

ENG 303: Business Writing

Course Information

ENG 303-31
Fall 2020
3 Credits
Online

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-3:30 and by appointment

Department Information:

La Salle English Department: 141 Olney
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Phone: 215-951-1145

University Information:

www.lasalle.edu (click on mylasalle for portal access)
For updates regarding university closure, call 215-951-1910 (code 105 for day courses)

Course Objectives

Welcome to English 303! In this course, we will gain experience in the planning, drafting, and revising of common forms of business writing. To meet this goal, we will learn the formats and conventions of genres that circulate within most organized communication environments: email, memos, letters, proposals, analytical reports, and so on. In addition, and more ambitiously, we will work to develop our awareness of such genres as *rhetorical*—as documents that aim to *persuade* specific readers toward certain beliefs or actions. Overall, our work this semester will better prepare you for success in any language-intensive profession (and that’s most of them!) by helping you to:

- Enhance your ability to read and write rhetorically, with a focus on readers and their expectations
- Improve your processes for planning and completing document projects.
- Develop your understanding of your own writing process.
- Develop your collaborative abilities (“teamwork”).
- Expand your understanding of business writing as one important kind of literacy.

Instructional Methods. This is an online course. Through Canvas, we’ll use a combination of assignment types and modes of delivering information. You will find the syllabus and other course materials on the University’s learning management system, Canvas, which is accessible from the Tools menu in the [mylasalle portal](#). All email communication should be conducted using your official La Salle email address.

Course Materials

Required Texts

- Richard Johnson-Sheehan. *Technical Communication Today*, 6th Edition.

- Any additional short readings will be made available on our course Canvas site.

Course Schedule

This course begins on August 17th and ends on November 25th. The last day to withdraw from this course is **October 23rd**. See the attached schedule for a more detailed breakdown of what we'll do during each class meeting.

Grading Methods and Evaluation

You will complete several major assignments this semester, each aiming to familiarize you with a different aspect of business writing (see Figure 1). You will work with me to develop your final project for the course: a group-authored formal report based on a specific problem that you identify and propose at the beginning of the semester. **You must complete and turn in all assignments (other than quizzes/homework) in order to receive a passing grade for the course.**

Assignment	Points
Workplace correspondence (4 short assignments, 5 pts each)	20
Writing for Career Advancement	10
Personal Website	10
Group Research Proposal	10
Group Document Design Analysis	10
Project Progress Report	5
Group Final Report	20
Meeting minutes (two per group member)	5
Short assignments/quizzes (as needed)	10
Total Points	100

Figure 1. Assignment and point breakdown for the semester.

Grades

Grades measure how successfully you complete an assignment (see Figure 2). They are not a measure of your worth or potential as a student; they are also not a reward for effort. At their best, grades are one important piece of how you learn what you're doing well and what you can improve. If you have any

questions about your grades after having carefully considered my comments on your work, please ask me.

Grade	%	What It Means
A	93-100 90-92 A A-	Excellent work. Addresses all the requirements of the assignment in a concise and persuasive way. Manifests consistent attention to format, tone, genre conventions, and the rhetorical situation of the writing task.
B	87-89 83-86 80-82 B+ B B-	Very good work. Clearly addresses all of the requirements of the assignment. Writing is persuasive, informed, and attuned to the rhetorical situation of the writing task. Almost entirely free of errors in format or mechanics.
C	77-79 73-76 70-72 C+ C C-	Adequate work. Addresses all of the requirements of the assignment. Writing is correct overall with occasional lapses in format and mechanics. Demonstrates awareness of the rhetorical situation of the task, but clearly less than A or B work.
D	67-69 63-66 60-62 D+ D D-	Less than adequate work. Barely meets the most basic requirements of the assignment. Frequent lapses in format, genre conventions, tone, and mechanics indicate a clear lack of attention to the rhetorical situation of the writing task.
F	Everything else	Failing work. Fails to meet the most basic requirements of the assignment. Fails to attend to the rhetorical situation of the writing task. Fails to demonstrate proper attention to format, correctness, and mechanics.

Figure 2. Grades and their meaning.

Feedback on Assignments

For each major assignment listed above, you will receive a detailed assignment sheet with specific requirements and a grading rubric.

Responsibilities, Expectations, and Resources

Changes to the Syllabus. This syllabus is a guide and every attempt is made to provide an accurate overview of the course. However, circumstances and events may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester and may depend, in part, on the progress, needs, and experiences you and your peers articulate. I will give notice when changes to the syllabus are made.

Student Responsibility Statement. There is a high level of academic standards and rigor in all courses offered at La Salle. Student success is dependent on the individual student's intrinsic motivation, ability to be a self-regulated learner, and technology skills.

Take initiative to complete your coursework on your own and when working in groups especially when working outside the direct supervision of the professor. You will be expected to study and complete

assignments independently. In addition, you may be expected to participate in discussions, group work, and regular class meetings. If you encounter any technical difficulties when trying to access coursework online, you should notify the instructor immediately as well as contact the La Salle University Helpdesk for technical support.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date listed. Work handed in late is uncharitable toward those who complete their work on time; consequently, I look upon late work with about the same tolerance as the respective professional communities you will soon join. Assignments handed in at any time after the beginning of class on the date due will be penalized by 10% for each calendar day late, including weekends. Plan now for computers (and certainly printers) to be uncooperative.

Professionalism. View your work as an opportunity to develop good professional habits. This means timely completion and careful revision and proofreading. Grammar, spelling, and formatting errors may seem like minor issues, but they have major workplace consequences. I will be treating you as professionals, and I ask for the same professionalism in your work and classroom participation.

Participation. When contributing to online class discussion, please refrain from the use of potentially offensive or hurtful language, even in jest. If you do not engage in the course through active participation and display disrespectful behavior, your participation grade will be impacted.

If you have an **emergency or illness**, please remain in contact with me by email so that we can make appropriate arrangements for you to keep up with assigned work. In general, remember that the sooner you inform me of any complications to your ability to complete assignments, the more options we'll have for minimizing their impact on your performance.

Class roster. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know, either in class or via email. Feel free to specify your preferred pronoun usage. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me.

Late assignments. All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the class meeting on which they are listed as due. You will be penalized 10% for every calendar day that an assignment is late (meaning that if you turn an assignment in after the deadline, the grade goes down by 10%). You must complete and turn in all assignments and Essays in order to qualify for a passing grade this semester.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of other people's words or ideas, whether deliberately or accidentally. Any written work with your name on it signifies that you are the author—that the ideas, wording, and structure are yours, with exceptions indicated by quotation marks and citations. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment in question, and a report on your academic dishonesty will be filed with the chair of your department and dean of your school. Receiving a zero on any assignment will make it difficult for you to receive a passing final grade in the class.

The university has a detailed Academic Integrity Policy which can be found in the Documents and Policies section on the home page of the university portal web site explaining more fully the rights of both instructors and students in the case of suspected plagiarism, including information about grade appeals. Please download this policy, read it, and sign the handout I distribute to you in order to indicate that you understand and agree to this policy. The handout I provide also has a field for you to sign and consent to the terms of this syllabus. I will collect your signed form through the second week of class. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask and I will be more than happy to help you.

Respect. I will rely on you to do your part to help foster a respectful and comfortable environment in our class. When you contribute to class discussion, please refrain from the use of potentially offensive or hurtful language, even in jest. One of the great benefits of class discussion is the range of beliefs and ideas it brings to light for our consideration. There will be many overlaps in our thinking, and there will be some differences as well. The goal of academic discourse is not that we all learn to think alike; the goal is that we all learn in an environment of civility and understanding. Please regard other people's work and ideas with the kindness and respect we all deserve as we read, write, and inquire together this semester.

Title IX. As a La Salle University employee, I am responsible for helping to keep our campus safe for all students. Title IX prohibits sexual misconduct. You can read more about La Salle University's "Policy On Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Discrimination" here:

<<https://wa3.lasalle.edu/channels/docs/get.php?id=1497>>. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or if you know someone who has, the university can help. Dawn Soufleris is our Deputy Title IX Coordinator, and if you have any concerns, you can reach her at her office in Union 123 or by email at soufleris@lasalle.edu.

Additionally, federal and university regulations **require** me to promptly convey any information about potential sexual misconduct to our Deputy Title IX Coordinator. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those who need it in order to respond and assist in a sensitive and professional manner. If you would like to talk to a designated confidential resource, Laura Cilia can be reached at cilia@lasalle.edu, and her office is Medical Office Building Suite 112 in the Student Counseling Center.

Canvas. Be sure to check Canvas regularly this semester for updates, announcements, and course materials. This is where you will find all of your readings for class that are not in your two required textbooks.

If you have problems using Canvas or any other course technology, IT can be contacted at 215-951-1860 or emailed at helpdesk@lasalle.edu.

Fair Use. The articles and other copyright materials that you will be working with in the course have been made available to you within the provisions of "fair use," as explained in the US legal code that governs copyright. In general, this means that you will use these materials exclusively for their designated purposes within the course and that you will not post, email, or otherwise distribute them to others outside the class. If you have any questions about fair use, please ask me.

In all cases, unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Further, students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute instructional materials without authorization. Doing so is an illegal breach of academic copyright law.

Student Disability Services. La Salle University abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which mandates reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities. If you require assistance or appropriate academic accommodations for a university-documented disability, please speak with me after class, during office hours, or by appointment. If you have not yet established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services, contact Ms. Rose Lee Pauline at 215-951-1014 or pauline@lasalle.edu.

Student Counseling Center. Open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, come to the Student Counseling Center at McShain Hall or call 215-951-1355. In an

emergency during the day, students may be seen without an appointment, and the emergency walk in hour is at 1:00 p.m.

Veteran Services. If you are a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves, in the National Guard, or a spouse/ dependent of a veteran, please let me know if an aspect of your present or prior service affects your ability to fulfill the requirements of the course. Campus resources for veterans, service members, and families can be found by contacting Mr. Luke Jiorle at 215.951.1070 or emailing vabenefits@lasalle.edu.

Want help with this course? The **Center for Academic Achievement** in Lawrence Administration Building (Suite 409) offers academic support services in this and many other courses. Individual appointments for Writing and Subject Tutoring can be made through GradesFirst. Group tutoring in the form of Supplemental Instruction (SI) is provided for designated courses. Students needing non-course based support can make individual appointments for Academic Coaching, and/or attend the Seminars on Success. To learn more about the Center and how you can utilize its resources and services, please visit our website.

Writing Tutors assist students from all disciplines and at all stages of the writing process. Tutors provide feedback on organization, clarity, citing and referencing sources, and work with students to enhance their ability to proofread and edit their papers. You may walk-in for help, but to ensure that a tutor is available, we recommend scheduling an appointment in GradesFirst through the mylasalle Portal. For detailed instructions, go to the Center's website. Fall 2020 hours are 9am – 7pm, Monday through Thursday and 9am – 3pm Friday. If you attend a branch campus or are taking online courses, we also offer distance writing tutoring via Zoom. To request an online appointment, schedule the appointment in GradesFirst, then contact tutoringsupport@lasalle.edu to request that the appointment be held online. You must do this at least 24 hours prior to the appointment. Writing workshops on a variety of topics will also be held this semester; students will be emailed details. For more information about Writing Tutoring, contact Jake Alspaugh at 215.951.1167 or alspaugh@lasalle.edu.

Subject Tutoring is available for students seeking content help in a variety of courses throughout the University. If you are struggling to answer that one question that has you stumped, looking for a more comprehensive understanding of the material, or need help to create a detailed study plan, Subject Tutoring is something you should take advantage of early and often. For a complete list of courses the Center tutors, visit academicsupport.lasalle.edu. If you would like additional information about Subject Tutoring, contact Phenix Frazier Badmus at 215.951.5005 or frazier@lasalle.edu.

One-on-one Academic Coaching sessions help to strengthen crucial skills necessary for academic success. Session topics include time management, study strategies, reading strategies, note-taking, test-taking, group study, and organization. Seminars on success are offered throughout the semester as well. To schedule an individual coaching appointment or for more information about this semester's seminar schedule, contact Melissa Gallagher at 215.951.5115 or hediger@lasalle.edu.

Further Information. You will find links to important policies and resources in our Canvas course. See the links below or go to Canvas and click on **Help** at the bottom of the global navigation menu or on **Getting Help** in the course navigation menu.

- [American Disability Act of 1990](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Student Guide to Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Technology Help and Support](#)
- [Classroom Accommodations](#)
- [Center for Academic Achievement](#)
- [Connelly Library](#)

Contacting Me

The best way to communicate with me is during office hours. Reserve email for questions that can be given brief (and therefore prompt) answers. I cannot respond fully to drafts of your writing through email; this is the purpose of office conferences.

Meeting with Me. The virtual office hours listed on the first page of this syllabus are the dedicated times when I am available to talk with students about any aspect of the course, especially your written work. If you are unavailable during these times, email me to see about scheduling an appointment for another time. I check my email once a day, so do not expect an immediate response. For conversations about your drafts and/or grades, please see me in office hours. Coming to office hours does not mean that you will necessarily do better on your assignments; it does, however, ensure that we will have a chance to enact some of the feedback, questioning, and conversation that all good writing requires before it can be great.

Communication Policy. I will periodically send out emails and post messages and announcements on Canvas to remind you of deadlines or readings, to provide details on assignments and examinations, and to tell students about University events of interest. It is your responsibility to check your University emails on a regular basis to stay informed. There will be no allowances made for a failure to read your official University email. Similarly, you must also be certain that you are receiving appropriate notifications from Canvas.

I will make every effort to respond to your messages within 24 – 48 hours during the work week and within 48 hours for emails sent on the weekend or holidays. It is the expectation that you will adhere to these timeframes as well when communicated with the instructor or classmates about matters pertaining to your coursework in this class.

Tips for a Successful Semester

The two greatest factors in your success this semester will be (1) how responsibly you keep up with readings and assignments; and (2) how fully you contribute as a knowledgeable, cooperative group member. Beyond that, be sure to email or see me with any questions you might have. That's what I'm here for, and I'm happy to help.

Welcome to class, and I look forward to a rigorous and rewarding semester together.



Week	Topic	ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS
Key	<p>TCS <i>Technical Communication Today, 6th Edition</i></p> <p>All readings and assignments are due on the date listed. Additional short readings and assignments will be added during the semester when I find that they will be most useful.</p> <p>Items listed in red indicate <i>specific written materials that you are expected to bring with you and/or hand in on that class day.</i></p> <p>This schedule may change over the course of the semester, but readings and assignments will never be due earlier than they are indicated here. Any changes will be announced on Canvas.</p>	
<p>Unit One: Foundations of Professional Writing</p>		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome to ENG303! ● Introduction to our course and goals ● What is “Business Writing”? 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course Syllabus ● Consent to Course Policies form ● TCS Chapter 1 <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consent to Course Policies Assignment ● Discussion Post: Introduction ● Reading Quiz, Chapter 1
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is “Rhetoric”? ● Genres of professional writing: workplace correspondence ● Managing the attitudes of writing: tone 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapter 2 <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapter 2 ● Discussion post: Example of “Professional Writing”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good News/Bad News Letters due
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Genres of professional writing: memos and email ● Genres of professional writing: social media 	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapter 6 ● Staff-wide Memo and Email Assignment
		Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapter 6 ● Email Discussion Post
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social media as professional writing continued ● The many rhetorical situations of career advancement 	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mitchell, "4 Do's and 4 Don't's for Businesses Using Social Media"
		Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff-wide Memo and Email Assignment due
Unit Two: Writing for Career Advancement		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading position advertisements rhetorically ● Genres of advancement: resumes and cover letters 	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapter 5
		Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapter 5 ● Discussion: Job Ad Research
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website Workshop: Personal Branding ● Tone and public presence ● Writing and collaboration 	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sreenivasan, "How to Use Social Media in Your Career" ● TCS Chapter 21
		Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapter 21 ● Social Media Discussion Post ● Career Advancement Materials due

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The rhetorical situations of proposals: internal, external, solicited, unsolicited ● Proposal structure and persuasive goals 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapters 3 and 9 <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapters 3 and 9 ● Personal Website due
<p>Unit Three: Writing to Problem-Solve 1: The Research Proposal</p>		
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Problem Statement workshop ● Research in professional writing 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapters 4 and 14 <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapters 4 and 14 ● Submit your group's proposal problem statement
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is document design? ● "The first two things" of document design ● General principles of document design 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapter 17 ● Document Design: The First Two Things ● "Informational Visuals in Business Writing" ● Document Design Report <hr/> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research Proposal due
<p>Unit Four: Visual Communication and Document Design</p>		
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Typography: what language looks like ● Professional visuals: Aesthetic and Informational 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yang, "Is Your Font Racist?" ● Hudgins, "Hating Comic Sans is Ableist" ● TCS Chapter 18

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aesthetic and informational visuals continued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic Vocabulary of Document Design ● View: Mars, “Why City Flags May be the Worst-designed Things You’ve Never Noticed”
		<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapter 18 and additional readings ● Discussion: Submit one aesthetic visual and one informational visual that your group is considering implementing in the Final Research Report ● Project Progress Report
<p>11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Genres of professional writing: reports ● Report superstructure and persuasive goals: the body ● Report supplements I: front matter 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapter 11
		<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Quiz, Chapter 11 ● Document Design Report Due
<p style="text-align: center;">Unit Five: Writing to Problem-Solve 2: Reports</p>		
<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report Supplements 2: back matter ● The roles of research in the Final Report ● Conferences 	<p>Prepare for conferences</p>
		<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submit a complete draft of your group’s FINAL REPORT
<p>13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report peer review ● Composing and Delivering Short Presentations 	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TCS Chapter 20 ● Skim TCS Appendix A

		<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reading Quiz, Chapter 20● Final Report Peer Review● Submit your group's Research Report background section
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Report finalization for style and correctness.● Course conclusion and semester in review	<p>Research Report and Website due. See the assignment sheets for instructions about submitting all components.</p>