt communicative purpose, content, organization, and language usage to the readers. Eliminate irrelevancy, poor sense, faulty logic, contradiction, vagueness, absolute generalizations, as well as undeveloped, unsupported ideas. As a rule, use vocabulary familiar to the reading audience, but when jargon is appropriate, define it. **Readers judge professional expertise by the quality of a person's writing, and clarity is critically important to quality**.

Coherence: Use logic and audience adaptation for overall organization and paragraph structure. Enhance coherence through the use of transitional words and phrases. Achieve good paragraphing sense by using topic sentences. Use no stringy paragraphs.

Conciseness: Use economy of language. Wordiness decreases clarity and readability. Use varied sentence structure for effective readability.

Source Citation and Plagiarism: MSU is a community of scholars committed to developing educated people who accept responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. All members of the University community share the responsibility and authority to challenge and make known acts of apparent academic dishonesty. You are responsible for knowing and following MSU's student honor code, Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures, available on the MSU Web at http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/acintegrity.html, also available at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library.

Whenever you borrow information (direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary), cite the source according to the standard documentation/style guide in your field (or another approved guide such as the MLA or APA formats). Be sure you pay particular attention to the way in which source citations refer to specific pages where borrowed information (direct quotation, etc.) is located in a source. Cite the source of key ideas and surprising ideas, statistics and other facts, and words not your own. Courtesy, honesty, and convention require this approach. Plagiarism is the failure to cite sources of borrowed information, and ignorance of citation (documentation) techniques is no excuse.

Plagiarism and any other form of cheating will result in your failing a given project and may cause you to fail the course. If you lack basic skills in using and citing source material, seek help from the Writing Center and/or the instructor. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty—intentional or unintentional—will be subject to sanctions as described in the *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures*, which can be found at http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/acintegrity.html (also available at reserves desk in Meyer Library).

Special Warning About Computer Technology and Deadlines: No deadline extensions will be granted because of problems with computer technology. Store your work on hard drives and back up often with floppy disks, USB media, and/or other media. You are assumed to be computer literate and personally organized enough to avoid ALL data storage and retrieval problems, regardless of such causes as crashes, viruses, and mysterious and cosmic conspiracy. To ensure participation in peer editing, final copies should not be submitted more than 12 hours before their deadline. Students should have current anti-virus software and should update their software often as a protection to themselves as well as others who are participating in this class. This is everyone's responsibility. **Do not wait till too close to the deadline to submit papers and risk having some kind of computer or Internet connection problem because such a problem will not excuse a late paper. Moreover, if you are not sure whether Bb's Dropbox feature works for a submission, be sure also to submit a project to the instructor's BearMail address well before the deadline.**

Grades: Letter grade designations in the course in some ways are similar to workplace judgments. An <u>A</u> is like the compliment of a manager for superior quality. A <u>B</u> means above average. Lower grades mean as follows: <u>C</u>, average; <u>D</u>, inadequate; <u>F</u>, seriously inadequate. In the workplace, inadequate writing may be returned. Then, rewriting can threaten a deadline (a potentially serious problem). In this course, we write too many papers to allow for re-working and re-grading of papers. The instructor might, however, return an extremely inadequate paper. In that case, the re-written final copy will be considered a late paper. For each graded paper, learn from your mistakes, and do better on the next project. Feel free to ask questions when papers are returned. Course grades will be assigned on the following scale: 100-90%=A; 89-80%=B; 79-70%=C; 69-60%=D; 59-0%=F.

If you stop participating in this course but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class, you may receive a failing grade but still be financially obligated. To drop a course anytime after the first week, you must turn in a drop slip at an authorized registration center (see the MSU Online page http://msonline.missouristate.edu/admission/default.htm).

NONDISCRIMINATION

Missouri State University is a community of people with respect for diversity that emphasizes the dignity and equality common to all individual faculty, staff, and students. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status in employment or in any of its program or activities. Missouri State University is an equal opportunity institution and maintains a grievance procedure incorporating due process available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries or concerns about possible discrimination to the Equal Opportunity Officer, Siceluff Hall 296, (417) 836-4252. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic

nature) should be discussed directly with your instructor and may also be brought to the attention of your instructor's Department Head. The MSU statement of nondiscrimination can be found at http://www.missouristate.edu/equity/nondiscrimination_statement.htm.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Missouri State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations in policies, practices, or procedures necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated, or otherwise treated differently from other individuals in the University community. The instructor in this course strongly supports the University's disability accommodation policy and will make reasonable accommodations for any student with a physical or documented learning disability in order to facilitate the student's learning and performance. Students requiring an accommodation should contact the instructor during the first week of classes, and they are encouraged to use the Learning Diagnostic Clinic and the Office of Disability Support Services.

To request academic accommodations for a disability, contact Jana Long, Coordinator, Disability Support Services (DSS), Plaster Student Union, Suite 405, (417) 836-4192 (voice); (417) 836-6792 (TTY); http://www.missouristate.edu/disability. Students are required to provide documentation of disability to DSS prior to receiving accommodations. DSS refers some types of accommodation requests to the Learning Diagnostic Clinic (LDC). For a sliding-scale fee, the LDC also provides diagnostic testing for learning and psychological disabilities. To inquire, contact Dr. Steve Capps, Director, LDC, (417) 836-4787; http://psychology.missouristate.edu/ldc. Students are responsible to initiate this process and bring it to the instructor's attention at the beginning of the semester.