

Course Syllabus Online **Fall 2013**

Oct 21 to Dec 13, 2013 (8 Week) B Block

Course Number & Title: COM 220: Business Communication & Writing

Instructor's Name: Dr. Angela Velez-Solic

Prerequisite Courses: None

Course Description: Topics considered in this course include basic principles of effective oral and written communication, a brief survey of standard English grammar and usage, and the forms and styles of business correspondence.

Contact Information:

Email: asolic002@drury.edu

Alternative: justcallmeang@hotmail.com

When you email me, please give me 24 hours to respond to you. Sometimes I will be fast, and sometimes that might take a little while, especially on weekends. I will try my best to get back to you within 24 hours, though.

Phone: [219-448-1584](tel:219-448-1584)

Texts are OK, but please indicate who you are (such as, hey, it's Jack from English 202).

Leave a message if I do not answer. Please do not text or call after 9pm CST.

Course Location Online: <http://druryonline.blackboard.com>

Required Texts:

Business & Administrative Communication
by K. Locker
ISBN 978-0-07-340318-2
Copyright 13
Edition 10

Instructor's Bio:

[My name is Dr. Angela Velez-Solic and I will be instructing you this term!](#)

Educationally speaking, I have my BA in English & Education, my MA in English, and my Ph.D. in Adult Education, with some emphasis in online learning.

I've been teaching at the college level since 1998 and I've loved it ever since. I started teaching online in 2005; at first I wasn't convinced it was right for me as a teacher, I soon realized that I could be just as effective through the computer as I was in the face to face classroom! In 2007 I started working full time in faculty support, training and development, and had teaching as a part time gig. I remain that way now.

I work full time at Indiana University Northwest as the Associate Director of our Center for Innovation and Scholarship in Teaching and Learning and Clinical Assistant Professor of Education. I love my job.

Personally speaking, I have a wonderful husband, Brian and 4 kids: Andrew, 15, Devin, 14, Zack, 11, and Julia, 9. I also have 3 stepchildren, a boy who's 13 and twin girls who are 8. I absolutely love being outdoors, camping, hiking, fishing, and especially riding my Harley Davidson. I have a 2007 Low Rider... it's the most wonderful type of freedom in the world.

Besides that, I enjoy photography, writing poetry, and enjoying time with my kids.

Technology:

To be successful in an online course, you must have reliable computer and internet access. It is each student's responsibility to have access to a dependable computer and internet connectivity. It is strongly recommended that, in addition to your standard means of access, you have an alternative plan for acquiring course materials, should your computer fail to function or your internet connectivity becomes disrupted. A Drury campus library is an excellent option if one is nearby; otherwise, most public libraries offer internet access. If you have a laptop computer, then familiarity with local "hotspots" might also serve you well. Develop a plan to address technical problems before they arise.

It is also the responsibility of the student to actively and proactively address technical problems. Be aware that many problems can be addressed simply by using Firefox, the internet browser that most effectively interfaces with Blackboard. Other browsers can be problematic. For example, sometimes people cannot see their own postings when using Internet Explorer.

Firefox is very similar to Internet Explorer, but it has other advantages. For example, many malicious programs are designed to attack Internet Explorer, so

using Firefox offers some added degree of protection. You can download Firefox for free at www.mozilla.com.

Finally, if you have further difficulties, here is a link to Drury’s technical support [Technology Services Support Page](#) which can also be found on the login page under “Helpful Drury Links”.

Personalized Lectures: Each week I will provide you with weekly ‘lectures’. These will be located in the Lesson folders. Make sure you take time to listen to and/or read them. They’re meant to supplement and support what we are learning during each unit.

Course Objectives:

In this class, you will learn to:

- _Write effective business communications for a variety of purposes
- _Adjust tone, diction, and visual presentation depending upon audience and purpose
- _Improve grammatical competency
- _Edit business correspondence for grammar and style
- _Use an appropriate documentation methodology (APA) when documenting source material
- _Use primary and secondary sources for scholarship
- _Improve critical thinking and reasoning skills
- _Incorporate effective and accurate visuals into communications

Course Schedule:

Keep in mind every week you will have a discussion. I will not list that under What’s due. You’ll have a discussion response due on THURSDAY and peer posts due by SUNDAY, every single week. An agenda for each week can be found in LESSONS that will give you details and specific due days.

Fall Semester	Oct. 21 to Dec. 13, 2013	
Student Access to Class: October 14	Class Activities	What’s Due
Week 1: Oct 21-27	Read Chapter 1, 2 Visit Appendix A Introduce yourself Discussion forum	- Week 1 quiz - Introduction forum postings - Week 1 discussion
Week 2: Oct 28- Nov 3	Read Chapter 3 Discussion forum	- Memo of Intent - Week 2 Quiz

		- Week 2 discussion
Week 3: Nov. 4- Nov 10	Read Chapter 17 & 5 Discussion forum	- Week 3 quiz - Proposal for action - Week 3 discussion
Week 4: Nov. 11- 17	Read Chapter 9 & 10 Discussion forum	- Week 4 quiz - Week 4 discussion
Week 5: Nov. 18-24	Read Chapter 6 & 11 Peer Review forum	- Week 5 quiz - Letter to media - Week 5 peer review
Week 6: Nov 25-Dec 1	Peer review forum	- Handbook to employees - Week 6 peer review
Week 7: Dec 2-8	Read Chapter 4 & 16 Discussion forum	- Week 7 quiz - Week 7 discussion - Prepare presentation
Week 8: Dec 9-13 (5 days only) Grades due Dec. 16	Prepare for oral and video presentation & Final exam	- Presentations - Final exam

You will need to create a YouSeeU account.

YouSeeU is a web-based tool that enables educators and students to securely and efficiently connect and exchange video presentations, assignments and discussions. Students will be required to login to this site in order to create his or her Video Oral Presentation that is due in Week 8. This doesn't mean procrastinate ☺

Website: <http://www.youseeu.com>

After your account is created, you will use this 6-digit code for the final oral presentation assignment: BFY6ZQ8

Announcements:

The announcement feature will be your starting point each week. Be sure to check announcements daily. This feature will be used to post any relevant messages such

as notifications, changes to assignments, due dates, instructions, links, updates, or general information to help facilitate your online experience.

Class Activities, Interaction, and Participation:

Online learning is an interactive process centering on discussions and other individual and/or collaborative activities. In order to benefit from this learning, students ideally need to actively participate 4-5 times per week in the class. A positive and direct correlation exists between frequency of student participation and learning outcomes. Because of that, students are expected to participate 4-5 times per week on class activities/Discussions.

Contributions by students to these activities form a rich learning environment that is diminished when students do not participate at this level. Set aside the time to be a collaborative partner in everyone's learning.

Discussion Board Expectations and Grading Rubric:

In order to receive full credit for discussion board postings, all initial discussions and reply comments must be posted on time. Initial discussions are due by **THURSDAY, 11:59pm** and all reply comments are due by **SUNDAY, 11:59pm** Central Time is used for all discussion due dates.

Initial Discussions: You are required to have ONE initial response to a discussion question(s) and at least THREE reply comments (to your peers or to your own initial response) posted throughout the week.

Reply Comments: In addition to posting your initial discussion(s) question response, you are expected to post reply comments to any question(s) that you have not answered in your initial response. You are expected to follow-up with those persons who have left you replies on your initial response to discussion question(s). You are also expected to reply to those persons for whom you have left feedback if they have responded to your comments to them. Aim to post **(4-5)** times to other students in the class each week.

Discussion board activity should be ongoing and throughout the week. You are expected to post on 3-4 different days of the week.

Remember to post early and to post often for maximum learning and discussion point awards!

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
Discussion Question Responses (15 points)	Discussion question response is posted on or before the due date, is thoughtful, and substantial in nature. Posts meet or exceeds length requirement.	Discussion question response is posted on or before the due date and may lack some substance. Posts do not meet length requirement.	Discussion question response not posted by the due date or r posed at all and/or lack substance. Posts do not mee length requirement.
Follow-Up Postings (10 points)	Demonstrates analysis of others' posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts. Posts 3 or more quality posts on 3 or more days a week.	Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation. Posts 2 or fewer posts on 2 or less days a week.	Posts one or no follow-up respons to others. Posts on one day of th week.
Usage & Mechanics (5 points)	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Writer makes more than 3 errc in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

I suggest that you participate on a daily basis during the course. Participation is measured by your contribution to the virtual classroom discussion board. Your contribution must add value to the course. A note is determined to be of substance by containing information that supplements, contradicts, questions, or furthers discussion on a subject area contained in the course. Notes such as "me too" and "I agree" and other notes not related to the course **are not considered substantial** notes for participation.

The following is an example of a post that **lacks** depth and contribution to continued analysis of the topic(s) at hand:

Response: Good job, Susan. You took the words right out of my mouth. I wish I had thought of that. I mainly focused on the various steps of the research process, but not how they specifically can be applied to a specific research topic. I like your application of the steps to researching homelessness.

Evaluation: This response says very little beyond the affirmation of Susan's earlier response.

An example of a substantial, value-adding response follows:

Response: Nice work, Susan. I can see the relevance of using your method for researching an author and finding relevant, reliable information about that person. I wonder if you've thought about including information about the author's family life. I enjoyed what you shared about his professional experiences, but little is shared about whether he was married, or had children. That typically affects what an author writes about. What can you find out?

What can help if you don't know what to say??? Check out these ideas:

1. Share a relevant experience that illustrates a concept or problem from the course.
2. Take an idea being discussed, and offer a different perspective on it, either class-related or from the real world.
3. Describe an interesting idea from the week's reading and explain what insights you gained from it and/or how it applies to you.
4. Disagree (respectfully, of course) with a point that someone else made, and then discuss an opposing viewpoint that is supported by scholarly sources.
5. Share a resource or website you have used as you explored the course topics and explain what you learned from it, how it relates to the course material, and reasons for others to consider researching it also.

A quick checklist to make sure your posts are 'substantial':

- Your response to the discussion question should be at least 2 paragraphs long. Remember, a paragraph should have at least 5 sentences in it.
- Your peer responses should be about a paragraph in length. Again, 5 sentences in length or more, approximately.
- Make sure you answered the question completely.
- Be sure your post adds more to the conversation. It should not just be congratulatory (Good job, etc.).

Please remember that if you do use the internet to help you answer a discussion question, it's your responsibility to cite that source in APA or MLA format in your post. If you don't, then it

will be considered plagiarism. I will check, so don't take any risks.

QUIZZES

Your quizzes will be worth 40 points. They are open note and open book, but they are timed. You will not have enough time to look up every answer, so I highly suggest that you take notes over important chapter concepts and use those instead of your book. Plus, it helps your brain retain information when you read, write, and repeat what it is that you are learning. Please do NOT attempt to pull an answer off of the internet. I won't tolerate that behavior whatsoever.

Summary Listing of Assignments/Grading Schedule:

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Weekly Discussion or Peer Review forums	Weekly. Weeks 5 & 6 are Peer Review and are worth 50 points each. Other weeks are 30 points	250 points
Quizzes	Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 @40 pts. each	240 points
Memo	Week 2	20 points
Proposal	Week 3	40 points
Letter	Week 5	50 points
Handbook	Week 6	100 points
Oral & Visual Presentation	Week 8	200 points
Final Exam	Week 8	100 points
	TOTAL	1000 points

Course Grading Scale:

1000-950 = A
949-901 = A-
900-850 = B+
849-830 = B
829-801 = B-
800-770 = C+
769-730 = C
729-701 = C-
700-670 = D+
669-630 = D
629-601 = D-
600 or fewer = F

Assignment Policy:

The course has been planned in advance, and I will make every effort to avoid changing any assignments or due dates. However, if the situation arises, and an adjustment needs to be made, I will let you know in advance of any impending changes.

Instructor Feedback/Grade Return Policy:

When I grade, I start with discussion first. You will get your discussion grade and feedback within 4 or 5 days of the week ending.

You will get feedback on your written assignments about 6 days after the week has ended. Make sure to check "My Grades" for your grades and any feedback from me. It's important to read that feedback if you didn't earn your full points so you can increase your score the following week.

Late Work:

Late work is a very frustrating part of teaching online. Therefore, I have had to get 'tough' when it comes to students submitting late work. However, I hope that my late policy will prove to be fair and equitable for all students.

Any written work (assignment that is turned in) that is submitted AFTER I have graded the assignments (usually 4-6 days after it's due) will NOT BE ACCEPTED. That is, once you see a 0 in that grade center column, do not bother turning it in. Do not bother sending me an email UNLESS you have a documented extenuating circumstance.

Are you reading between the lines, here?? Yep, that means that there's a grace period for everyone. Be careful, though, because if you use that every week, you'll perpetually be behind and playing 'catch up'. I'd advise that you only use that when absolutely necessary. Chronic procrastination is NOT a good thing, people ☺
Due dates are good.

It is not necessary to send me an email telling me you're using the grace period. It doesn't matter why you're using it. So, please don't do that.

The only exception to this policy is if you contact me IN ADVANCE of the due date expressing the reason you need extra time (and it will need to be a documented reason such as a hospitalization, illness, car accident, etc.). Notes from parents (boyfriends, best friends, spouses, etc.) DO NOT COUNT. It must be from a doctor, hospital, clinic, etc. with contact information available.

If, of course, it's an unexpected emergency, I will understand that advanced notice was not possible. If we do agree upon an acceptance of this late work, you are to submit me a scanned copy of your document with your assignment. **If it does not accompany your assignment, I will not grade it.**

Discussions cannot be late. Period. You have to have your discussion posts in by the time that week is up, or you will not earn your points. If you posted your discussion response, but forgot to post to your peers, you cannot go back in to the forum and post late.

What this all means is that you need to plan ahead. Make time for your work and make your school work a priority. I know what it's like to balance life, family, work, and school. I earned a Ph.D. while going through a nasty divorce, raising 4 young children (youngest in diapers), and working an insane number of hours. I did it and graduated with a 4.0. Granted, not everyone has that crazy of a situation, but what it should tell you is that IT IS POSSIBLE to do well, even when life throws a lot of pot holes in your road! ☺

Issuance of an Incomplete Grade:

Only if illness (documentation may be required) or other unavoidable circumstances prevent you from completing the course will I consider awarding an INCOMPLETE. You are responsible for contacting me to work out a schedule for removing the "I" grade. Unless we agree to a different schedule, coursework must be completed and the "I" grade replaced with a letter grade within 2-3 weeks after the end of the course.

It's strongly suggested that you and your student agree to a work schedule to complete missed assignments **BEFORE** the Incomplete grade is issued. We have found that more students will complete their missed work if it is completed within 2-3 weeks of the end of class although Drury policy allows 6 weeks into the next semester for work completion.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty undermines the values of Drury University as well as the educational endeavor. Dishonesty and theft of any kind are not to be tolerated, but the act of cheating in academic work is detrimental to the educational process and ultimately cheats both the student involved and the entire community of scholars. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the dean of the college. Please refer to the CGCS catalog for more thorough review of the university's academic dishonesty policy.

[Here is my policy.](#)

This is a writing class, so I know how easy and tempting it might be to use the lovely Google search engine to help you write your assignments and/or do your discussion and weekly reflections.

What I want you to think about is the fact that I've taught English for a long time and I can spot plagiarism immediately. It is not in your best interest to even attempt 'borrowing' information (anyone else's ideas, their words, or their sentences) from any website, someone else's paper, or any other source without proper citations of your sources.

If you don't know what plagiarism is, you need to get yourself familiar with what it is and what it isn't. If you visit these sites it might help you:

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/2/>

I will check all major assignments through Safe Assign. You can see your own results when I use the plagiarism detection tool. If I suspect plagiarism on your discussion responses and/or your writing, I will check them too. The same policy applies, whether it's a discussion response or assignment.

If you do plagiarize, here are the consequences:

1st offense: You will earn a 0 on that assignment/discussion/reflection

2nd offense: You will be reported to the CGCS Dean, which might result in failing the course and could also affect your college record.

It's not worth it. I promise. Trust your own brain to come up with its own ideas, and use the internet as research only.