

BUS 714 – Elements of Business Writing

Sections: 02Z (9725) 2-4:45 pm & 01Z (9724) 6:30-9:15 pm THURSDAYS

SFSU College of Business (CoB) | College of Professional & Global Education (CPaGE)

Fall 2024 | Thursday, August 29 – Thursday, December 12

Course Canvas web address: <https://sfsu.instructure.com/courses/46834>

Meeting times:

- **First class meeting in-person** in DTC 513 (160 Spear Street, 5th floor, San Francisco) during the listed class period above for your section. **In-person attendance is required.**
- **After** the first in-person meeting, the class reverts to synchronous **online sessions via Zoom** during the class period listed above for your enrolled section in this virtual room: <https://tinyurl.com/yyoxshu>

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Office hours: Zoom conference by appointment: **Wednesdays** 1-3 pm

Camera required. *This class requires students to share their image and voice via video consistently during synchronous Zoom sessions each week.*

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 rhetorical 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.

** After the first required in-person meeting at the College of Business downtown campus, class will be held exclusively online this semester, through compulsory weekly Zoom sessions during the time frame for your enrolled section. These synchronous sessions will be used for lecture, class discussions and group project work and supported by the course web portal at gregteach.net/SFSU and iLearn for submissions of required assignments. Supplemental offline work will be performed asynchronously via assignments posted on the course webpage. Instructions for how to access each of these sites will be covered in our in-person session in the first week of the term.*

Prerequisites

This is an integrated course for writing skills and principles of business writing and organizational communication for students who have not met the minimum written English proficiency requirement. Course is restricted to graduate Business students in the BUS MSA, MBA, MBA (SB), MSBA, BLMS, or BLSB program. Graduate students in other majors may enroll on a space available basis with the consent of the Faculty Director of Graduate Programs. This course may not be used to meet master's degree ATC requirements. CR/NC grading only.

Objectives

Broadly, this course helps improve students' ability to think, write, and argue coherently and concisely, so that they will be well-prepared for further academic study and well-matched to the needs of today's businesses. Practically, students should be able to effectively plan, produce, and refine convincing written documents. This is broken into three components (below): know the problem/plan, be convincing, and work well in classes, and the real world. Students are expected to experience measurable, substantial individual personal growth in the quality, depth and breadth of writing skills they possess, not necessarily meet an arbitrary "absolute" minimum standard for writing.

Know the problem, and formulate a plan of action

- Understand a problem/prompt/task and develop a plan for responding to it.
- Grasp well, and from the start, the nature of desired deliverables.
- Students act in a problem-centric manner and are driven by a solid understanding of prompts they receive, from both professors and top managers.
- No "faking it." Students are emboldened to inquire regarding intent of words, memes, phrases or idioms they do not comprehend.
- Responses to prompts are on-target/on-topic and identify and directly addresses core issue(s).

Be convincing (3 components)

Critical Thinking:

- Think critically about the validity and appropriateness of sources, evidence, and argumentation.
- Understand what comprises compelling evidence.
- Using critical thinking, logically organize and effectively inform and craft arguments, that employ evidence.
- Know when an opposing view is relevant, and how to respond.

Rhetoric:

- Structure a document in a coherent manner—appropriate to various assignments, business contexts, and diverse audiences.
- Apply business-appropriate written syntax, grammar, and tone in a manner that enhances the persuasiveness of the written work.
- Possess knowledge and skills needed to properly cite and reference all sources.
- Communicate effectively via graphical means, including crafting and editing charts, tables, figures, illustrations, and any other type of visuals. These vehicles should be seamlessly integrated into written material.

Evidence:

- Ability to search for and find relevant evidence and literature, and to use these sources persuasively in arguments.
- Become familiar with primary research, determination of findings, and reporting results in a concise, compelling manner.

Work effectively in classes and the business world

Broadly, students should be able to interact in a responsive and cogent manner with others using written vehicles for expression.

- Possess the skills to critique and edit student's own and others' written work for improved conciseness, style, persuasiveness, and impact.
- Ability to read and extract main messages from others' complex writing.
- Ability to use others' thoughts and ideas in a constructive and appropriate manner (citing/references).
- Be able to function well as a team member when the writing task involves multiple human inputs.
- Ability to create and refine coherent documents (style, content) written by several authors.

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

All 3 course texts and the digital tool are required. The “EDU Plus” version of the Prezi digital tool listed below *should only be purchased in the third week of the course, and it may be canceled after Week 6*. The books should be the e-editions via the Redshelf online book portal listed. Print versions may be substituted and ordered from a book vendor of your choice, but it’s your responsibility to make sure you have your hard copy in time enough to complete each reading and writing assignment when it’s due (due dates for all required assignments will be listed on our gregteach.net/SFSU course portal). *You will need all three titles in order to complete a writing assignment that’s due in the beginning of the second week of class.

Business Communication

Harvard Business Essentials, 2003
EISBN-13: 978-1422131725
<https://tinyurl.com/y54b9jdj>

Everything’s an Argument, 9e

Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz
Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2022
EISBN-13: 978-1-319-24448-4
<https://tinyurl.com/4uh6az3j>

The Business Writer’s Companion, 8e

Gerald J. Alred, Charles T. Brusaw, Walter E. Oliu
Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2019
EISBN-13: 978-1319102821
<https://tinyurl.com/yxc2z9w7>

Prezi “EDU Plus”

https://prezi.com/pricing/edu/?click_source=logged_element&page_location=header&element_text=pricing

Attendance & Participation

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 and peer exchanges that cannot be replicated outside of the course. Arriving late or leaving early should not happen, of course. Lates or early exits will be counted as absences if the pattern persists. You may miss one class without notifying me ahead of time and without it affecting your grade adversely. After that, your course grade will drop the equivalent of a full letter grade for each missed class - and remember that since this class must be passed with an "A" average (see Grading section below), unexcused absences will effectively prevent you from passing this course. All missed work due to absences must be made up in consultation with me.

Active 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 class discussions and exercises on a regular basis. Please note that the classroom (whether virtual or in-person) 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.

Accommodations

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 // <https://access.sfsu.edu/>

Dates

It's your responsibility to be aware of critical dates and deadlines throughout the term. Below are a few of the most important ones. Please check our online course page at gregteach.net for all assignment deadlines.

First day of class	Thursday, August 29
Declared recess (Labor Day)	Monday, September 2
Add/Drop deadline	Monday, September 16
Declared recess (Veteran's Day)	Monday, November 11
Withdraw deadline	Monday, November 11
Declared recess (Thanksgiving)	Monday-Friday, November 25-29
Last day of class	Thursday, December 12
Last day of the term	Friday, December 20

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 a perfect score on everything you submit** (you will be able to take advantage of my liberal revision policy to make sure that happens, not to worry). See the Grading section below for additional details.

The course will be conducted primarily via compulsory synchronous Zoom meetings each week during the period for your assigned class section, but there will also be some asynchronous, offline weeks in which we will not be meeting as a class but you will still be expected to complete coursework and meet with your peers to work on group projects as assigned. Zoom 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 to receive credit. I don't give partial credit for partial work – 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 throughout the term, and I'll assign regular reading from course texts and other sources for which you will be responsible every time we meet. There will also be periodic pop reading quizzes during class. Although this is a reading and writing class, it is still participation-based – I don't lecture for the entire period, and it isn't 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* 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 to succeed in this course as all of the materials needed to pass are accessed online.

Grading

Grades are determined from the following components and valued as shown. This course is not graded on a curve or weighted by item or category. There are no extra credit opportunities in this class. 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) – but these point values are assessed only to help you gauge your relative level of mastery on a given item before revisions. **Ultimately, no assignment will be accepted for final credit with less than a perfect score.** Revision opportunities on most everything in the course will be made available in order to allow you to achieve perfect scores on each item.

All work must be completed satisfactorily in order to pass the course. Instructor feedback is provided on most major writing assignments usually within 2 weeks of submission. In-class writing assignments and quizzes are returned the following week of instruction in most cases. 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.

***All work is required in order to pass the course – no assignments may be skipped.**

Missed work due to absences must be completed satisfactorily in consultation with me. **The course must be passed with an average of “A” (>90%) in order to receive a passing grade of “Credit” for the course.** Students who are unable to achieve passing scores on every assignment will receive a grade of “No Credit.”

Essays & Projects:

Rhetorical Analysis	20 pts
Project Narrative	10 pts
Group Write Analysis	40 pts
Cover Letter	20 pts
Definition Essay (Midterm)	20 pts
Group Proposal	20 pts

Coursework:

Journal Wiki(s)	10 pts each
Reading Quizzes (TBD)	10 pts each

Academic Integrity

Members of our academic community at the college have a responsibility to develop an awareness of academic integrity, to cultivate skills to realize honesty in academic and community work, and to sustain actively academic honor as a core value of our community. The work you submit here in this class must be your own. **Plagiarism** is using another person or machine’s (e.g. AI) words or ideas, 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 include 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.

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 (#S22-298). In addition to attending to one's own actions, the Standards for Student Conduct require that students who witness academic dishonesty notify their faculty/instructor, department chair, or the Office of Student Conduct. Supporting academic integrity enhances the reputation of the University and the value attributed to degrees awarded by the University. Please also note that students may not withdraw from classes in which they have committed academic misconduct per college policy.

For more information, see the College of Business Academic Standards:

<https://cob.sfsu.edu/resources/undergraduate-resources/academic-standards>

A note about artificial intelligence (AI):

There are now many artificial intelligence tools ("AI") available online - you may know of services like **ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly, Quillbot, Easybib, Phrasly, Microsoft Editor**. These are all examples of common open access AI services who offer tools to create writing for you. Some students are now using AI tools to generate discussion and short answer responses along with complete essays for course assignments in place of their own work. The writing

that's generated by these services can be very sophisticated, very specific to the questions one poses to them, and very near to natural speech that you might create on your own in response to an assignment prompt. Although some of you will feel tempted to use these services to help you understand course material or to help you get ideas for how to respond to course prompts, please understand that use of AI services to generate any writing work for this class is no different than having or paying someone else to write your work for you, and it's also no different from using copy/pasted print or online source text in place of your own speech: these are all clear instances of **intentional plagiarism**.

This includes proofreading software that's installed directly onto your computer and embedded in a word processing application like **Microsoft Word** as a "plug in" service to automatically edit and proofread your writing for you such as what **Grammarly** provides for purchase and download. **DO NOT USE THESE PLUG-IN TOOLS** as they will mark your writing as having been created or altered with AI.

So here's the rule:

Any person, service, software application or other tool or entity, real or virtual, online or offline, that is used to create, fix, replace, proofread, edit, correct, or otherwise change in any way writing that you do for this class at any point in any amount is not authorized in this class.

Do not use an AI service to create writing for you. Do not submit your writing to a site, service or person or other entity for proofreading, editing or correction, whether you think it's using AI or not. Do not use a version of Microsoft Word or similar that has embedded grammar scanning services like Grammarly or similar to write or proofread your work for you.

If you use services, applications, people or online tools to create, change or fix writing for you, I will be able to detect it in your work and the work will not be accepted for credit. Use the rules and strategies I teach you in this class to write, edit, and proofread all of your writing work **on your own**.

How do I know it's AI? Online tools exist to scan text and screen it for AI-generated material - these tools, now used by many teachers like me, have an accuracy rate of between 98 and 100%, which means that as long as I use these tools to filter your submitted writing work - and I do - any submitted AI-generated or AI-altered writing will be spotted. Once a given instance of plagiarized speech is identified, I then run another check on all of your submitted work in the class, and any additional instances of plagiarism would be found as well. The consequences for first and subsequent acts of willful plagiarism are outlined above.

Please note once again that this **includes** writing that has been uploaded into an online tool or service for proofreading and grammar correction only. **Proofreading services (like those you find at Grammarly or EasyBib or Microsoft Editor or Easybib, for example) leave a digital footprint when you allow them to correct your work, whether you've used them online or offline - and that makes all of your work appear to have been generated by AI when it's scanned by me.**

AI services are useful in many contexts in our daily lives, but they have no place in this course at any point. Don't use AI tools here, even for help in generating ideas or in scanning your work for sentence level errors, as the temptation will be too great to use that speech in place of your own original writing, a move that will expose you to accusations of willful plagiarism. It is much better to create your own work because then you're not cheating and in any case that's the only way you'll actually grow your own writing skills - which is the reason you're taking this course. Do your own writing and proofreading and don't risk calamity by stealing the work of others or allowing a service to correct your work - AI bots or real people, it doesn't matter - and then advancing it as your own.

Again, all of the writing you submit in this class must either be your own work - from the drafting through the final editing and proofreading phases - or properly cited and attributed work from legitimate sources who are not you and are not AI, period. If you ever have any questions about how to properly use or site sources of any type, ask me and I'll be happy to help you. There are also multiple tutorials in the **Resource Center** module of our course that are specifically put there to help you with your research and citation tasks in this course, so please use those when you have questions about using and citing sources.

College Disclosures

Electronic Privacy & Copyright

SF State students may not capture audio, photos or video from class sessions on their own devices without the explicit permission of the instructor and everyone present, unless part of a DPRC-authorized accommodation.

SF State students also may not post any course materials to any third-party sites (such as Chegg) or post any recordings, screenshots, audio or chat transcripts in any setting outside the class. Violations of these rules are subject to student disciplinary action.

Disclosure of Sexual Violence (SF State Policy S15-257)

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence, including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc

Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu>

For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

Health & Safety Commitments

Your health and safety are our paramount concern at SF State. We ask every member of our campus community to join a pledge to make and follow plans to keep fellow students, faculty, and staff safe and well. Feeling confident, safe and well will help you focus on your academic success. To participate in this class, all students are asked expected to:

- **Stay informed** on the most up-to-date information related to SF State's COVID-19 response and Campus Comeback plan
- **Plan ahead** for possible class disruptions due to COVID-19 or other unexpected events, such as unhealthy air quality caused by smoke
- **Take care of yourself and others** by staying home when you aren't feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, and
- **Follow all required health and safety guidelines**, including verifying your proof of vaccination or exemption status before coming to class; and wearing a multilayered mask over your nose and mouth at all times when indoors on campus; and wash your hands as often as possible (i.e. soap and water, hand sanitizer).

For more information about SF State's response to COVID-19 and how you can keep yourself and others safe and well, visit the Campus Comeback Website (<https://together.sfsu.edu/>). To plan for how you will maintain your academic success when unexpected events disrupt regular teaching and learning activities, follow the information on the course syllabus and consult the Keep Learning guide: (<https://instructionalcontinuity.sfsu.edu/node/12>).

SF State Withdrawal from Courses Policy

The LFCoB will observe the SF State Withdrawal from Courses policy F18-196. Please refer students to this webpage: <https://registrar.sfsu.edu/withdrawal>

LFCoB Student Advising

The student advising team is available from Monday to Friday. Both drop-in and appointment-based advising information can be found cob.sfsu.edu/advising and in person in BUS 112. Contact info is (415) 405-3531 and cobssc@sfsu.edu

Center for Career Services and Professional Development

Please see this link: <http://cob.sfsu.edu/resources/career-services> or contact cobcareer@sfsu.edu, and (415) 338-2509 or stop by BUS 137.

Tutoring and Academic Support Center (TASC)

Tutoring and academic support is available starting the second week of the semester. Students should check the TASC website (<https://tutoring.sfsu.edu/>) for classes, hours, and workshops. Both virtual and in-person services are available by drop in and appointments. Group tutoring is also an option.

Credit Hours Policy (S22-299)

Standard classes require 50-minutes class meeting per unit per week and 100-minute out-of-class-student-work per unit per week. "Supervision courses must satisfy the credit hour requirement of 150 minutes of total academic work (faculty instruction plus out-of-class work) per unit per week for 15 weeks or an equivalent amount of work over a different period of time."

Observance of Religious and Cultural Holidays (SO9-212)

The faculty of San Francisco State University shall accommodate students wishing to observe religious and cultural holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class activities. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that they will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. This policy shall be included in the University Bulletin, appropriate websites, the Faculty Manual, and undergraduate and graduate student handbooks. Faculty are encouraged to include the policy statement in their course syllabi. Students wishing to be excused from class attendance for religious observances must submit a written request to their instructors prior to their absences, as stated in the policy above.