

COURSE SYLLABUS

Bus 714 – Elements of Business Writing – Z01 (92804)

SFSU College of Business | College of Extended Learning
Spring 2014 | Jan 27 – May 23 | Wed 6:30-9:15 pm | 6th fl, Rm 674

Greg Christensen | christenseng@smccd.edu | www.gregteach.net

Office: Mondays 5-6 pm by appt. & via email | Office #579

COURSE

Business is about buying and selling – products, ideas, people – and successful buying and selling relies on effective *persuasion*. This means that *good* business is about being persuasive enough so that your target audience will actually *want* the idea or product you’re selling. Perhaps it’s a new tool you’re marketing to a consumer, or a product idea you’re pitching to a design team, or a strategic plan you’re presenting to a board of directors, or your own services to a prospective employer. To succeed in any of these settings, you must have a clear sense of concept, a well-focused set of arguments, and a convincing sales pitch. Closing the deal and delivering your “product” to the consumer requires the confident use of language and a mastery of primary argumentative strategies, written and verbal.

Welcome to Business 714. Reading, writing and speaking are three of the most fundamental processes we engage in to make meaning and communicate with one another in all aspects of our personal and professional lives. This course is designed to review and improve the communicative skills necessary to succeed in a graduate business program like this one, but also to excel in the business world thereafter. In this class you’ll practice various business writing and speaking tasks to reinforce foundation level skills in exposition, argument, research and presentation. The course emphasizes discussion, oral presentation and business writing equally, with very little organized lecture. The goal is to help you improve your ability to think, write and speak and argue coherently and concisely so that you will be well-prepared for further academic study and well-matched to even the most challenging of today’s business climates.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills mastery appropriate to a graduate level business program
2. Demonstrate a critical awareness of your own competencies as you continue to perceive yourself as an accomplished writer, thinker and business scholar engaged in academic discourse in a cross-disciplinary context
3. Write coherent, articulate and well-organized memos, proposals, etc. appropriate to the graduate level based on your study of various business styles and forms of communication
4. Make coherent and cohesive verbal and written argument as befits the business scholar and which support a clear and concise, self-generated thesis position
5. Demonstrate critical reading and research skills in the development of analytical and evaluative responses to important ideas and arguments from multiple points of view

In addition to competence in standard English grammar and usage, your essays and presentation speech should demonstrate a command of a variety of expository strategies appropriate to college and business audiences, and they should also reflect an informed commitment to standard conventions of academic and professional discourse.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Business Communication
Harvard Business Essentials, 2003
ISBN-13: 978-1591391135

Everything's an Argument, 5th ed
Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruskiewicz
Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010
ISBN-13: 978-0312596132

Rules of Thumb, 9th ed
(APA/MLA Documentation Update, spiral bound)
Jay Silverman, Elaine Hughes, Diana Roberts Wienbroer
McGraw-Hill, 2013
ISBN-13: 978-0073405964

***All 3 course texts are required and should be the editions listed above. E-editions may not be substituted for standard print versions (see the Technology section below).**

EVALUATION

BUS 714 is a credit (CR) / no-credit (NC) course. All submitted work is evaluated using a standard A-F grading rubric available on the course website. In order to pass the class and receive a final grade of "Credit," all work must be submitted and you must achieve an average of C or better in **each** of the two main course components ("Coursework" and "Essays & Responses") and in the course overall. See the Grading section below for additional details.

Classes will be a mix of lecture, discussion, and oral and written presentation work. Homework items must be submitted on the day they are due in order to receive credit; late homework assignments will not be accepted for credit and in-class exercises and quizzes cannot be made up if you miss class. I do not give partial credit for partial work – in order to receive credit on homework items, you must complete the entire exercise as assigned, by its due date. Please email me in advance if you plan on missing a day and/or assignment so that we can make sure your work still gets submitted to me on time. Check the course website (gregteach.net) for a detailed schedule of reading and writing assignments.

There will be alternating in-class and take home short writing assignments each week, and I'll assign regular reading from course texts and other sources for which you will be responsible every time we meet. Although this is a reading and writing class, it is still participation-based – I do not lecture for the entire period, and it is not possible to receive a passing grade without doing the reading and then coming prepared to talk about it, write about it, and be tested on it. Please get in the habit of checking the online reading and homework schedules *well before class meets* in order to ensure that you have enough time to complete all items as assigned.

***You will need reliable access to a computer with Internet and printing capabilities in order to succeed in this course as many of the materials needed to pass are only available online.**

FORMATTING

Please see the **Sample Format** sheet on the course website for a detailed explanation of how you should format your written work for this class. For digital submissions, please treat your work exactly as you would standard printed versions. Formatting should follow standard academic conventions: 1 or 1.25 inch margins, single/double-spaced text, standard professional typefaces (e.g. Times New Roman, Ariel, New Century Schoolbook, Calibri), 11 or 12 point font.

ATTENDANCE

Because course instruction is cumulative in nature, missing *any* class will put you at a serious disadvantage because of missed material that I cannot reteach to you. That said, you can miss **one class** without it affecting your grade adversely. After that, your course average will drop the equivalent of a full letter grade for each missed class. Arriving late or leaving early should not happen either, of course. Tardies will be counted as absences if the pattern persists.

PARTICIPATION

Active, verbal participation is vital to your success in the course. To measure your grasp of the material, I have to hear and see you contribute to in-class discussions and exercises on a regular basis. Please note that the classroom should be a safe place for people to voice their thoughts: during discussions and exercises please be sensitive to your classmates. Take care to listen to what they have to say before you respond, and be vigilant that you are not hurtful in your responses to them.

GRADING

Grades are determined from the following components and weighted as shown. Assignments have point values (see below) calculated as percentage scores on a standard 100-point scale (100-90 is an A, 89-80 a B, 79-70 a C, 69-60 a D, and everything below 60 an F). Please hold on to all work that I return to you in case your scores do not match what's in the grade book at the end of the term.

Essays & Responses:	
Rhetorical Analyses (2)	20 pts each
Letters & Memos (3)	20 pts each
Pitch Write-ups (2-3)	20 pts each
Coursework:	
Vocabulary Quizzes	10 pts each (x12)
Reading Quizzes	10 pts each (x3-5)
Vocabulary Logs	10 pts each (x12)
In-class writing practice	5 pts each (3-5)
Informal homework exercises	10 pts each (3-5)
Presentations & Group Work	20 pts each (2-3)

***Both categories above must be passed with an average of "C" (70%) or better and the course overall must be passed with an average of "C" (70%) in order to receive a passing grade of "Credit" for the course. Students who are unable to achieve passing scores in both main course components will receive a grade of "No Credit" and be forced to repeat the course before moving forward to their other coursework at SFSU.**

TECHNOLOGY

Use of personal digital devices (cell phones, iPods, laptops, tablet computers, etc.) is permitted during class. However, since they can tend to be distracting from the classroom experience when used inappropriately, I ask that you refrain from texting, messaging and emailing during class and that you use your devices on the desk areas only. I may ask you to put your devices away for particular exercises and exams as well. I reserve to ban device use in the classroom if I feel the above guidelines are not being followed, so use your devices wisely and smartly in class – please try use them as research tools instead of as learning distractions.

DPRC

Students with verified disabilities have the right to receive reasonable academic accommodations. Those requiring accommodations for a learning or physical disability that may affect their ability to complete course requirements should communicate with me during the first week of the term so that I may adjust course materials or schedules in order to meet individual needs. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is designed to facilitate equal educational opportunities for those who need the added support. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building on the main SFSU campus. They can be accessed by telephone, email, and web here: 415.338.2472 // dprc@sfsu.edu // <http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc/>

PLAGIARISM

The work you submit must be your own. Plagiarism is using another person's words or ideas, either published or unpublished, and passing them off as your own *by not properly citing the original source*. I expect you to periodically use other people's words and ideas in your own work, but I do not want you to steal them.

The most obvious form of plagiarism is copying directly from print or Web-based materials *without using quotation marks* or other appropriate forms of attribution. A less obvious form, but equally as serious, is summarizing or paraphrasing the ideas of an author *without citing that author as the original source*. A third and often overlooked type of plagiarism is *using an editor – a friend, family member, or tutor – beyond a reasonable level (this would included having that person(s) write any portion of your work for you)*. In each of these instances, your work no longer reflects your own knowledge, voice, style, or comprehension of the given material. All paraphrases and quotations must be cited appropriately. If you have questions regarding how to properly cite your sources, ask me, ask a research librarian at our school library, or refer to the appropriate citation source materials on the course website. This site is also an excellent resource for questions regarding source citation: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/index.htm>

There is a zero-tolerance policy in this class with regards to willful acts of cheating and plagiarism: Students caught intentionally engaging in these acts will receive an automatic “F” on the relevant assignment. Subsequent infractions will expose you to a lowered or failing course grade because of failed coursework, and it may also invite further disciplinary measures ranging from a warning to a penalty grade to expulsion from the college, per SFSU standards of student conduct and academic integrity.

DATES

It is your responsibility to be aware critical dates and deadlines throughout the term. Below are a few of the most important. Check our course page for all assignment deadlines.

First day of term:	Mon, Jan 29
Add/Drop deadline:	Fri, Feb 7
CR/NC request option:	Fri, Mar 21
Spring Break – No class:	Mon-Sat, Mar 24-29
Cesar Chavez Day – No class:	Mon, Mar 31
Last day of regular class:	Wed, May 14
Finals Week:	Sat-Fri, May 17-23
Final Exam:	Wed, May 21
Last day of the term:	Fri, May 23