Syllabus
EN.661.110.06
Professional Communication for Business, Science and Industry
Fall, 2014
(3 credits, W)

Description
This course teaches students to communicate effectively with a wide variety of specialized and non-specialized audiences. Projects include production of resumes, cover letters, proposals, instructions, reports, and other relevant documents. Class emphasizes writing clearly and persuasively, creating appropriate visuals, developing oral presentation skills, working in collaborative groups, giving and receiving feedback, and simulating the real world environment in which most communication occurs. No audits.

Prerequisites
None

Instructor
Professor Jen Bernstein, jberns12@jhu.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays 2-4PM, The Daily Grind (café at the top of the BLC)

Meetings
Monday, Wednesday, 12:00–1:15 pm, Maryland 202

Textbook
Required:
- Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace by Joseph Williams, ISBN: 978-0205830763

Online Resources
Please log in to Blackboard for all materials related to this course.

Course Objectives
(1) Students will improve their ability to write clear, audience-friendly professional and technical documents that communicate effectively and adhere to ethical standards.
(2) Students will learn to produce and refine an array of professional documents including proposals, reports, and correspondence.
(3) Students will learn the importance of effective oral communication in professional settings (and will practice oral presentation skills).
(4) Students will learn about presentation design
(5) Students will learn about the research process and incorporate relevant techniques in course assignments where appropriate.
(6) Students will improve their personal documents (e.g., resume, cover letter, etc.) and skills (e.g., verbal and non-verbal communication during an interview, etc.) needed for seeking employment.
Students will improve their ability to analyze the writing of peers and recommend appropriate revisions.

Students will have opportunities to work in teams to accomplish writing tasks.

Students will approach assignments as if they were on-the-job writing tasks. In other words, they will submit work that is professional in appearance and polished, work that would impress an employer or client.

**Course Topics**

- Basic English grammar and punctuation
- Principles of clear writing
- Professional document formats (i.e., letters, memos, proposals, reports, etc.)
- Public speaking
- Presentation design
- Research process
- Personal documents and skills for seeking employment

**ABET Outcomes**

- Ability to function on multidisciplinary teams (d).
- Understanding of professional and ethical responsibility (f).
- Ability to communicate effectively (g).
- The broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global and societal context (h).
- Recognition of the need for and an ability to engage in life-long learning (i).
- Knowledge of contemporary issues (j).

**Course Expectations & Grading**

This course is designed to give you the communication “survival skills” that are essential for navigating the professional world. So much depends on your ability to write and speak – not just clearly, but persuasively. Accordingly, we will spend the term perfecting those skills via weekly readings and assignments, active class participation, and peer review workshops.

For most assignments in this section of ProfCom, you’re going to pretend that you’ve recently become involved with a foundation whose purpose is to give money to young people who have big ideas to change society for the better. Real organizations like the Skoll Foundation, New Profit, Echoing Green and Ashoka award fellowships to people who want to solve some of the world’s biggest social problems: homelessness, poverty, disease, and human rights violations - to name a few. They call this work social entrepreneurship.

Our fictitious foundation partners with students exclusively at Johns Hopkins University. This program, called The Center for Social Leadership (CSL), seeks to nurture students’ vision to promote social change in their communities – be it in the USA, or abroad. They admit a select group of students to a semester-long fellowship program, which guides students through the process of researching innovative solutions to their problems and figuring out ways to implement them in the community. The fellowship program is a multistage process; each stage requires students to submit a different sort of document/or presentation to advance to the next round. For the most promising projects, they give a grant of $70,000 in seed funding to make the project a reality.

What is the biggest social problem that world citizens face today and what do you intend to do about it? You may address this question from the perspective of your own academic discipline, from an interdisciplinary perspective, from a political perspective or simply from your own personal
perspective, which may combine all of the above. Your final project will include a persuasive, well-researched technical report in response to that question and an oral presentation. With the exception of the resume packet assignment, all other graded assignments in this course will relate to this large project.

**Grading Procedure**

Rocket Pitch and Evaluation Memo (pass/fail) 5%
Resume Packet (pass/fail) 5%
Short Proposal Outlining Technical Report 15%
Technical Report 30%
Final Presentation 15%
Fellowship/Grant Proposal 15%
Participation in Class Discussions and Peer Review 10%
Revised Rocket Pitch and Email (pass/fail) 5%

**Department Attendance Policy**

Attendance is required. You get three (3) unexcused absences – you should reserve them almost exclusively for situations of real illness or other true personal emergencies. Each absence after #3 will result in a ten (10) point deduction from your final grade. On rare occasion, I will excuse a student’s absence with a doctor’s note (but we’re talking the kind of note you get from the hospital – not Health Services, because they don’t give notes). The only other way to get an excused absence is to go through the Dean of Students or Counseling Services (generally for religious observances, extreme personal illness, or a death in the family). Because so much of the work we do is in class, more than one absence over the attendance limit will hurt your grade – regardless of any notes I get from the dean. That said- if you have a truly legitimate explanation please come talk to me!

If you know that you will be absent on a particular day, it is your responsibility to notify me in advance and to obtain class notes and assignments from your peers.

**Paper Policy**

1. If you miss a class during which an assignment is due, it doesn’t mean you get an extension on the paper deadline. If you want full credit, you need to email your assignment to me before the beginning of that class. I will deduct ten (10) points for every day any paper comes to me late (this includes both first and second drafts of papers).

2. If you are scheduled to workshop a paper and fail to email it to the group before the due date, I will deduct three (3) points for every day it comes late.

3. If you miss the workshop in which your own paper is being reviewed, I will deduct ten (10) points from the overall assignment grade.

**Class Participation Policy**

My expectations for class participation include the following:

- You will arrive on time (see the department attendance policy above). Punctuality and regular attendance are non-negotiable.
- You will arrive prepared for class. You will need to have the texts for that day on hand and all assignments completed.
- You will need to be alert. I understand that many of you have very heavy workloads and will be staying up late studying, but we cannot accomplish anything without your full participation, which means you need to be awake. Bring a large cup of coffee to class, or take a power nap right before – whatever it takes!
• On days when we use computers in the classroom – and this happens frequently – please refrain from going on Facebook, or checking your email, or succumbing to any of the other temptations that the internet has created for us. I know it’s difficult but just try.
• You will turn off your cell phone before class. I don’t want to hear any ringers go off in the middle of our discussions, and I certainly don’t want to see you texting.
• Respect each student’s right to express themselves. When someone else is talking, please don’t interrupt. Listen to him or her and try to think about what they are saying. It will help your case when it is your turn to speak.
• Please don’t hold back because you feel that your idea may be unpopular or incorrect. Keep in mind that the study of writing can be a subjective thing at times. The strength of all classroom discussion comes from the diversity of opinions within the group.

Workshop Policy/Procedure
We will have four (4) major workshops over the course of the semester.

Workshops are classes during which we will spend most of our time discussing students’ written work. Here are some things you should know:
• Everyone is required to sign up for one workshop.
• It is your responsibility to keep track of the date of the workshop you’ve signed up for. I will post a workshop schedule at the beginning of the semester.
• Students signed up to any particular workshop are expected to email copies of their assignment to the entire group the class day it is due to me (your teacher). Failure to do so will result in a deduction of points from the overall assignment grade (see above).
• When you email your assignment to the group, you should email it to the entire list (including my address). This is so I can keep track of any stragglers.
• All students are expected to give thorough comments on all student papers submitted to workshop. These comments should include line edits and a substantial summary comment paragraph assessing each document’s overall strengths and weaknesses. You will use MS Word’s “track changes” feature to do this electronically.
• All students are responsible for emailing their comments back to students at the end of each workshop class.
• If you are absent on a workshop day, you are still expected to comment on student workshop papers. You should submit them to the appropriate students via email. If you are absent for the workshop where your own paper is being reviewed, I will deduct ten (10) points from the overall assignment grade.

Extension Policy
Extensions are available on request. Please submit a written request (hard copy or electronic) for an extension to me at least 72 hours before the final assignment is due.

Help for Non-Native Speakers
The CLE offers free ESL tutoring services to foreign students who need extra help with grammar/mechanics issues in their papers. Denise Link-Farajali and Laura Davis hold regular office hours during the week. You can schedule an appointment with either of them through the CLE’s website. http://eng.jhu.edu/wse/cle/page/esl

Email Policy
I am happy to answer any course-related questions you might have. My email address is listed at the top of this syllabus. Please keep in mind that I am not tethered to my computer – and I don’t check JHU email regularly on my cell phone. I try to respond to student emails within 24-48 hours, but
sometimes I get inundated. Obviously, because of the response time lag, it’s never a good idea to send me an email about the assignment the night before it is due. If you have a last-minute question, try checking the assignment sheet first – or perhaps send out an email to your classmates.

Also, please know that I don’t send out emails to confirm that I’ve received student work. It’s your responsibility to check your inbox/sent mail/spam folder to make sure that your communication has gone through.

Final Folders
You will keep a folder for this course that contains:

- all final drafts of every paper you’ve completed for this course
- comments from your peers (and myself) on those drafts
- copies of all papers you have reviewed for your peers

You will submit this folder to me at the end of the course. I will use it to calculate your final grade. For this reason it is essential that you keep copies of all drafts of your papers that you write in this class. You also need to save copies of the comments you write on your peers’ papers.

Final Exam
There will not be a final exam given during the assigned exam time period. Class will not meet. However there is an assignment due (see Key Dates/Assignment & Readings list below).

Key Dates / Assignments & Readings
The schedule below is subject to change based on our class’s needs, our general progress through the assignments, and other unforeseen circumstances. Any changes made during class will also be announced by course email. That means you are responsible for staying up to date with the schedule by coming to class and checking class communications.

Mon 9/01 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
Wed 9/03 Course Introduction

Mon 9/08 Creating a Persuasive Argument for Social Change
PREP: Read Bornstein, How to Change the World, Chapter 1
PREP: Read Bornstein, How to Change the World, Chapter 11 (Vera Cordeiro)
PREP: Read Bornstein, How to Change the World, Chapter 13 (J.B. Schramm)

Wed 9/10 Public Speaking / Pitches
PREP: Read Bornstein, How to Change the World, Chapter 3 (Fabio Rosa)
PREP: Read Bornstein, How to Change the World, Chapter 17 (Javed Abidi)
PREP: Pick a project that interests you from the Echoing Green web site and come to class prepared to talk about it

Mon 9/15 Rocket Pitches / Grammar Brush-up
PREP: Rocket Pitch due
Wed 9/17 Rocket Pitches / Grammar Brush-up
PREP: Read Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace (Chapter 1)

Mon 9/22 Letters and Memos / Grammar Brush-up
PREP: Read Williams’ Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace (Chapter 2)
PREP: Select a letter from http://www.lettersofnote.com/ and come to class prepared to discuss it
Wed 9/24  LIBRARY DAY
PREP: Come to class having read five significant sources on your topic. You should have the articles with you as you might find it useful to reread them during class. It will be most helpful for you if you come to class with an idea about the gaps in your current research.
PREP: Bring your laptop with you to class!!

MEMO EVALUATING ROCKET PITCH PERFORMANCE DUE BY 11:59PM FRIDAY. PLEASE SEE YOUR EMAIL FOR A LINK TO YOUR VIDEO FOOTAGE!

Mon 9/29  Short Research Proposals / Grammar Brush-up
PREP: Read Williams’ Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace (Chapter 3)
PREP: Read Bornstein, How to Change the World, Chapter 10 (Are They Possessed, Really Possessed, by an Idea?)

Wed 10/01  Differences between Grammar and Style / Passive Voice
PREP: 1st Draft Short Proposal/ Workshop Emails due

Mon 10/06  Workshop Short Research Proposals
PREP: Read and comment on assigned student proposals and come to class prepared to discuss your comments
PREP: Bring your laptop with you to class!!

Wed 10/08  Technical Reports

Mon 10/13  CAREER CENTER DAY!
PREP: Please come to class with five specific questions about your own resume / job application packet

Wed 10/15  Resumes/Interviews/Job Search Etiquette continued
PREP: Read Williams’ Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace (Chapter 4, 5, 6)
PREP: 2nd Draft Short Research Proposal due

Thu 10/16  Classes meet on a Monday schedule
Workshop Resumes
PREP: Read and comment on assigned student resumes and come to class prepared to discuss your comments
PREP: Bring your laptop with you to class!!
PREP: Resume Packet due (note that you don’t get to revise this)

Mon 10/20  Language in Technical Reports
PREP: Read Williams’ Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace (Chapter 7, 8)

Wed 10/22  Intro to Graphic Design
PREP: Read Presentation Zen: Chapters 1-7 (p. 5-207)

Mon 10/27  Presentation Design
PREP: Read Presentation Zen Chapters 8, 9 and 10

Wed 10/29  Individual conferences with your instructor about your Technical Report
PREP: 1st Draft Technical Report/ Workshop emails due

Mon 11/03  Individual conferences with your instructor about your Technical Report

Wed 11/05  Workshop Technical Reports
PREP: Read and comment on assigned Technical Report and come to class prepared to discuss your comments

Mon 11/10  Grant Proposals
**Ethics**

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student affairs and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. You can find more information about university misconduct policies on the web at these sites:

- For undergraduates: [http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/](http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/)
- For graduate students: [http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/graduate-specific-policies/](http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/graduate-specific-policies/)

The two preceding paragraphs summarize what the university has to say about ethics. This is what I have to say about plagiarism, the offense which is most relevant for this course:

Senators have plagiarized, Harvard professors have plagiarized... The internet has made it so easy to plagiarize. It has also made it easy to check student papers for plagiarism. Please, please don’t make me waste time checking for stolen writing and don’t make me fail you for plagiarism or some other ethical violation!

**Students with Disabilities**

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.