

BCM 1420: Informational Writing Syllabus

Fall 2010

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Office Hours:
M 3:30 – 4:30 pm
T/R 8:30 – 9:15 am
T/R 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course develops the composition skills required of the competent writer in business and professions. Through continued directed practice, students develop competence in analysis, organization, and presentation of information in writing. Students use critical thinking to write for different audiences. This course fulfills the University's Proficiency 1 writing requirement.

KEY OUTCOMES

To complete BCM 1420 successfully, students enrolled in the Haworth College of Business, must achieve a C or better and demonstrate the ability to:

- Apply problem-solving strategies, including analysis of situation and audience, to plan and write essays, research papers, letters, memos, and answers to essay exams, all of which accurately reflect the assignment given.
- Write unified, complete, and coherent messages that reflect purpose and point of view.
- Edit and proofread your written work to ensure correct grammar, spelling, word choice, and sentence clarity.
- Gather data and information using secondary research tools, including the library and the Internet, and personal inquiry through face-to-face or written correspondence.
- Select credible and reliable data and information using analytical and critical reading skills and to use your findings in support of a persuasive stance or point of view.
- Use summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotations of information found in secondary sources and cite these sources ethically and appropriately.

WORK OF THE COURSE

Topics covered in BCM 1420 include:

- Writing to solve problems: understanding the writing context, defining purpose, establishing a definite perspective or point of view, selecting appropriate/valid criteria, planning reader oriented messages, developing appropriate and meaningful content, responding appropriately to the problem given.
- Organizing effectively: using effective three-part structure, thesis and topic sentences and paragraphs, achieving unity and coherence within and between paragraphs; learning and adapting select genres of business writing.
- Writing effectively: using effective words and sentences (style), varying sentence types and structure, choosing words wisely (word choice), and being concise.
- Using the conventions of American English: careful editing beyond spell check and grammar check, expanding punctuation and grammatical repertoire while developing the ability to make grammar and punctuation decisions with knowledge and confidence (essentially knowing which errors you make and where to find them in your handbook to make corrections).

Course work allocation:

80% Substantive written assignments, developed through the use of various mediums, structures, development strategies and organizational patterns, and in and out-of-class exercises.

10% Class contribution (includes attendance)

10% Final Examination

COURSE TEXT AND MATERIALS

- *The DK Handbook*, 2nd edition; Anne Frances Wysocki & Dennis A. Lynch.
- A good dictionary of your choice.
- Access to a computer for utilizing “MyCompLab” and word-processing of all assignments (unless otherwise stated), and for communicating via e-mail
- A portable disk (jump drive, burnable CD, or other electronic media storage device). Work for this course must be kept on a storage device **other than your computer’s hard drive**.
- Activated University computer e-mail account.
- Recommended: 3 ring binder for course materials and multiple colored pens & highlighters.

INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS

- *Academic Integrity*: You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. [The policies can be found at <http://catalog.wmich.edu> under Academic Policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities.] If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test. **Note**: All assignments, unless indicated as collaborative work, must be completed individually.
- *Preparation*: regularly review the assignment calendar; access the course website to check for updates; review previous class notes, and, *prior to class*, complete assigned readings, exercises and/or written assignments. Bring to class each day the textbooks and/or course pack, and any materials distributed in advance or posted on the course website.
- *Class Contribution*: take an active role in your own education and the classroom learning environment through attendance, arriving on time; asking questions; using critical thinking to participate in class discussions and in-class activities; taking notes; meeting assignment deadlines; and seeking out assistance when necessary.
- *Respect*: arrive at class on time and prepared for session activities; turn off and put out of sight cell phones before entering the classroom. [Note: any use of a cell phone in the classroom will be recorded as an absence, resulting in a zero for the day’s exercises/assignments.]
- *Absences*: attendance and participation are imperative for successful completion of this course; missed in-class work may not be made up; **absent students are responsible for contacting classmates (not me) to find out what has been missed and to receive assignment details so that work is turned in on time. Should an illness or injury effect class attendance significantly, contact me promptly.**
- *Assignment details*:
 - written assignments must be word-processed in a **12-point** serif font (such as **Times New Roman** or **Cambria**); spaced appropriately for the type of communication; checked for spelling, punctuation, grammar and typographical errors; include the student’s name and class time; and be stapled before being submitted.
 - Assignments are to be submitted in person by the person expecting credit for it and are due at the beginning of the class period; assignments are considered late if the student is late to class.

- Each student is allowed one late paper during the semester; late papers are due in the BIS office, 3310 Schneider Hall, within 48 hours (not counting Saturday or Sunday) of the original time due. **No late papers will be accepted after November 15th.**
- Keep all course notes, worksheets, exercises, and written work until after the final exam.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND GRADING STANDARDS FOR WRITTEN WORK

BCM 1420 grading practices are designed to encourage, recognize, and develop excellence in written communication. All faculty members who teach this course use the following standards:

- Creative insight into the problem presented. The paper reflects an appropriate awareness of and adaptation to the rhetorical situation (context and purpose), the relationship between writer and reader, and other issues implied by the assignment.
- Content and Development. The paper is accurate, contains quality information appropriate to the needs of the reader, develops the writer's perspective or purpose convincingly, and shows a good sense of "how much" to say.
- Organization. The paper is organized clearly, effectively, and logically to meet reader's needs and the writer's purposes, exhibits correct use of three part structure, shows effective paragraphing, and is held together by the purpose or thesis.
- Style. The paper uses effective sentence structure, appropriate word choice, and appropriate tone for an academic or business context. The paper is clear and coherent, with every word playing a necessary part.
- Editing and Appearance. The paper is grammatically appropriate and free from usage, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors. It is formatted attractively and professionally.

Assignments are graded holistically; grades should be interpreted as follows:

A/BA papers are excellent overall in meeting the standards set by the criteria. At most they have a few minor weaknesses, with BA papers exhibiting more minor weaknesses than an A paper.

B/CB papers are good overall but may exhibit several minor weaknesses in meeting the criteria, or be noticeably weak in one or two areas.

C papers are acceptable overall but exhibit noticeable weaknesses in two or more categories.

CD/D papers are unacceptable. They do not meet criteria in one or more areas. They may have insufficient content or organization; inappropriate tone or style; lack of attention to audience; or excessive grammar, spelling or usage errors.

E papers display extreme weaknesses in several categories.

Numerical equivalents for this scale are as follows (scale determined by whether the faculty member uses a point system or letter grades)

A 93% and above or 4.0 points

BA 88-92% or 3.5 points

B 83-87% or 3.0 points

CB 78-82% or 2.5 points

C 73-77% or 2.0 points

DC 68-72% or 1.5 points

D 63-67% or 1.0 points

E 62% and below or 0.0 points