

ENG U694 TOPICS IN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION: PROFESSIONAL WRITING IN CONTEXT*
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY • FALL 2004 • MTH 11:45 A.M. – 1:25 P.M.

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Course Description

As a student majoring in English, you have unique preparation for a wide range of careers that emphasize analysis and writing. You know how to read complex texts, and you know how to write persuasive essays. But writing functional documents for use in the workplace isn't quite the same as writing a paper for a course. This course shows you how to apply your academic skills in analysis and writing to create texts that embody appropriateness for the situation (what the ancient Greek rhetoricians called *kairos*).

One of the best ways to learn about a situation is to immerse yourself in it. For that reason, this course takes a service-learning approach, meaning that you will spend some of your time (2-3 hours per week) in a community organization working on projects that are also central to the academic content of the course. Our site this semester is the International Learning Center (ILC) of the YMCA of Greater Boston, located next door to Northeastern on Huntington Avenue. Your primary project will be a grant proposal written for the ILC; the other assignments help you to complete or reflect on that proposal. While all students in the course will work for the ILC, you will be able to choose the type of proposal you work on, whether you work closely with other students or more independently, and even the hours you spend at the ILC.

Because everyone in the course will be writing grant proposals (rather than, say, brochures or business plans), we will spend a lot of time discussing grant proposals as a genre. At the end of the course, you will know a fair amount about the genre and about the role of grantseeking in nonprofit organizations. You might choose to parlay this knowledge into a career as a grantwriter, as many English majors have done. But this course is designed to teach you strategies that will serve you well in any career. After successfully completing the course, you will be able to:

- Evaluate the contexts of writing situations and determine the implications of these contexts
- Evaluate the needs of various audiences and determine a range of options for meeting those needs
- Understand the processes of writing within organizations
- Plan and execute professional writing projects, from concept to production
- Articulate the ethical issues at stake in workplace writing

Note: This course is a work in progress. If you have issues or concerns about the course, please do not wait until the end of the semester to voice them, as I may be able to address them immediately. Please talk with me, send me e-mail, or leave a note (signed or anonymous) for me in the English department office.

* This syllabus is subject to change. You will be informed during class of any changes to the syllabus. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed, including any changes to the syllabus.

Required Texts and Materials

Bowdon, Melody, and J. Blake Scott. *Service-Learning in Technical and Professional Communication*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2003.

Miner, Lynn E., and Jeremy T. Miner. *Proposal Planning and Writing*. 3rd ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2003.

An email account

Assignments and Grading

I will calculate your final grade as follows:

Client project, with letter of transmittal	30 %
Evaluation report	30 %
Short memos (trip report, project plan, progress report, cover memo for project review, grantmaker analysis)	15 %
Field journal	10 %
Participation	10 %
Presentation, portfolio, and resume	5 %

The criteria I use to evaluate written assignments include professionalism, focus, thoroughness, insight, sophistication, and use of supporting evidence. All assignments are to be completed individually. If you are working with another student on your client project (the grant proposal for the ILC), speak with me about whether any of your assignments can and should be co-authored. Do not submit co-authored assignments without prior approval.

Daily Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Required Reading	Due
1	9/9	Introduction		
2	9/13	Service-learning in professional communication (with guest speakers); collaboration	Bowdon & Scott ch. 1-2, 6	
	9/16	NO CLASS. Visit your client.	Bowdon & Scott ch. 5	Begin field journal
3	9/20	Grantseeking	Miner & Miner ch. 1-4	Trip report memo
	9/23	Using models and requirements	Karsh and Fox (handout)	
4	9/27	Rhetoric and professional communication	Bowdon & Scott ch. 3	
	9/30	Project planning; writing workshop	Review Bowdon & Scott ch. 5	Rough draft of project plan
5	10/4	Learning about your client	Bowdon & Scott ch. 7	Bring materials about the ILC and the YMCA to class
	10/7	Learning about your audience: the grantmakers		Final draft of project plan; bring materials about your grantmaker to class
6	10/11	COLUMBUS DAY. NU closed.		
	10/14	Grantwriting: Defining Needs	Miner & Miner ch. 7	Grantmaker analysis
7	10/18	Grantwriting: Defining Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes	Miner & Miner ch. 8	
	10/21	Grantwriting: Methods	Miner & Miner ch. 9	

8	10/25	Grantwriting: Evaluation	Miner & Miner ch. 10	
	10/28	NO CLASS. Work on your project.		
9	11/1	Grantwriting: Dissemination	Miner & Miner ch. 11	
	11/4	Grantwriting: Budgets and Appendices	Miner & Miner ch. 12-13	
10	11/8	Assessing your progress	Bowdon & Scott ch. 8	Progress report
	11/11	VETERAN'S DAY. NU closed.		
11	11/15	Evaluating your project	Bowdon & Scott ch. 9	
	11/18	Workshop		First draft of client project, with review memo
12	11/22	Portfolio and resume workshop	Scott (handout); Bowdon & Scott p. 76-88	Draft of portfolio and resume
	11/25	THANKSGIVING. NU closed.		
13	11/29	Workshop		Draft of evaluation report
	12/2	Workshop; presentations	Bowdon & Scott ch. 10	Second draft of client project, with letter of transmittal
14	12/6	Presentations; evaluations		Presentations
	12/9	READING DAY. No classes.		
15	12/13-17	EXAM WEEK. No classes.		
Due 12/14 by 4 p.m. in 406 Holmes: Client project, with letter of transmittal; evaluation report; field journal.				

Description of Assignments

Specific information for each of the following assignments will be distributed in class.

1. **Client project** — Your major assignment is a grant proposal (or part of a grant proposal) prepared for the International Learning Center (ILC) of the YMCA of Greater Boston, located next door to Northeastern on Huntington Avenue. The ILC, which has multiple projects in need of funding, will work with us to match projects with individual student interests. You might work on a small piece of a large grant proposal being made to the Department of Education, or you might write the bulk of a smaller proposal to an independent foundation. In all cases, you will receive support and supervision from me and from the staff at the ILC, who are as eager to help you learn about grantwriting as they are to receive your assistance and expertise. If you are working with another student on your project, speak with me about whether any of your assignments can and should be co-authored. Do not submit co-authored assignments without prior approval. Your grade will be based partially on an evaluation of your performance by the staff at the ILC.
2. **Evaluation report** — Reflection is an important part of experiential learning. The evaluation report is your reflection on and assessment of the client project, both as a finished product and as a learning process.
3. **Short memos** — These memos help keep me and your client (the ILC) up to date on your project. They are also designed to give you practice in writing memoranda (often called the workhorse of professional communication).
 - a. **Trip report** — A memo, addressed to me, that describes your first visit to the ILC.
 - b. **Project plan** — A memo, addressed to me and the staff at the ILC, detailing how you expect to accomplish your project.
 - c. **Grantmaker analysis** — A memo, addressed to me and the staff at the ILC, describing the grantmaker and how you plan to appeal to them.

- d. **Progress report** — A memo, addressed to me and the staff at the ILC, informing me of the status of the project.
- e. **Cover memo for project review** — A memo, addressed to me and the staff at the ILC, that focuses our attention as readers and reviewers.
4. **Field journal** — The journal is a record of the ongoing work of your project, including daily decisions and accomplishments, problems and roadblocks, and reflections. You will find the journal very useful at the end of the semester, when you starting drafting your evaluation report. The entire journal is due at the end of the semester, but you should make entries whenever you work on your project, and you must send me weekly entries (by email) by **each Friday at 5 p.m.** Students who do not send weekly entries will receive significantly lower grades on this assignment.
5. **Participation** — Participation includes having read the day's assigned materials, contributing to class discussion and activities, and respectfully engaging with the ideas of your colleagues.
6. **Presentation, portfolio, and resume** — During the final class, you'll share what you've accomplished and learned with me and your colleagues. Part of the presentation will include showing us your portfolio, which should include your best pieces of professional writing from this class and others.

Policies

Attendance

Attendance is required. Two classes have been cancelled to allow time for working at the ILC. Missing more than two additional classes (for any reason) will affect your final grade and may prevent you from passing the course.

Format of Work

All work must be professionally presented. Print all work with a readable printer, using dark ink on plain white paper. Proofread carefully; make sure all work adheres to commonly accepted standards of grammatical and typographical correctness. Include your name on all work.

Deadlines and Extensions

Written papers must be submitted on the day that they are due. Late assignments will be penalized by a letter grade for each day that they are late (for example, an A will become a B).

Incompletes

I will assign the grade of incomplete only under extraordinary circumstances. In order to receive this grade, you must have completed most of the work for the course and have encountered an emergency (for example, serious illness or a death in the family) that prevents you from finishing one or two assignments. If you find yourself in this situation toward the end of the semester, talk to me as soon as possible before the last assignments are due.

Please do not ask for an incomplete if you are having trouble completing work because of time commitments at work or in other classes.

Plagiarism

I encourage you to bounce ideas off each other, offer each other suggestions, and seek other opinions about your work. When you use the citable work of someone else, though, document your source. If you use someone else's words or ideas without acknowledging the source, if you do not place quotation marks around (or set off from the body of the text) the directly quoted words of someone else, or if you submit work that you have completed in another context, then you have committed plagiarism, a serious breach of academic and professional conduct. Plagiarism is not only illegal; it is professional suicide. If you have questions about crediting the work of others as you complete your assignments, ask me.