

GUIDELINES FOR ENGLISH 308

- 308 Business Communications 3 credits. An advanced course in conventions of business communications, emphasizing purpose and audience. Focus on style, semantics, research skills, format, persuasion, and critical analysis and synthesis of data.
Prerequisite: English 201 and completion of 60 credits.

The goal of English 308 is to provide students with the skills they need to communicate successfully in the workplace. To accomplish this goal, the course will teach students the rhetorical skills necessary for effective professional communication and the stylistic conventions of contemporary business writing. The course will also give students experience designing documents for a variety of common communication tasks that they are likely to face on the job.

Skills that students are expected to bring to English 308

- A. Basic skills in rhetoric outlined in the English 101 Guidelines, including choosing and focusing on a subject, organizing multi-paragraph papers, shaping effective paragraphs, and providing readers the information they need to understand a new subject.
- B. Basic understanding of the grammar of English sentences as outlined in the English 101 Guidelines, including the ability to compose grammatically correct sentences in a variety of patterns used in written English.
- C. Mastery of the conventions of standard edited English, including conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and manuscript form.
- D. Ability to choose and to present relevant evidence and arguments; see the English 201 Guidelines.
- E. Mastery of basic library research techniques as presented in English 201.
- F. Understanding what constitutes plagiarism and students' responsibility for doing their own work.

Aims of English 308

- A. To review the conventions of standard edited English and to improve students' abilities to write standard edited English free from the errors most likely to detract from professional writing.
- B. To give students the skills for defining the professional audience they are likely to encounter and the skills for adapting documents to meet audience needs. Students will be introduced to contexts involving multiple audiences.

- C. To teach students to define clearly the objectives and aims of their documents in a variety of rhetorical situations.
- D. To introduce students to the importance of tone in professional communication.
- E. To teach students the stylistic conventions of contemporary business English (the 7 C's or current readability criteria), including the importance of eliminating sexist language from professional documents.
- F. To introduce students to standard business communication formats (such as the memo, the full-block letter, and the simplified letter) and standard business communications tasks (such as neutral news messages, persuasive messages, and collection letters).
- G. To introduce students to the major steps in the job search process, including company research, resume and cover letter preparation, interviewing, and follow-ups.
- H. To provide students with experience in collaborative work similar to that they will encounter on the job.
- I. To review effective research skills, to introduce students to tools for professional research in business, and to provide students with experience using professional journals in their fields.
- J. To teach students the major components of a professional report (such as the abstract and letter of transmittal) and the effective use of heading in longer documents.
- K. To introduce students to the rhetorical use of visual aids and the ways to incorporate those visuals effectively into documents.
- L. To provide students practice in the skills of successful oral presentation as it relates to writing.

Written work of English 308

- A. Students can expect to write the equivalent of 20 typewritten pages.
- B. All out-of-class work must be typed or word-processed; students are strongly encouraged to word process their assignments and to keep all their work on computer disk.
- C. Individual instructors may require that unacceptable work be revised before receiving either credit or a grade.
- D. Instructors may penalize or refuse to accept late work according to the inconvenience it creates.

Attendance and class preparation

- A. Students are required to attend class regularly. Missing more than six meetings of a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class, four meeting of a Tuesday-Thursday class, or two meetings of a once-a-week class may constitute grounds for failure. (Students who register late and miss classes as a result must assume that further absences may be possible only for illness or verifiable emergencies, with limits established at the discretion of the instructor.)
- B. Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in the discussions and writing exercises so essential to a course on written composition.
- C. Written work must be turned in on time. Instructors may lower the grade on any assignment turned in late, or they may decline to give credit for the assignment.
- D. Instructors should schedule at least one mandatory conference with each student. Students are also encouraged to confer with their instructors as need arises.
- E. Instructors are not expected to spend either class time or conference time on writing problems proper to earlier courses in the composition sequence.

Uses of the Academic Skills Center

While enrolled in English 308, students are encouraged to seek extra help at the Academic Skills Center.