



## English 210

Workplace Writing  
MWF in HOPW 003  
Spring, 2011

Dr. Chidsey Dickson  
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Email works best:  
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edu  
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11-12 & 2-3:15

### Required Materials

Porter, et al. *Professional Writing Online 3.0* (purchase license at bookstore)  
Shipley, et al. *SEND: The Essential Guide to Email*  
Notebook (something to take notes in)

### Course Description

Rejecting the cliché that workplace writing is mindless drudgery, this course takes a "rhetorical" approach to technical and business writing. Writing well is really about creating "useable" documents for particular audiences. Thus, good writing in the workplace is not simply writing that is "correct." It is writing that is well-designed. Your readers (or users) do not have to work hard to understand what they need from your document and how to get it.

To simulate the creation of texts for technical and business environments, I will provide you with scenarios that describe complex situations for which you will plan, draft and revise a number of reports, memos, proposals, etc.

### Grades

|                                                                                                                                                |     |
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| Class Participation (attendance, note-taking in class, class preparedness, short exercises, discussion, enthusiastic group work, quizzes, etc) | 30% |
| Projects (some will come from Porter, others from Collier)                                                                                     | 60% |
| Final Exam                                                                                                                                     | 10% |

To get an A in the class you:

- Prepare fully for every class—do the daily reading/writing/blogging. Being "prepared" for class also means being ready and able to help the whole class or your small group engage with the material for the day. Slouching down in your seat, hood-or-iPod-earpiece-wearing, coming late to class, sleeping, eating or head-on-desk "resting": all indicate a lack of engagement. Basically, one slouch, tardy, or nibble per month is acceptable. Beyond that, it will "hurt your grade."
- Engage with the professor and other students in class—this means listening attentively to what others are saying and connecting it with your own experience and the previous work we've done in the semester. Don't hog the stage but don't sit back and let others keep the ball rolling.

- Turn in all assignments on time (exceptions can be negotiated as they arise, but must involve good reasoning; talk to me *before* the due date) and meet or exceed all the goals (see assignment description and grading criteria)
- Miss no more than three classes (extreme exceptions can be dealt with on an individual basis).

### **Attendance/Class Behavior**

- More than three unexcused absences from class indicates that, regardless of your writing ability or performance, you are not really invested in the course. After three absences, I might ask to speak to you about what's hindering your full engagement (problems with workload, difficulty of assignments, etc.). **Students who have six or more absences automatically fail the class.** Since the class is only 50 minutes long (5 minutes of which is taken up with roll-taking and announcements), being on time is absolutely necessary. If you are chronically late, I will have to begin to count each lateness as one half an absence.
- **No food is allowed in class but you can bring a drink if there is a top.**
- Use the restroom before you come to class, but if you need to go, you don't need to ask permission—just be quiet as you leave and return. Also, sometimes during the middle of class you just need to stretch your legs and take a deep breath—if you can do this quietly I have no problem with it.

### **Missed Classes**

Due to sickness, athletic events, family problems, etc., you will probably miss one or two classes during the semester. There's no need to notify me if that's all you miss. **It is your responsibility, though, to have contact information for another person** in the class (email and phone number) so that if you do miss a class *you* can find out what you missed, possible changes to the syllabus, etc.. More than three unexcused absences results in a drop in your semester grade by ½ letter grade.

### **Picking Up Work After an Absence**

If you are absent on the day I return a hardcopy of your work, you can pick it up later outside my office door. If you leave your work there for weeks and weeks, it will indicate to me a lack of interest in improving your work (see "Participation Grade").

### **Class Preparedness and Late Assignments**

Late assignments are penalized a half a letter grade for every day they are late. My feedback to your work will be prompt if it is turned in on time, but if you turn something in late, I cannot promise that I will have time to turn your work around as quickly. It may be 4-7 days before I have time to respond.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious act of intellectual theft and will not be tolerated. All language and ideas you deploy in formal projects that you derive from sources must be credited. We will discuss the MLA guidelines for incorporating and documenting sources. As far as CW posts go, you are on your honor not to read your peers' posts and merely paraphrase what they say. If I see that this is a problem, I will speak to you individually. If the problem is not addressed, I may choose to turn

off your ability to see your peers' posts, which disrupts part of the point of the electronic forum: seeing what others have to say.

### What to Bring to Class (this is part of your "Participation Grade")

- Notebook and pen
- A folder containing any work (drafts, notes, etc.) from the writing project you're working on

### Writing Center (Hopwood 04)

All writers can benefit from discussing their work with another interested writer; hence, the individual attention provided by the Writing Center tutors is a helpful resource for all students in ENGL 111-112. You should decide at what point in your writing process discussion with a tutor would be most helpful:

- invention and focusing your document in the early stages
- developing and organizing ideas in the rough draft
- integrating and documenting sources (when applicable)
- editing and proofreading before a final draft

### Schedule of Assignments

|     | M                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | W                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | F                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan | 17 What is <i>clarity</i> in writing?<br>Ppt for class:<br><a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/711/1/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/711/1/</a>                                                                                                                                               | 19 Read up on the following:<br>1. rhetorical awareness:<br><a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/624/01/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/624/01/</a><br>2. conciseness<br><a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/1/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/1/</a><br>3. "Paramedic method" for revising prose:<br><a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/635/1/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/635/1/</a><br>4. nominalization and metadiscourse (handout)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Take notes in your notebook and be prepared to answer questions in class. | 21 On the PWO website, log on and click tab for PRINCIPLES. Read: "The Rhetoric of Prof. Writing" & "Understanding Readers." Take notes in your notebook and be prepared to answer questions in class. Also, <b>do the exercises here:</b> <a href="http://www.sfu.ca/~whitmore/style/conciseness_01.htm">http://www.sfu.ca/~whitmore/style/conciseness_01.htm</a> |
|     | 24 Go PWO and to "Documents" and read about the memo. In particular, look closely at the template and examples. <b>Due Exercise One:</b> Analyzing Metaphor (handout). Write a memo to me that explains what you discovered. Upload to Moodle before coming to class. [Note: I will not grade Exercises. You get credit or | 26 <b>Due: Exercise Two:</b> Analyzing Metaphor (handout) and write me another memo. Upload to Moodle before class.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 28 Go to PWO and to the tab for Projects. <b>Due:</b> Scroll down until you find the exercise, "List Exercise." Call it Exercise Three. Also: Review your class notes on clarity and conciseness. Prepare for a quiz.                                                                                                                                              |

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|     | you do not. I will email you if you do not get credit]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|     | 31 Read Projects: <b><i>Air Bag Project</i></b> (including Customer Complaint Letter and Vanguard Response Letter); Principles: Building Arguments, Shaping Text, Writing Instructional Texts. & Analyzing Writing Situations <b>Due:</b> Worksheets from Principles: Analyzing Writing Situations on Elements of Your Writing Situation and Document Plan Worksheet for <b><i>Air Bag Project</i></b> | 2 Re-read: Principles: Understanding Readers. Work on Draft.                                                                                                                                                                           | 4 <b>Due:</b> Draft of Air Bag Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Feb | 7 In PWO's Principles read Designing and Writing Instructions. [I will return your first draft of Air Bag Project. If you want, meet with me in Office Hours on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday]                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 9 <b>Due:</b> Exercise Four (upload to moodle)                                                                                                                                                                                         | 11 Read the <b>Air Midwest Case</b> (find under PROJECTS tab). Read Documents/ Reports: "Rhetoric of Report Writing" & "Rhetoric of the Memo." Answer all the questions listed in the case description, but elaborate on two you feel most important. |
|     | 14 <b>Due:</b> Revision of Air Bag Project. <b>Due:</b> Draft of Memo & White Paper for Air Midwest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 16 Go to PWO Principles Constructing Visuals. <b>Due:</b> do the Exercises after reading the analysis of what certain graphics should provide. We'll call your analysis "Exercise Five." Upload to Moodle. [I will return your drafts] | 18 Read Wiki Project (handout). Go to PWO's Principles and read about Research, Style/Editing, & (under Managing Projects) Collaboration and Team Writing. Plan your group's project.                                                                 |
|     | 21 <b>Due:</b> Revision of Air Midwest. <b>Due:</b> your part of the Wiki proposal.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 23 <b>Due:</b> Proposal for Wiki (emailed to me Tuesday night by 8pm).                                                                                                                                                                 | 25 <b>Due:</b> Your part of the writing for the wiki. Bring two copies (one for your group, one for me). [Note: Please purchase a mic at Best Buy or Target. They are less than \$20]                                                                 |
| Mar | 28 <b>Due:</b> The Wiki project In-class: Alissa Harrington will demo screencasting software to prepare you to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2 Read under Principles Designing and Writing Instructions & under Projects Screencasting. Also take a look at                                                                                                                         | 4 Lab workday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|  | create your own screencast tutorial (possible subjects: How to create a brochure in MS Publisher; How to convert a document to a PDF; How to unfriend people on Facebook; How to deactivate your Facebook.). | this example:<br><a href="http://www.screencastcentral.com/public/767.cfm">http://www.screencastcentral.com/public/767.cfm</a> |  |
|  | <b>SPRING BREAK</b> (note: if you have time, you might read <i>How We Decide</i> or <i>Sexing the Cherry</i> )                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                |  |

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| Mar | 14 In class, we'll talk about SEND. We'll discuss PROTOCOL vs. ETHICS. You'll get started on Exercise 5 (see below).                  | 16 <b>Due: Exercise 5:</b> Memo to Senior Class on 5 or 10 most valuable things you learned from SEND. Consider your audience: how should you get their attention, and hold it? | 18 <b>Due:</b> Revised Wiki & Research for Exercise 6                                                                                           |
|     | 21 <b>Due:</b> Exercise 6. In class, we will interview someone about privacy issues in the workplace. You will begin your research.   | 23 <b>Due:</b> 3-4 pages of notes from research on Exercise 7. Bring them to class! (hard copy)                                                                                 | 25 <b>Due:</b> Exercise 7 & research and at least 2 pages of writing (script and/or audience analysis) for the Screencast project (Exercise 8). |
|     | 28 <b>Due:</b> Script (for 1, 2 or 3 screencasts; the # will depend on how complex they are; the goal is for a total of 5-8 minutes). | 30 Work on screencasts.                                                                                                                                                         | <b>April 1 Due:</b> Screencasts. Upload to Moodle. Send me a Memo (see bottom of page).                                                         |

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|  | <p>4 Clyde Harkrader and Jennifer Ervin (two former LC English Majors) will be in class today to answer questions about how they got jobs.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Class does meet today. I will be gone to a conference in Atlanta for this week.</p> | <p>6 Prepare for Writing Projects 3 &amp; 4. Read the assignments and do some initial brainstorming about audience/purpose/design.</p> <p><b>Note</b> Class does <i>not</i> meet on this day.</p> | <p>8 Alissa Harrington will give you instruction in Excel.</p> <p><b>Note</b> Class does meet today.</p> |
|  | <p>11 <b>Due:</b> WP3: 2-3 pages of analysis and a first try on converting the numerical data to visual information.</p>                                                                                                                           | <p>13 Continue to work on WP3.</p>                                                                                                                                                                | <p>15 <b>Due:</b> WP3</p>                                                                                |
|  | <p>18 <b>Due:</b> WP4: 2-3 pages of analysis and a plan for converting the numerical data into the three charts.</p>                                                                                                                               | <p>20 Continue to work on WP4</p>                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>22 <b>Due:</b> WP4</p>                                                                                |
|  | <p>25 TBA (Possibly, you'll be doing a prez or PPT presentation)</p>                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>27 TBA</p>                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>29 TBA</p> <hr/> <p>May 2<br/>Final Exam</p>                                                          |

#### □ **Exercise Five: Memo to Senior Class**

Summarize the 5 - 10 most valuable things you learned from SEND. Consider your audience: how should you get their attention, and hold it? What can do besides give them a straight-up summary? Perhaps begin by asking: what would a person first starting out in the workplace NOT know that you learned from SEND? Why wouldn't they know it? What's the "common sense" getting in the way? Could you structure the memo in a way that confronts them with the "logic" behind two sides? That way: they can choose. I would think that would work better than simply TELLING them one more thing. They've had 4 years of that!!!

#### □ **Exercise Six: Uncle/Aunt Meanswell Buttkinski**

You're an uncle/aunt and your nephew/niece is about to join a particular profession: maybe environmental science, counseling, teaching, etc. Instead of giving them a nice pen or briefcase, you decide to do a white paper on some new ethical issues emerging in the field your kin is going.

Do some library research and/or interview someone (probably a LC professor) about ethical issues in a technical or scientific field. Just to start your thinking, you might check out one or both of these websites (taking notes):

- <http://www.businessethics.ca/articles.html>
- <http://www.files.chem.vt.edu/chem-ed/ethics/>

Your purpose in this assignment is to bring to the foreground *new* issues/court cases. For instance, if you were to interview me about the technical field of literary studies, I would say that plagiarism has always been an ethical issue for people in my field but the newest development concerns the ethics of having big PhD and MFA programs (which provide the university with cheap labor) when the market for tenure-track jobs in the Humanities has taken a nose dive.

**Due:** A 250-500 word Letter to your kin; also a cover memo to me. Upload in one file to Moodle.

#### □ **Exercise Seven: Workplace Privacy**

In performing and completing this assignment, you should:

- Learn about the current understanding of the "expectation of privacy" in the workplace
- Learn to make clear, useful recommendations based on your research
- Learn to use and to modify memo structure.

You have recently been hired The Williams Group, a technical writing firm.

Susan Williams, President of the firm, has asked you to write a concise, formal memo regarding e-mail use, Internet use and "the expectation of privacy" in the corporate workplace. As The Williams Group has reached a certain level of growth, the company must codify its communications policies. Williams wants you to perform initial research on the general state of affairs regarding e-mail use, Internet use and the expectation of privacy in

the corporate workplace. Most importantly, you are to develop a working set of recommendations (that may be modified later) for new employees regarding their use of e-mail and the Internet at work. Williams offers a series of questions to get you thinking, but wants you to choose the focus of your memo based on your interests and experience, your research and, ultimately, your recommendations:

- Generally, what do employees assume about their privacy in the workplace?
- What assumptions about privacy do employees typically have about e-mail and Internet use?
- Is e-mail and Internet use typically monitored by private companies or public agencies? If use is monitored, why? Are there specific situations that might trigger monitoring? What are they? How do the technologies work that monitor use? Must employees be notified if they are being monitored?
- What does the United States Constitution say about workplace privacy? What do the courts say? Are there cases pertaining to the use of e-mail and the Internet and the expectation of privacy? What are they?
- Is workplace communication a different concept than, say, communication between individuals? How?
- Do you see a common attitude or set of policies regarding e-mail and Internet use, and the expectation of privacy, that The Williams Group should adapt? What are your recommendations?

**Due:** A 250-500 word memo; a cover memo. Upload in one file to Moodle.

#### □ **Exercise Eight: Screencast Tutorial (Instructions)**

Drawing from the list of possible topics (see earlier email), choose 1-3 topics that new first-year students could use some help with when it comes to navigating the school website. The project will require you to make use of PWO's principles and guidelines for writing instructions.

#### □ **Writing Project 3: Who Takes English 210? Why?**

In performing and completing this assignment, you will learn:

- To create appropriate visuals from numeric data
- To analyze and explain the data so the document meets the needs of the audience.
- To gain a better understanding of document design and graphics.
- To practice writing based on a specific purpose and audience.

First, I will be giving all English majors/minors a survey using some free survey site. The questions:



1. What expository writing courses have you had at LC?
2. Do you consider yourself a creative writer?
3. Are you an English Major/Minor?
4. Do you want to be an English teacher?
5. Do you see yourself as working for a company?
6. Do you think you will look for a job that requires writing skills?
7. Do you think that writing in the context of the business world would be intellectually engaging?
7. Do you enjoy problem-solving activities?
8. What year are you (sophomore, junior, senior)?
9. Are you taking English 210 (Business Writing)? Have you taken it? Plan on taking it?
10. Have you talked to your English Major/Minor advisor about job searches and career options?

Drawing on this data, you will play around with creating Excel pivot chart/tables in ways that might help you answer the following questions:

1. What does this survey tell me about ENGL 210's appeal (who takes it & why; who doesn't & why not) and whether English advisors are giving appropriate course counseling?
2. What actions might be taken on the basis of your findings in #1.

**Deliverables:** You will produce a reader friendly, short report (or handout) that includes the three visuals described above along with a summary and analysis of the data. Your audience is English Department Faculty.

#### □ **Writing Project 4: Visual Reports, A Second Time**

##### Learning Objectives

- To create appropriate visuals from numeric data
- To analyze and explain the data so the document meets the needs of the audience.
- To gain a better understanding of document design and graphics.
- To practice writing based on a specific purpose and audience.

Here's the scenario: Marietta, OH in Washington County is home to the only manganese (Mn) refinery in North America and world's leading producer of Mn alloys for the steel industry with the widest product range on the market producing Mn-based products for applications such as batteries, ferrites, fertilizers and animal feeds. The refinery has been emitting Mn into the Marietta-Parkersburg airshed for over 50 years. Manganese emissions from this point source are the highest in the nation, averaging over 450,000lbs/yr since 1988 (EPA's TRI database, 2000). For over 20 years, this rural, isolated and under served community has expressed great concern about industrial emissions.

A research partnership has developed between the University of Cincinnati, Department of Environmental Health and the community of Marietta, OH. The long-term goal of the partnership is to conduct a scientific study on the effects of Mn exposure in children, since they may be more vulnerable to developmental issues from exposure. A supplemental goal of this project is to educate the citizens of Marietta about air quality and scientific research. A recent survey showed that an overwhelming majority of survey respondents were concerned or very concerned about the quality of the air (89%), while approximately 71% of respondents were ‘very concerned or concerned’ about manganese in their community’s air.

Very few of the Marietta-Parkersburg Metropolitan Area residents know how to locate information about Mn on the EPA “right-to-know” website, navigate through the site, or interpret the information. This town is a community at the foothills of the Appalachian mountains, relatively isolated and with a median family income of \$36,042 ,13.6% of families are below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

Your job is to help them out. You need to create a short informational report that will help the people of Marietta understand, using data, how bad the air really is. You need to use the data from the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) found here

<http://epa.ohio.gov/dapc/tri/reptsdb.aspx>

***Hint:*** The county summaries are helpful!

Your report needs to include 3 functional visuals.

- an historical view of TRI air releases of Mn and Mn compounds over a five-year period (2004-2008) for Washington County
- Washington County’s and the top 4 counties for total air releases for 2008
- Washington County’s and 4 other top producers of Mn and Mn compounds total air release for 2008

Your report needs to include a short summary and a more extensive discussion/analysis of the data in your figures.

**Deliverables:** You will produce reader friendly, short report (or handout) that includes the three visuals described above along with a summary and analysis of the data.

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**Note:** When you are asked to write me a “cover memo,” this is what I want:

### **Cover Memo**

The purpose of the cover memo is to give me insight into your writing process and to direct me how to read your interpretation of the assignment. Using the questions as a

guide please attach a 200- 250- word memo — addressed to me — that responds to the following questions. Feel free to raise other issues not provided by the questions. ***Please be as honest as you can in your responses.*** Your responses will have no bearing on my evaluation.

- Briefly describe your writing process for this assignment. For example, how much time did you spend in the writing process — thinking, researching, reading, writing, reflecting and revising? Do you think the result (your product) reflects the effort (your writing process)? Why or why not?
- In what part of your work do you feel most confident? Why?
- In what parts of the final project do you feel least confident? Why?
- If you could start this assignment over, what changes would you make in your writing process?
- To what things are you particularly interested in having me respond?