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T Th 1-2
and by appt.

ENGLISH 308
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

AUGUST

21--Introduction to the course
23--Grading criteria; In-class, Assignment 1

28--Communication; Ober chapter 1
30Audience, aim and purpose; Ober chapter 6

SEPTEMBER

04--Labor Day, No Class
06--Some principles of effective business style; Ober chapter 5; Edit Assignment 2

11--Some principles of effective business style; Ober chapter 4 Audience, Assignment 2
13--Finding and documenting sources

18--Developing effective proposals; Ober chapter 10
20--Developing effective proposals; Ober chapter 11

25--Routine correspondence: direct organization; Ober chapter 7; Edit Assignment 3
27--Collaborative work; Ober, chapter 2; Proposal, Assignment 3

OCTOBER

02--Collaborative memo, In-class, Assignment 4
04--Routine correspondence: indirect organization; Ober chapter 9

09--Routine correspondence: indirect organization; Edit Assignment 5
11--Routine correspondence: persuasive organization; Ober chapter 8; Indirect Message, Assignment 5

16--Introduction to the job search process
18--In-class Persuasive Message, Assignment 6

23--Resumes; Ober chapter 15
25--The cover letter

30--Interviewing; Cover Letter/Resume, Assignment 7

NOVEMBER

01--The professional report: abstracting and the letter of transmittal; Ober chapter 12

06--The professional report: abstracting, headings and organization
08--The professional report; graphics; oral presentations; Ober chapters 13 and 14
10--Last day to withdraw with a W

13--Conferences; Rough Draft of Final Report
15--Conferences

20--Thanksgiving Break
22--Thanksgiving Break

27--Presentations
29--Presentations; Final Report due

DECEMBER

04--Presentations
06--Presentations

The final examination will be given during the regularly scheduled final time, December 12, 2000, from 3:00-5:00 pm. The room will be announced later.

TEXT

Ober, Scott. Contemporary Business Communication, 4th Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

You should also have a good dictionary like the Webster's New World Dictionary, 3rd ed., and a good grammar handbook.

GOALS

Business Communication will help you develop the rhetorical skills necessary for effective business writing. Since business writing, beyond the most formulaic, is essentially persuasive, the main focus of the course will be on successful persuasion. That means that our major emphases will be audience analysis--what can you know about your audience's needs and wants and how can you use that knowledge to communicate more effectively--and on the corporate culture, both formal and informal, in which you communicate on the job. We will also emphasize creating a positive tone, developing a service attitude, and projecting a positive impression.

We will also practice the major types of business communication; format, both on the level of document layout (modified block letters, for example) and on the level of document organization (proposals and reports, for example) will be important. Of course, we will concentrate on professional standards of correctness. But while format and correctness are important, they are less important than the effective communication of your meaning and the effective accomplishment of your aims.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Grades

Six components will make up the final course grade:

- 1) The papers. This component will be composed of the first 6 assigned papers. [45%]
- 2) The job application package. [15%]
- 3) The final report. This will be the major assignment for the semester. The final report must be typed. [20%]
- 4) The oral presentation. [5%]

5) The final examination. [10%]

6) Attendance and participation. [5%]

NOTE: You must turn in the final report and it must be on time to pass the course. If the report is not handed in on time you will receive an F for the course grade. Do not procrastinate.

Attendance

Attendance figures into the final grade. Each class, I will take attendance, even if I do not "call roll." Students who are late for class or who leave early will receive no attendance credit for that day unless they have a legitimate excuse, the problem is not habitual, and they present that excuse to me in a timely manner (i.e. before class if you must leave early or immediately after class if you are late). It is the student's responsibility to discuss the absence with me. The attendance grade will be assigned according to the following scale.

1 = A

2 = B

3 = C

4 = D

NOTE: Students with more than four unexcused absences will fail the course.

Absences will be allowed during the presentations only in exceptional circumstances; since part of the assignment requires you to be an audience for others and to evaluate two colleagues, each absence during presentations will lower your presentation grade (e.g. from a B to a B-)

To excuse an absence, you should submit a brief memo to me explaining the reason for the absence, if possible before the absence.

Please keep in mind that the syllabus is tentative and that you will be responsible for any changes in assignments or due dates that are made whether you are in class or not. It is a good idea to have two or three classmates you can contact if you must miss class.

Papers

All out of class assignments should be produced on computer. Be sure to run the spell check and proof the document carefully to eliminate all errors. All written work should be turned in by class time on the date due. Keep a backup copy of each assignment on disk until the

semester is over. Late assignments will be penalized according to the inconvenience they create unless you have an authorized university excuse (in which case, you should make arrangements with me ahead of time), a documented medical excuse, or a truly compelling reason for missing the deadline. If you have good reason for turning in work late, please submit a brief memo to me before the work is due explaining your reason. NO LATE final reports will be accepted, although early submissions are accepted and encouraged.

All written work should conform to the standards of edited American English. Grammatical and mechanical errors will affect an assignment's grade. Be sure to run the spell check before you submit an assignment and, if you spot an error, correct it.

Papers written out of class should be professional in appearance and should follow the conventional guidelines for formatting. That means that, at a minimum, the papers should:

- be typed
- be numbered and stapled
- be free from errors
- be formatted fully and correctly for the type of document
- be legible
- use standard margins

It is not necessary to include a cover page unless the instructions specifically require one.

All papers submitted for this class are the property of the instructor. I may use a student's paper for class discussion or in the folder of student examples, but in all cases the student's name and any identification will be removed. Papers will not be used for any other purposes unless I receive the student's permission.

NOTE: I will place a file of student examples on reserve in the Oboler Library. Feel free to look at past examples for some helpful hints. Remember, though, that some changes may have been made in the assignment. Always follow the instructions on the assignment sheets you are given in class. (If you have any questions about why things are different on the example, ask me.)

Peer Editing

Assignments 2, 3, and 5 will have required peer editing. For peer editing, you must have a rough draft of the assigned document and must participate actively in the editing session. If you do not participate in peer editing you will be penalized one grade (e.g. from a B to a B-).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, representing another's work in part or in whole as your own, will result in an F for the paper. In more serious cases, plagiarism may result in an F for the course and/or disciplinary action.

Folders

Keep all of your written work in a standard manila folder. Hand in these folders, including all old work, each time you submit an assignment. The folders will be collected at the end of the semester. If you come in for a conference, please bring your folder with you. Students who wish to keep their old assignments may pick up their folder any time during the following semester. In addition, keep a copy of all old work on computer disk until the semester is over.

If you have a diagnosed disability, or if you believe that you have a disability that might require "reasonable accommodations" in this course, please contact the Director of the ADA and Disabilities Resource Center, Graveley Hall, 236-3599.
