

BTW 271: Persuasive Writing

Fall 2013 Section F
MW 2:00 - 3:15 pm Davenport Hall 338

Instructor: Erin McQuiston
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3 pm

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Course Description

In this course, you will study principles of written and visual persuasion for business and the professions. This will include letter writing, proposals, advertisements, reports, and other types of writing designed to move readers to action.

This class is designed around a semester-long project that gives you the opportunity to create a campaign for a social issue. You will research a social, political, or service issue, design a specific and detailed campaign plan for that issue, and produce a variety of documents as a part of your campaign. In order to help you with your campaign, we will spend time talking about advocacy, research and argumentation, and we will look at examples from real-world social campaigns.

As in any writing class, this course requires a great deal of reading and writing; expect to produce at least 25-30 pages of written work. You must be prepared to commit to the amount of work necessary to succeed in this course.

Course Objectives

The overall aim of this class is to help you strengthen your communication skills by producing useful and well-researched documents. To this end, your specific goals are to:

- Understand how communication grows out of complex interactions among others, our prior knowledge of what texts are appropriate for specific contexts, intellectual reflection, and our production of effective documents.
- Conduct research in order to produce effective and thoughtful documents.
- Produce a range of documents, including proposals, written reports/research papers, advertisements, letters, and brochures.
- Explore the rhetorical effectiveness of written and visual communication, in the context of varying audiences and purposes.

Course Materials

- Anne Wysocki and Dennis Lynch, *Compose, Design, Advocate* (2nd Edition).
- Portable hard drive or flash drive for large files.
- \$15-30 for printing of portfolio and supplementary readings.
- Supplementary readings available through the class Moodle site.

Attendance

I expect you to be present at each class meeting. However, I will grant you 4 “free” absences. I do not care what you use these absences for. Upon the fifth absence, you will lose 1/3-letter grade off of your final grade for each additional absence. **It is possible to fail the course solely due to absences.** I recommend saving your “free” absences for unexpected situations later in the semester. **If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out from your classmates what you have missed.**

Serious illnesses, death or illness in the family and religious observances are always excused, although I may ask to see documentation.

Class Participation

Simply being present in class will not guarantee success in this course. You will earn 10% of your final grade through in-class assignments, quizzes and homework assignments. In-class assignments and quizzes must be completed in-class on the day they are assigned, and cannot be made up. This means that missing class for any reason hurts your grade.

Classroom Etiquette

- Tardiness is rude and disruptive. Please be considerate and arrive on time.
- Cell phones must be turned off or silenced.
- Food is not allowed (we have a slight raccoon problem). Drinks must be in spill-proof containers.
- While you don't have to agree with your peers in discussion, you do have an obligation to respect their beliefs and opinions, and to engage in debates rather than arguments. Hateful, demeaning or rude comments will not be tolerated.
- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses should be removed during class.

Assignments

You must submit a **hard copy** of each assignment by the due date and time. Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 10 points per late day, including weekends and holidays. If you are having difficulty meeting a deadline, inform me of this at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due; I make exceptions on a case-by-case basis and will require proper documentation.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

In-class Assignments, Homework and Quizzes	10%
Topic Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	15%
Campaign Design Plan	15%
Research Report	20%
Campaign Presentation	15%
Campaign Portfolio	25%

Grading

Below are my general grading guidelines. I use a 100-point scale for all major assignments.

Grade	Points	Criteria
A	95-100	Excellent. Exceeds basic requirements of the assignment. Analysis is sophisticated, convincing and clearly developed. Organization and prose are sophisticated. Flawless.
A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	
B	84-86	Good. Goes beyond basic requirements of the assignment. Analysis extends beyond surface, ideas are beginning to be fleshed out but may need more development. Organization is clear and prose demonstrates facility with language.
B-	80-83	
C+	77-79	
C	74-76	Adequate. Meets the basic requirements of the assignment but analysis and organization are under-developed, and prose is unsatisfactory.
C-	70-73	
D	60-69	Inadequate. Makes some effort at the assignment, but falls far short of expectations.
F	< 60	Egregiously inadequate. In no way meets the basic requirements of the assignment.

Plagiarism

Representing someone else's work as your own is a serious offense, and penalties range from failing an assignment to dismissal from the University. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, buying a paper online, having someone else write it for you, copying from a website, or paraphrasing or copying from any source without giving credit. You are responsible for reading and understanding the definition of plagiarism in the Student Handbook; this information is online at <http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code>.

Email Etiquette

You are welcome to contact me outside of class by email. I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours, or 48 on weekends. Email is a good way to ask shorter questions, but please do not habitually wait to ask by email a clarification question that occurs to you in class. Chances are, other students are confused about the same point. For help with a draft, bring it to my office hours or make an appointment.

Emergency Plan

In the event of an emergency, you will be asked either to exit the building or to go to the basement. Please do so quickly and quietly. Please remain with me and your classmates; you will not be allowed to leave until officially notified by emergency personnel. If you have a physical disability and require help in exiting the building, please see Lauri Harden in the Undergraduate Studies Office (English Building 294) to sign the voluntary register for assistance.

Accommodations

If you have a disability and can benefit from any adjustments to the classroom, please speak with me and contact the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (333-1970).

Grounds for Failing the Course:

- Grades that average below 60/100
- Plagiarism, confirmed by department investigation
- Failure to hand in the final project and/or both portfolios
- Missing more than 9 classes without prior arrangement with the instructor
- Harassment of others in class or online

Lagniappe Card

You may hand in your Lagniappe Card in return for an extra absence OR for an extra 24 hours to complete any take-home assignment. *This excludes quizzes, exams, presentations, or in-class writing exercises.* The deadline for using your Lagniappe Card is Reading Day.

I reserve the right to alter the schedule or vary course material as necessary, including adding or subtracting assignments (before they are assigned) and adjusting the flow of the course based upon what I feel will benefit the needs of the class.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Course Introduction

M Aug 26 Introduction: Persuasion and Advocacy

W Aug 28 Wysocki, "About Written Modes of Communication"
Begin identifying issues/organizations you are considering. Post your final decision to the Moodle forum, so everyone knows what you're doing. I reserve the right to reject topic choices. Finalize your topic before September 9th.

Week 2: Rhetorical Analysis

M Sep 2 Wysocki, “Analyzing Opinion and Editorial Pieces”

W Sep 4 Advocacy Case Study: read Kandaswamy, “Innocent Victims and Brave New Laws”

Week 3: Presenting Your Case

M Sep 9 Word Choice and Connotation

W Sep 11 *Be prepared to present your topic to the class*

Week 4: Researching

M Sep 16 Wysocki, “Researching for Advocacy and Argument”

W Sep 18 Wysocki, “Producing a More Complex Composition,” pgs 111-131 of “About Advocacy and Argument”

Week 5: Conferences

M Sep 23 Conferences: *Formal Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due*

W Sep 25 Conferences: *Formal Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due*

Week 6: Persuasion Case Studies

M Sep 30 Kaufman, “One Simple Trick”

W Oct 2 Bumiller, “We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint”

Week 7: Drafting and Editing

M Oct 7 Draft Day: *bring your report draft to class*

W Oct 9 Editing Case Study
Research Report Due

Week 8: Persuasion and the Principles of Design

M Oct 14 Sturken, “Viewers Make Meaning”

W Oct 16 Wysocki, “Analyzing Posters”

Week 9: Conferences

- M Oct 21 *Bring a detailed outline of your campaign design plan*
- W Oct 23 *Bring a detailed outline of your campaign design plan*

Week 10: Visual Software Workshops

- M Oct 28 In-class workshop with Photoshop
 Campaign Design Plan due
- W Oct 30 In-class workshop with InDesign

Week 11: Advertisements

- M Nov 4 Wysocki, “Intro to Advocacy Ads”
- W Nov 6 TBD

Week 12: Letter Writing

- M Nov 11 Purdue OWL, “Writing the Basic Business Letter”
- W Nov 13 Guadagno and Cialdini, “Persuade him by email, but see her in person”

Week 13: Brochures and Mailings

- M Nov 18 Alred, Brusaw and Oliu, “Brochures”
- W Nov 20 Workshop: Form Letters

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14: Project Labs

- M Dec 2 Conferences
- W Dec 4 Conferences

Week 15: Final Presentations

- M Dec 9 *Be prepared to present to the class*
- W Dec 11 *Be prepared to present to the class*

Portfolio due on or before Friday, December 18 at 4:30 pm.