

Media and Communication

COMMS 200: Writing in the Workplace

SEMESTER 2, 2017

Convenor:

Stephen Turner

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Social Science building, rm 538 (201E-538)

Office hours:

Monday 12-1 or by appointment

Lecture:

Thurs: 2-4, Clocktower, rm 029 (105-029)

Tutorials:

Mon 11-12, Arts 1, rm 210 (2016-210)

Thurs 1-2, Arts 1, rm 215 (206-215)

Course description:

Addresses written communication in the workplace across a range of discourses, environments, strategies and audiences. Focusing on different kinds of writing used in contexts such as government, community organisations, consultancy, professions, NGOs and private business, students will analyse and produce key workplace text-types within a critical framework of workplace analysis and scholarship on labour and organisations. By the end of this course students will have developed the ability to distinguish between the main types of workplace writing and to determine their mode, function and role in workplace operations; to produce effective, appropriate and strategic writing across key workplace text-types; to relate the type and function of texts to the contexts of different kinds of work environments; to relate workplace writing to the aims and goals of different kinds of organisations; and will be able to understand the relation of writing and workplace, including the ability to reflect on writing as part of the work.

Learning aims:

By the end of this course students will have developed:

- the ability to produce effective and appropriate writing in the form of key workplace text types;
- the ability to distinguish between the main types of workplace writing and to determine their mode, function and role in workplace operations;

- the ability to analyse a workplace problem or situation, and to construct a case study by way of critical review;
- the ability to work collaboratively in teams to complete a group project;
- familiarity with common presentation tools, and understanding of their use and effects;
- the ability to present material, and to communicate in person, with authority;
- an understanding of the relation of writing and workplace, including the ability to reflect on writing as part of the work operation that it facilitates.

How we proceed:

The course is focused on the development of practical writing skills and their application to the workplace, considered in the context of different kinds of organisation. Each week will involve discussion and demonstration of the workplace text, context or media, including presentation on weekly topics by guest lecturers or speakers, and critical reflection on organisational communication.

The separate one-hour tutorials are workshop-based, and focussed on coursework assignments.

Note: Students are expected to average 10 hours of work (3 hours in class and 7 hours of preparation and independent study) per week for each 15 point paper they are enrolled in.

Prescribed text:

Sky Marsen, *Professional Writing*, 3rd edition (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, Hampshire: New York, 2013)

Recommended text:

Jenny Buxton, Susan Carter and Sean Sturm, *Punc Rocks* (Pearson: Auckland, 2012)

Resources:

write@uni [academic writing]

<https://flexiblelearning.auckland.ac.nz/writeatuni/>

OWL Purdue Online Writing [writing rules]

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/599/01/Pr4snaion>

Texas A and M University Writing Centre [writing and presentation]

<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides>

Weekly topics:

*Further readings and materials will be announced prior to each week's class, and posted on Canvas (under weekly 'modules').

Week 1 (July 27): Introduction to the course
See Matt Abrahams, 'Think fast, talk smart' (Ted talks)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3K_hbpWNpg

Week 2 (August 3): Internal communications (email, memo, letters, minutes, notes)
Marsen, pp.50-75

Week 3 (August 10): External communications (PR copy, customer relations, web page)
With Paula Morris (English and Drama, UoA)
Marsen, pp.135-162

Assignment due (text-types #1 and #2– internal and external communication): Monday, 14 August, 3 pm

Length: 500 words each (1000 words altogether)

Week 4 (August 17): Reports and proposals
Marsen, pp.163-202

Week 5 (August 24): Document design **with Anna Boswell (English and Drama, UoA)**

Week 6 (August 31): Sentence work on workplace texts **with Sean Sturm (CLeaR, UoA)**
Marsen, pp.235-266.

Assignment due (text-evaluation): Friday, 1 September, 3 pm

Length: 1000 words

MID-SEMESTER BREAK Monday, September 4 – Saturday, September 16

Week 7 (September 21): Employability (EOI, CV, resume) **with UoA Career services**
Marsen, appendix

Assignment due (text-type #3 – employability document): Monday, 25 September, 3 pm,
Length: 500 words

Week 8 (September 28): Critical management **with Philip Turner (Fonterra)**
Marsen, pp.202-217

Week 9 (October 5): Content strategy and data analytics **with Jonathan Burgess (Faculty of Arts, Marketing, UoA)**

Assignment due (text-type #4 – publicity): Monday, 9 October, 3 pm Length: 500 words

Week 10 (October 12): Teamwork **with Gavin Northey (Business school, UoA)**
Marsen, pp.218-234

Week 11 (October 19): About presentations **with Helen Sword (CleaR, UoA)**

Week 12 (October 26): Group presentations

Assignment due (report): Wednesday, 1 November, 3 pm Length: 2000 words

Coursework:

Text practice (500 words each = 2000 words total) 4 x 10% = 40%

Text-types #1 and #2 (internal and external comm.)	Due: Monday, 14 August, 3 pm
Text-type #3 (employability document)	Due: Monday, 25 September, 3 pm
Text-type #4 (publicity)	Due: Monday, 9 October, 3 pm

An exercise that involves practice in writing different types of work documents, in different types of organisations, according to imaginary work scenarios.

Text-evaluation (1000 words) 20% **Due: Friday, 1 September, 3 pm**

A critical response to a workplace document, involving summary, analysis and discussion.

Case study (2000 words) 40% **Due: Wednesday, 1 November, 3 pm**
= group written report 20%
self-evaluation 10%
role in group presentation 10%

A case study or critical review of an organisational situation, identifying underlying issues, with analysis of an organisational problem within a theoretical framework, and recommendations or implementation.

Detailed instruction and criteria for each assignment will be provided during the course.

Turnitin:

All coursework should be submitted through **Canvas-turnitin under the relevant assignment**. You cannot submit assignments to a GTA or lecturer. Failure to present your coursework appropriately will lose you marks. Assignments not submitted to Turnitin via Canvas by the deadline will not be given a mark and will not count towards your final grade.

Plagiarism:

All cases of plagiarism will be brought before a Disciplinary Committee. Plagiarism is committed when you fail to indicate clearly your use of other people's ideas, facts, research, information, etc.

Learning the conventions of citing source material is an important academic skill that enables you to use other people's ideas to support your own argument, or use them as a base from which to pitch your own counter-argument.

By submitting your coursework electronically, you are effectively declaring that your work is not plagiarized. Plagiarism is failure to properly and clearly acknowledge those words or ideas within your own work that are not your own. **Plagiarism is regarded as a serious form of cheating and will result in a deduction of marks and possibly even a mark of zero for the assignment.**

The work that a student submits for grading must be the student's own work, reflecting his or her learning. Where work from other sources is used, it must be properly acknowledged and referenced. This requirement also applies to sources on the world-wide web.

Note: Turnitin is the plagiarism software. It will not only pick up all cases of plagiarism in your paper, but it will also pick up sentences and paragraphs that you may have used in your own previous work. Please avoid repeating your arguments in the same words.

Deadlines:

- In circumstances such as illness you may seek an extension but you will require a doctor's certificate.

Extensions must be personally negotiated with your instructor **at least two days** before the assignment is due. Extensions must be registered with the course convenor, preferably in person and confirmed by email.

Once you submit, you will need to place a note with your work, which specifies exactly the date the extension was granted, the new submission date and who granted the extension.

Late assignments:

- Will be penalised *one mark per day*. This includes each day of the weekend.
- An assignment handed in after the marked assignments have been returned to students but before the end of the teaching semester will *not* be marked. However, it may be used for consideration of a final grade.

Aegrotat and compassionate consideration:

Information regarding the granting of aegrotat pass or compassionate consideration of grades is contained in the University Calendar under 'Examination Regulations'. Applications are not usually granted unless the student has completed all pieces of coursework and passed them with a C+ or higher. You must contact the Examinations Office (not the FTVMS Department) if you need to apply for an aegrotat pass.

Academic support services:

UoA provides a range of resources to support students towards achieving their academic potential. These resources are not restricted to assisting students who are encountering difficulties in their studies. To access information about the range of academic and learning support services at the University, please visit:

<http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoahome/for/current-students/cs-student-support-and-services/csacademic-and-learning-support>

Student Learning Centre web site: <http://www.auckland.ac.nz/slc> ELE (English Language Enrichment) website: <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/e/ele/>