

# English 420: Business Writing

*Multicultural Contexts. Service Learning. Global Social Justice.*

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**Instructor:** Sweta Baniya

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**Office Hours:** T: 9:30-10:30 AM

& also by appointment

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**Course:** Fall-2018; Section- 03

**CRN:** 43032

**Meets:** MWF 10:30-11:30 AM

Wetherill hall of Chemistry 212

**Website:** Blackboard

## Course Description

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**English 420** English 420 teaches students the rhetorical principles and writing practices necessary for producing effective business letters, memos, reports, and collaborative projects in professional-workplace contexts. The curriculum is informed by current research in rhetoric and professional writing and is guided by the needs and practices of business, industry, and society at large, as well as by the expectations of Purdue students and programs. All sections of English 420 are offered in networked computer classrooms or exclusively online to ensure that students taking the course are prepared for the writing environment of the 21st-century workplace. The course teaches the rhetorical principles that help students shape their business writing and communication ethically, for multiple audiences, in a variety of professional situations.

**Service Learning** The incorporation of service learning in this course will allow us to “work across a number of contexts, with diverse audiences, and on projects of civic significance” (Grabill 92). You will engage in learning to create varied digital rhetoric-based artifacts such as white papers, website designs, blog posts, social media strategies, video documentaries, crowdfunding projects, and podcasts for our community partner Caregiver Companion. For more information: <https://www.purdue.edu/engagement/academics/service-learning.html>

**Caregiver Companion** [Caregiver Companion](#) is a non-profit organization in Tippecanoe County, Indiana that provides non-medical supplemental volunteer support for elderly and disabled individuals who desire to remain in their home, as well as their caregivers. For this semester, they will be our partner.

**Texts required** 12th edition of *Excellence in Business Communication* by Thill & Bovee (ISBN 9780134388144)  
\*Additional readings will be provided via Blackboard

**Blackboard** For this class, I will be using Blackboard for all the information related to course, classroom activities, notes, projects, resources. Blackboard can be accessed with this url: <https://mycourses.purdue.edu/>. I will suggest using Firefox as your browser when accessing Blackboard.

## Course Goals

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This course is designed based on the triangulation of three different concepts: **multicultural contexts, service learning and community engagement, and global social justice**. Based on these major goals, below are the detailed descriptions.

<b>Writing in Context</b>	analyzing multicultural-professional cultures, global-social contexts, and diverse audiences to determine how they shape the various purposes and forms of workplace writing-such as persuasion, organizational communication, and public discourse and their effects on global audience.
<b>Project Management</b>	developing and deploying strategies for planning, researching, drafting, revising, and editing documents, both individually and collaboratively
<b>Document Design</b>	understanding and implementing design principles such as format and layout, through testing and revising information architecture
<b>Teamwork</b>	managing distributed teams on line, delivering and implementing effective feedback
<b>Research</b>	locating, evaluating, and using print and online information selectively for particular audiences and purposes; triangulating sources of evidence
<b>Technology</b>	Using and evaluating writing technologies used frequently in the workplace such as emailing, IM, photo and video editing, presentation design, content management, social media, and desktop publishing.

## Assignments, Grades

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<b>Assignment 1: Job Documents</b> <b>200 points</b>	<p>In this unit, you will focus on building your professional identity by producing employment documents (résumé and cover letters) that you can use at career fairs and for individual applications. The purpose of this assignment is to highlight the rhetorical aspects of employment documents, develop your individual professionalization, and create a set of documents that you can use and modify for career fairs and specific job applications.</p> <p><b>Deliverables</b> take the form of a cohesively branded portfolio, which include: a skills inventory, a memo analyzing your chosen job ad, a résumé or CV, a cover letter, and a written version of your elevator pitch.</p>
<b>Assignment 2: White Paper</b> <b>240 points</b>	<p>This project will serve to help you develop a relationship with our community partner, <i>Caregiver Companion</i>, gather research about them, and discover how they serve their <i>neighbors</i>. To do that, you will be tasked with composing <b>a white paper or “backgrounder”</b> that will cover issues in the nonprofit sector and provide history and background information about <i>Caregiver Companion</i>, their needs as an organization. At the end of the assignment you will share your “<i>Service Learning Class Project</i>” for your third unit. I will send all 22 recommendations to the partner organization</p>

and they will select 5 that will meet their needs for the semester. Those 5 projects will be the final Service Learning Group projects of our class. Additionally, I will also be applying for a Service Learning Grant (More details later in class).

**Deliverables** take form of visiting service location, preliminary proposal outlining the research question (s), scope, and methods of your project, primary and secondary research, a blog post (400 words), and an infographic based on your initial findings, and a final white paper with a well-designed executive statement that acts as a cover page.

**Assignment  
3: Service  
Learning  
Class  
Project  
350 points**

For this unit, the chosen group leaders will recruit their group members based on interest and skills of the members. As a team you will work closely with the partner organization to produce multi-modal documents that will help our community partners. The project might include: **a marketing/communications campaign, a crowdfunding/ Kick starter project for fundraising, social media strategy, an event or awareness, volunteer engagement, volunteer recruitment events, newsletter, video documentary, and an oral history project.** At the end of the semester, you will need to give a presentation to the Caregiver Companion.

**Deliverables** take the form of the final product, a recommendation report on how this product could be used, a memo from each individual student on the process and future recommendation (500-600 words), final presentation.

**Reflection  
Papers  
40\*3 = 120**

Each student will produce three reflection papers over the semester based on the three themes of the class: **Multicultural communication, Service Learning and Community Engagement, and Global Social Justice.** Based on these three themes, book chapters, and classroom discussions, you will think through your key findings and write a reflection of single space page- **only one 8x11” size page length.** In this paper you will do two things: 1) summarize your readings including a personal reflection and 2) “application” of those readings based on the paper day theme and your specific discipline or professional space. **We will read out these papers in the class.** Through these papers, I also want you to think about your larger service learning goals of the class and how will you implement these goals outside of classroom and in the community that you are already part of or will be a part of in the future.

**Speaker  
Series  
30\*3= 90  
points**

During our semester, I will invite 3 speakers to come to our class and discuss their work, research, and how business communication plays a vital role in their professional lives. Before each speaker series, I will share their bio and the topic they will be covering during the class. I expect each of you throughout 3 different speakers’ series to ask at least 1 question to the speaker. After each speaker series you are required to write a 300-400-word response to their talk.

**Grading  
Scale**

I grade on a 1000-point scale and I will convert that into letter grades based on percentage. The grade division is as follow: A+= 97-100; A = 94-96; A-= 90-93; B+=87-89; B=84-86; B-=80-83; C+=77-79; C=74-76; C-=70-73; D+=67-69; D=64-66; D-=60-63; F<60. Please feel free to ask question about

your grades. I will be happy to discuss this in my office during office hours. **As restricted by FREPA, I will not discuss your grades via email or in any public setting, such as classroom or hallway.**

### Evaluation

Final letter grades in this class will be based on the cumulative total of the points that you have earned on the assignments in this class. 1000 total points are possible. Detailed evaluation rubrics for deliverables for units 1,2, and 3 will be distributed in class. In addition to these deliverables, your **professional ethos** throughout the duration of the course and course participation will factor into your final grade.

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## Course Policies

### Technology

**Laptops** are more than welcome to use in classroom for taking notes. But since we are in the computer lab, we will already be working on desktops but if you want to use your laptop then you are welcome to do so.

**Google Docs:** We will be doing most of our classroom activities via google docs, I would suggest you all to open a gmail account if you don't have one yet. Also, make the email professional in nature.

**Cellphone:** Cellphones are great technological tools, but when in a classroom they need to be silenced and used only for emergency notifications. There may be times where I ask you to use your cellphone, so this is the only other time you may use it for non-emergency purposes. Also, I highly restrict use of applications like *Text message, imessage (also from your laptop), Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram* when class is on session. **If I see you using apps beyond educational purpose, you will be marked absent. If this repeats more than 3 times, I will email your advisor.**

**Headphones:** You are welcome to use your headphones while we are in class and working on our drafts.

### Attendance

This class requires you to participate in discussions and hands-on writing activities. For the course to be a success, everyone's participation is necessary. For that reason, attendance is required. You will be allowed 4 absences; after the 5<sup>th</sup> absence, I will lower your final grade by one full letter grade. After 7 absences, I will lower it by two full letter grades. After your 8<sup>th</sup> absence, I will ask you to drop out of the class.

### Plagiarism

This is the copying, deliberate or not, of another person's work and/or ideas without the proper citation. This can result in failure of the project, the course, and other disciplinary action. We will discuss it further in class, but you also need to be aware of what it is and how to avoid it. When in doubt, you can always check with me. More information:  
<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html> and  
<http://icap.rhetorike.org/studentguide>

<b>Late work</b>	It is your responsibility for letting me know that due to any circumstances, if are going to be late in submitting any of the projects. Rough drafts are equally important because we will be conducting peer-review workshop on the drafts.
<b>Rewrites</b>	You must come talk to me in person about the possibility of a rewrite. I will consider rewrites on a case-by-case basis.
<b>The Writing Lab</b>	As our class is based on writing and communication, I highly recommend you visit <a href="#">Purdue's Writing Lab</a> in person or online for getting feedback on writing projects or for additional writing resources.
<b>Disability</b>	If you have a disability that requires special academic accommodation, please make an appointment to speak with your me within the first three (3) weeks of the semester in order to discuss any adjustments. It is important that you talk about this at the beginning of the semester. It is your responsibility to notify the Disability Resource Center ( <a href="http://www.purdue.edu/drc">http://www.purdue.edu/drc</a> ) of an impairment or condition that may require accommodations and/or classroom modifications.
<b>Purdue University's Nondiscrimination Policy</b>	Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies.
<b>Purdue Honor Pledge</b>	"As a Boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together — We are Purdue."
<b>Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)</b>	Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765) 494-6995) and <a href="http://www.purdue.edu/caps/">http://www.purdue.edu/caps/</a> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.
<b>Emergencies</b>	In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, calendar, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes as necessary. Information about possible changes will be communicated by me through email. If you have questions, please email me, and for more information, see ITAP's Campus Emergency website: <a href="http://www.purdue.edu/emergency/">http://www.purdue.edu/emergency/</a>
<b>Course Changes</b>	The instructor reserves the right to change or amend the syllabus and schedule.

## Tentative Schedule for Fall 2018<sup>1</sup>

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
<b>Unit: 1 Job Documents</b>			
1: Aug 20-24	Introduction to the class Objectives: Syllabus, Goals,	Thill & Bovee, <i>EBC</i> , Ch-1: “Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World” <b>Preparing a Google calendar for the semester!</b>	<i>EBC</i> , Ch -3: “Communication Challenges in a Diverse Marketplace”  <b>Introduction to Assignment 1: Professional Portfolio</b> Homework: Bring five Job Ads for Analysis in class
2: Aug 27-31	Speaker Series 1: Jeffrey Stein, PhD, Director of Purdue Physical Therapy. Due: Speaker Series by 11:59 AM (*Schedule might change based on priority of class) <b>Due: Speaker Series Reflection by 11:59 PM</b>	<i>EBC</i> , Ch-15 “Building Careers & Writing résumés” In class: Group Activity on the Job Ads	Workshop on Skills Inventory + Job Ad Analysis continues. Individual work time.
3: Sep 03-07	Labor Day- No class	<i>EBC</i> , Ch-16: “Applying & Interviewing for Employment”	Working on Drafts of the Job Documents.
<b>Unit 2: White Paper</b>			
4: Sep 10-14	<b>Due by 9 AM (BB):</b> First Draft of Assignment 1 <i>Peer Review Day: On this day your first assignment is due for Peer Review. We will spend the classroom day providing feedback to each other’s draft.</i>	<b>Introduction to Assignment 2:</b> White Paper In Class: Read more about Caregiver Companion, finding Research Topic exercise.	<i>EBC</i> , Ch-11 “Planning Reports and Proposals”  *Additional Reading (TBD)  Brainstorming Session for White Paper and Creating a personal research plan
5: Sep 17-21	<b>Due by 9 AM (BB):</b> Reflection Paper on Multicultural Communication	Reflection Paper Multicultural Communication	<b>Speaker Series 2:</b> Executive Director of Caregiver Companion. <b>Due: Speaker Series by 11:59 PM</b>

<sup>1</sup> The schedule is tentative and is subjected to change based on class needs and requirement.

			(*Schedule might change based on priority of class)
6: Sep 24-28	<i>EBC, Ch-12 “Writing Reports and Proposals”</i>	Stelzner, “How to Read a White Paper” (on BB) Elevator Pitch of the possible white paper topic	Workshop on Primary Research by: Derek Sherman Assignment 1: Final Draft Due on Blackboard by 11:59 PM
7: Oct 01-05	Day dedicated for you to go to the community partner’s organization and then interview someone	Day dedicated for you to go to the community partner’s organization and then interview someone	<b>Due before 9 AM : Learning Outcomes, Memos of Community Partner visit</b>  <i>EBC, Ch- 13, “Completing Reports and Proposals”</i>  Milinkovic and Ivanicevic. “Infographic as a Marketing Communication Tools
8: Oct 08- 12	October Break- No class	Adobe In-design Workshop via ItaP	More on Design Thinking: Piktochart and Canva
9: Oct 15-19	Individual Work time during class	Individual Work time during class	<b>Due by 9 AM: First Draft of Assignment 2</b> <i>Peer Review Day: On this day your first assignment is due for Peer Review. We will spend the classroom day providing feedback to each other’s draft.</i>
<b>Unit 3: Service Learning Project</b>			
10: Oct 22-26	Paper Day Paper on Service Learning and Community Engagement	Paper Day Paper on Service Learning and Community Engagement	Speaker Series 3: TBD <b>Due: Speaker Series by 11:59 PM</b>
11: Oct 29- Nov 02	<b>Introduction to Assignment 3</b> <i>EBC, Ch:4, Planning Business Messages</i>	<i>EBC, Ch6: Completing Business Messages</i> <i>EBC, Ch5 Writing Business Messages</i>	<i>EBC, Ch. 7: Crafting Messages for Digital Channels</i>  <b>Assignment 2: Final Draft Due on Blackboard by 11:59 PM</b>
12: Nov 05- 09	Group Engagement Work with the community members and partners	Group Engagement Work with the community members and partners	<b>Due by 9 AM: Learning Outcomes, Memos Workshop Time</b>

			EBC, Ch 8: Writing Routine and Positive Messages
13: Nov 12-16	EBC, Ch: 9 Writing Negative Messages	EBC, Ch 10: Writing Persuasive Messages	Video Editing workshop with Itap
14: Nov 19-23	Thanksgiving Break	Thanksgiving Break	Thanksgiving Break
15: Nov 26-30	<b>Students work on their own + Meetings</b>	<b>Students work on their own + Meetings</b>	<b>Students work on their own</b>
16: Dec 03-07	Assignment 3 Due: Finals/ Presentation + Reflection Paper	Assignment 3 Due: Finals/ Presentation + Reflection Paper	Assignment 3 Due: Finals/ Presentation + Reflection Paper