

Workplace Writing

A Handbook for Common Workplace Genres and Professional Writing Strategies

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Workplace Writing: A Handbook for Common Workplace Genres and Professional Writing Strategies

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Foreword: Course Introduction

Welcome to ENGL 417: Written Communication for the Workplace, a course that explores writing genres commonly used in professional workplaces. These genres include various types of correspondence—letters, memos, and emails—as well as reports, proposals, and abstracts (or summaries). As a student in this class, you will study how these written genres are shaped by different workplace rhetorical situations, or contexts. Indeed, knowing the rhetorical context (audience + purpose) of any situation in which information needs to be shared will help you navigate available document formats, and will help you learn to write for similar yet inevitably different workplace situations.

What do we mean by that? Primarily, we want you to be aware that your writing classroom will be filled with students from a variety of majors and minors, some of whom are required to be there and some of whom elect to take the course based on their own educational goals. Because of this, your conversations, activities, and assignments throughout the semester will center on generalized writing skills that can be adapted to any number of particular work environments. This also means that your classroom will not be lecture-based, but skills-based, thus asking you for consistent engagement with, and application of, course concepts.

Course Objectives

Here are the key objectives you will be able to meet as a writer by the end of the semester:

- Identify the audience or audiences of a writing task and analyze their needs, attitudes, expectations, and the rhetorical purpose of the writing task in order to present information accurately and persuasively.
- Produce documents typically required of workplace professionals that meet readers' informational needs and genre expectations (e.g., they are well-organized, acknowledge realistic constraints, credible, current, comprehensive, and accurate).
- Identify a work-related problem or opportunity in order to complete a project that presents results, discussion, and conclusions.
- Gather, analyze, evaluate, and/or synthesize information from print and electronic sources, including workplace documents, to develop writing projects and present and document sources accurately and ethically.
- Integrate visuals, text, and basic principles of document design using appropriate digital technologies.
- Adapt a written text for the purposes of an effective, professional oral presentation.
- Revise and proofread documents for readability, accessibility, ethical presentation, style, tone, and usage.

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