Indiana State University
College of Technology
Department of HRD & Performance Technologies

HRD 340 Writing for the Workplace

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Course description
An advanced course in professional writing, with specific emphasis on forms of writing that are common in the workplace.

Prerequisites
ENG 105 or 107 or 108 or 130, and the successful completion of 48 credits of course work.

Course Objectives
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- demonstrate fluency in the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, and preparing final papers (FS Comp 1);
- demonstrate increasing mastery of the varied elements of writing: thesis, stance, content, organization, sentences, diction, and technical matters (FS Comp 2);
- analyze workplace situations to identify problems and factors relevant to understanding and managing the situations (FS Comp 2);
- write clear, detailed, organized writing samples of varied lengths in a variety of professional formats: correspondence, résumés, training reviews, performance evaluations, and reports (FS Comp 3);
- synthesize and critique material from a variety of print and electronic sources with an emphasis on workplace and professional publications (FS Comp 4 and 5);
- cite sources properly (FS Comp 5);
- discuss and write about critical issues related to the workplace (FS Comp 5 and 6).
- exhibit critical thinking as readers and writers (FS Comp 6);
- prepare written materials that provide compelling arguments and recommendations to real-world situations in the workplace (FS Comp 7);
As a Junior Composition course within the Foundational Studies Program, this course connects many of its goals to the general learning objectives (FSLO) of the Foundational Studies Program. By the conclusion of your Foundational Studies Program at ISU, students will be able to:

- Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems.
- Critically evaluate the ideas of others.
- Apply knowledge and skills within and across the fundamental ways of knowing (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, mathematics, and history).
- Demonstrate an appreciation of human expression through literature and fine and performing arts.
- Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship.
- Demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies.
- Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions.
- Apply principles of physical and emotional health to wellness.
- Express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

Required Textbooks

Assignments
Students will be evaluated on these items:

- Daily Class Participation/Writing 10%
- Quizzes 5%
- Training Recommendation Report 15%
- Short Descriptive paper 10%
- Journal Article Critique 10%
- Résumé with accompanying materials 10%
- Workplace Policy/Procedural Manual 20%
- Final Exam 20%

**All assignments must be typed (double-spaced), completed according to 6th edition APA format, and submitted in class on the due date. Late assignments will receive full credit only when legitimate reasons warrant the lateness. Such arrangements must be made in advance with the instructor.**

Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>94-99</td>
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Attendance and Punctuality
Your attendance and active participation are essential elements of this class. For on-campus students, participation will be evaluated on the times students volunteer information in class and regular class attendance. For online learners, much of the learning will come from shared ideas in Threaded Discussions, Chat, and Emails. Active participation is necessary to build a learning community. Student participation in Threaded Discussions, Emails and in Chat will be graded as follows:

- Student initiates thoughtful discussion.
- Student provides valuable feedback to the seminar.
- Student gives timely input into the seminar.
- Student shows concern for quality of all products and deliverables presented in the seminar.
- Student adds value to the overall learning community

"The Sycamore Standard"
Indiana State University
Students at Indiana State University are expected to accept certain personal responsibilities that constitute the "standard" for behavior in a community of scholars.

As a student at Indiana State University:
I will practice personal and academic integrity; I will commit my energies to the pursuit of truth, learning, and scholarship; I will foster an environment conducive to the personal and academic accomplishment of all students; I will avoid activities that promote bigotry or intolerance; I will choose associations and define my relationships with others based on respect for individual rights and human dignity; I will conduct my life as a student in a manner that brings honor to me and to the University Community; I will discourage actions or behaviors by others that are contrary to these standards.
Adopted by the Indiana State University Student Government Association April 17, 2002

American With Disabilities Act Statement
"Indiana State University seeks to provide effective services and accommodation for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, you are required to register with Disability Support Services at the beginning of the semester. Contact the Director of Student Support Services. The telephone number is 237-2301 and the office is located in Gillum Hall, Room 202A. The Director will ensure that you receive all the additional help that Indiana State offers.

If you will require assistance during an emergency evacuation, notify your instructor immediately. Look for evacuation procedures posted in your classrooms."

Laptop Usage
Laptop Required for Course: Regular Usage: For the purposes of this course, it will be assumed that you are in compliance with the mandatory laptop policy of the University. You will be expected to bring your laptop and be ready to use it for every class period. Usage of the laptop must conform to the provisions of this course as laid out in this syllabus as well as the Code of Student Conduct.
Laptop Required for Course: Irregular Usage: For the purposes of this course it will be assumed that you are in compliance with the mandatory laptop policy of the University. You will be expected to bring your laptop and be ready to use it for those class periods noted (below/above). Usage of the laptop must
conform to the provisions of this course as laid out in this syllabus as well as the Code of Student Conduct.

Laptop Not Required for Course: Usage Permitted: While there will be no assignments or examinations for which the laptop will be used, your use of a laptop is generally permitted as long as such usage remains within the bounds of the Code of Student Conduct and it conforms to the provisions of its use as laid out in this syllabus. There may be occasions where laptop usage is forbidden and if that occurs, failure to comply with this direction will be viewed as a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Laptop Usage Forbidden: While the University has chosen to require laptops of its students, the University also recognizes and respects the right of faculty to conduct their classes as they deem appropriate. In this course, no laptop may be used in class. Failure to comply with this direction is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

**Academic Freedom**

"Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject."

The preceding comes from the American Association of University Professors statement on academic freedom. Though the entire statement speaks to many issues, it is this portion on the conduct of the course that is most relevant. For the purpose of Foundational Studies courses this means that faculty have the right to conduct their class in a fashion they deem appropriate as long as the material presented meets the learning objectives laid out by the entire faculty.


**Course Calendar**

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<th>Overview of Course</th>
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<td>Syllabus Distribution</td>
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<td>Introduction to Professional Writing</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Getting Started: Writing and Your Career</td>
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<td>Writing for the Global Marketplace</td>
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<td>Characteristics of Job-Related Writing</td>
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<td>Ethical Writing in the Workplace</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>The Writing Process at Work</td>
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<td>What Writing is and is not</td>
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<td>Collaborative Writing at Work</td>
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<td>Setting up a Writing Group</td>
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<td>Models for Collaboration</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>A Writer’s Guide to Paragraphs, Sentences, and Words</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Writing Routine Correspondence for the Organization</td>
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<td>Memos</td>
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<td>Emails</td>
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<td>Websites</td>
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<td>Blogs</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Writing Letters</td>
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<td>Letter Formats</td>
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Parts of a Letter
Appearance of Your Letter
Types of Letters
Formulating Your Message
International Correspondence

Week 7
Career Communications
Job Searches
Resume and Letter of Application
Steps to Follow to Get Hired
Accepting or Declining a Job Offer

Week 8
Doing Research on the Job
The Differences Between School and Workplace Research
The Research Process
Note Taking
Documenting Sources

Week 9
Summarizing Information at Work
Contents of a Business Report
Types of Summaries
Abstracts
News Releases

Week 10
Designing Clear Visuals
The Purpose of Visuals
Types of Visuals and Their Purposes
Choosing Effective Visuals
Tables and Figures

Week 11
Designing Successful Documents and Websites
Organizing Information Visually
Characteristics of Effective Design

Week 12
Writing Instructions and Procedures
Why Instructions are Important
The Variety of Instructions
Assessing and Meeting Your Audience’s Needs
Using Visuals Effectively
The Process of Writing Instructions
Writing Procedures for Policies and Regulations

Week 13
Writing Winning Proposals
Characteristics of Proposals
Types of Proposals

Week 14
Writing Effective Short Reports
Types of Short Reports
Protecting Yourself Legally

Week 15
Writing Long Reports
Parts of a Long Report

Week 16
Final Exam
Course Narrative

In the age of digital communication, writing skills are more important than ever. Employees must be able to express themselves without the benefit of facial expression, voice tone, and body language. The message must be clear, easy to read, and concise or other people will stop reading much quicker than they will tune out a boring speaker. Unfortunately, many employees lack the necessary skills to write for the professional workplace, and this reflects negatively on them within their profession and organization. Many of the documents, manuals, and reports produced in the workplace are difficult to understand, a problem that makes the writer, and his/her organization, look less than competent. Understanding and using basic writing strategies such as simplifying language and incorporating prewriting techniques can better ensure that the audience is engaged and that the message is communicated correctly.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), demand for professional writers in almost every field of industry and public life, including high-technology industries, business, government, and non-profit organizations is expected to increase by 17 percent by 2020. Legal, scientific, and technological developments and discoveries will generate demand for people who can interpret technical information for a general audience. Rapid growth and change in the high-technology and electronics industries will result in a greater need for people who can write users' guides, instruction manuals, and training materials in a variety of formats and communicate information clearly to others. This occupation requires workers who are both skilled writers and effective communicators and have knowledge in a specialized subject area.

Organizations are making more material available online often in formats that permit greater scrutiny and comparison of detailed information. The growing complexity of information available online will spur demand for better writers. Professional, scientific, and technical services firms will continue to grow and should be a good source of new jobs even as the occupation finds acceptance in a broader range of industries.

Finally, career communications of all kinds are increasingly being handled online and in text. Applying for a job usually requires several different types of written communication, from filling out an application to writing a cover letter and drafting a resume. Most online job postings require some form of written content, and the quality of this writing often serves as a gatekeeper. Something as simple as a grammatical mistake or use of text-speak in the resume and cover letter might cause an application packet to get moved into the trash folder in favor of many others.

To be best prepared for success in the workplace, students need to start with strong writing skills, then learn how to adapt them for their audience, the changing technology, and employer needs. This course will allow the students to draft multiple forms of writing, write for a variety of audiences, and receive feedback from the instructor. By the end of this semester, students will have a much better understanding of how to plan, write, and revise usable documents for the professional workplace.

References