En 661.110
Professional Communication for Science, Business, & Industry

Caroline Wilkins     Sec. 08: M, W 10:30 Hodson 211
105 Whitehead Hall     Sec. 09: M, W 1:30 Shriver 5
cwilki18@jhu.edu
Office hours: M & W 12:00-1:00

Required Texts
Style: the Basics of Clarity & Grace by Williams & Colomb (ISBN 978-0205830763)

Presentation Zen by Reynolds (ISBN 978-0321525659)

and/or Harvard Business Review will be made available on-line or handed out in class.

Course Objectives
Throughout your college career, you work on the principals of academic writing, the kind of writing
that helps you succeed in your coursework. The purpose of this course, however, is to teach the writing
skills that are required in the professional world. We will focus on the kind of writing that connects
what you learn at university to life beyond the academy. You will learn techniques that will help you
develop your arguments in interesting and persuasive ways, and you will learn to consider your
audience in ways that will allow you to communicate effectively “across” your discipline to other
experts in your field, as well as “down” your discipline to less experienced readers. You will add
research techniques to your repertoire that will help you find the best information to support your
arguments. You will improve your ability to edit your own writing as well as that of others.

Papers & Grading
There are five major written assignments, as well as numerous minor ones (the homeworks), and an
oral presentation.

We begin by considering what you plan to do this summer, finding a job or an internship for which you
could reasonably apply and pulling together a resume & cover letter, the Job Materials for that
position. We revisit these materials throughout the term. Over the course of the term, we undertake a Revision Exercise, which will require you to work collaboratively to transform a poorly written
document into a useful, sound, attractive one that is actually readable! Four assignments, the Situation Paper, the Annotated Bibliography, the Proposal, and the Presentation, are linked thematically and
require more substantial research. In the Situation Paper, you will make an assertion about an issue in
your field and argue for your take on the situation; often this takes the form of identifying a problem &
explaining that it is, in fact, a problem to a particular audience. In your Proposal Paper you will, then,
present and argue for a solution to the situation that you’ve been considering. Finally, you deliver a Presentation to the class that details the problem and presents your proposal. You will create a
handout and visuals as part of this assignment.

Your grade will be based on the major papers, the written homework, and your participation in class.
The breakdown is:
Annotated Bibliography  10%
Revision Exercise   10%
Situation Paper   15%
Proposal Paper   20%
Oral Presentation   10%
Job Materials     15%
Homework    10%
Overall Participation   10%

All papers and homework must be typed, double-spaced, with margins, fonts, and headings appropriate for the genre & audience. Each paper is due in class on the specified date. Late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each calendar day past the due date. A paper is not considered “turned in” until I have it in my possession. (Emailing me to tell me your paper is in my box, while nice, does not count as turning in your paper.) In general, I do not accept emailed assignments, with a few exceptions which we’ll discuss.

Before most major assignments are due, we will hold a draft workshop in class. Participation in these draft workshops is mandatory. I will not accept your paper without such participation. You must bring a draft that meets the requirements of the assignment to the workshop. That means that it is the appropriate length and represents a substantial amount of work. Do not fail to take this requirement seriously. When you hand in your paper, you also hand in the edited draft. You are graded on the advice and feedback that you give as an editor, too. Taking the editing seriously is part of your grade.

Homework, Quizzes, & Participation
Throughout the semester there will be written homework assigned. The HWs are usually 1-2 page responses to the readings; sometimes they are other types of writing exercises. These are very important not only to the improvement of your writing and thinking, but to your grade as well. HWs are graded on a 3 point scale: check+, check, and check-. A successful reading response begins with careful reading, then having an idea, and then communicating that idea. Do not summarize the readings: not only are summaries dull, but they do not give you the chance to explore your own ideas. Homework counts for 10% of your final grade, as much as some of the major assignments. Taken seriously, the homeworks can boost your overall grade. Be prepared to share your homework with other students: reading one another’s work is one of the ways we improve our own.

Your participation is essential to the success of the class. The best way to have a good class is to do the reading, do some thinking, and try to communicate your ideas and questions to the rest of us. You are expected to put some thought and effort into the reading, writing, and class discussion. You are further expected to turn off all your personal electronics during class.

We might have quizzes periodically to keep the class on its collective toes. They will be extremely easy if you have done the reading, impossible if you have not.

Portfolios
You should keep all your graded work in this class in a folder. While we may not need to look over your entire portfolio at any time, it's a very useful way to gauge your progress in the course. At the end of the semester, a review of the portfolios will show where you've excelled as well as the areas where you will to focus more attention.
Attendance
I take attendance daily. It is your responsibility to keep caught up in class. This class is not lecture-based. Classroom interaction is important because writing is an essentially social activity; remember, this is a course in communication. Absences due to illness or your participation in a university-sponsored event, although allowable, must be documented. Any student who misses 25% of the class, for any reason, will fail. Work missed because of any absence should be made up, and this is always your responsibility; get a classmate’s phone number or email, and find out what you missed. Do not rely on me to fill you in.

Tardiness is also unacceptable. Three tardies equals one absence. You are tardy if you come in after class has begun.

Disability Services
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.

Academic Integrity
The university asks that all professors include this statement:
“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.”

Plagiarism is the deliberate presentation of someone else’s work or words as your own. This can include using other students’ work or assignments, the improper use of print or electronic sources, and unauthorized collaboration. I will refer any suspected violation of the honor system to the Ethics Board. The penalties for plagiarism include a failing grade for the course and possible dismissal from the university. You can borrow from published sources as long as you mention them in the text and give documentation for them. Information that is available over the Internet (whether text or graphics) also needs to be cited. If you have questions about documenting sources, collaboration, or plagiarism, please raise them in class. You may also consult the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” and the Ethics Board web site (www.jhu.edu/ethics).

Calendar of Assignments
Assignments are to be completed by the date indicated. We will go over some of the chapters in the text in class, but not all of them. You are responsible for all the material assigned even if it is not discussed in class. Bring the necessary texts and materials to every class.

M 1/26: Introductions. HW#1, the Career/Goals statement, due.

W 1/28: Read Lessons 1 & 2 in Style. Discussion of rhetorical situation, focusing on ethos and audience.


M 2/9: Read “How to Make Your Own AR-15” (Blackboard); and “Presenting in Today's World” in Presentation Zen (p. 5-25). HW#2 due: a reading response to “How to Make Your Own AR-15.” In class work on Topic Choice Memo.


M 2/16: Read Lessons 3 & 4 in Style; ch. 2 & 3 in Presentation Zen (p. 31-73).

W 2/18: Read “How Texas Inflicts Bad Textbooks on Us” (Blackboard). HW #4: reading response to the article.

M 2/23: Read Lessons 5, 6, & 7 in Style; ch. 4 & 5 (p. 75-117) in Presentation Zen;

W 2/25: Read ch. 6 & 7 (p. 119-179) in Presentation Zen


W 3/4 Situation Papers due. Be prepared to discuss your situations in class and think about what direction you want to take your proposals.


W 3/11: Read “Daddy Track” (on line). HW #5 due: reading response.

M 3/16: No class: spring break

W 3/18: No class: spring break


W 3/25: Read ch. 8, 9, & 10 (p. 185 – the end) in PZ.

M 3/30: Read Lesson 10 in Style and “A Modest Proposal” (Blackboard).

W 4/1: Catch up day. HW#6 due: a short ironic proposal.

M 4/6: 1st draft workshop for Proposal.

W 4/8: 2nd draft workshop for Proposal.

**Friday, 4/10: Proposals due (electronic submission), then go enjoy your weekend! **

M 4/13: Hard copy of Proposal due. Mock presentations in class: bring an outline of what your presentation will cover, including a written plan for the talk, the visuals, and the hand-out (about 2 pg).


M 4/20: Oral presentations.

M 4/27: Oral presentations.

W 4/29: Last class. In-class writing, and general catch up day. Last day to hand in the Revision.

Final note: While our class does not have a formal exam, the last written assignment will be due this date by noon; you will submit it electronically. It will be HW#7, a short reflective essay about the presentations, your own and others'. An assignment sheet will be distributed on Blackboard.