

Instructor: Ryan Leack  
Email: rleack@gmail.com  
Office: 24-112  
Office Hours: TTh 3:00-4:30

Course: English 301, Section 01  
Class Number: 13990  
Room: 5-136  
Time: TTh 1:00-2:50

### **English 301 “Writing for the Professions”**

When we think of writing, many of us think of creative writing, academic writing, or non-fiction books or articles written by serious authors who have devoted their lives to this craft. This type of writing is written for publication, possibly for payment, and is associated with art, intellectual activity, and the life of the mind. However, this writing is actually a very small subset of the writing that goes on every day. Most writing serves business and legal purposes, is done quickly with very short deadlines, and has fairly immediate use and consequences. While we tend to place more value on the first type of writing, the second, more common type of writing, requires almost equal skill and sensitivity to audience. Good writing makes things happen in the world for companies, governments, and individuals. This course is about this second realm of writing, the everyday, workplace writing that makes things happen.

#### **Course Outcomes**

Students will learn to

- Write and revise reader-centered documents of various types and genres for different purposes;
- Analyze documents of different types in terms of purpose, audience, format, and rhetorical effectiveness;
- Use language and style appropriate for specific audiences;
- Produce documents that perform their intended function in a clear and concise manner;
- Research problems and possible solutions, gather information, and present the results in a way that facilitates decision-making;
- Use images, charts, and graphs to create interest and to present information effectively;
- Utilize and adapt reading, writing and researching skills developed in the academic major to other rhetorical situations and purposes;
- Proofread documents to ensure that grammatical errors and mechanical problems do not inhibit communication.

#### **Required Reading**

Markel, Mike. *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* (1<sup>st</sup> Edition). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013.

The ISBN number is 978-1-4576-0940-4

#### **Online Tools**

Although this is not an online course, many of the tools and texts we will use are online. You will need regular access to a computer with an internet connection.

#### **The Blackboard Site**

Most handouts, discussion questions, and other course materials will be posted to “Course Documents” on the Blackboard site, so it will be important to check it a couple of times a week. Links to web-based tools and documents will be posted to the “Online Resources” space on Blackboard. You will also upload most assignments to Blackboard for grading. Although almost any file can be uploaded, it will not be possible to

provide in-text comments in documents that are not in the MSWord .doc or .docx formats. Most word processing programs can save in the .doc format if you choose “Save As.”

**Personal Blog**

I have created an individual blog on Blackboard called “Problems at the Office.” First, you will fill out a sheet describing the company or workplace, the correspondents, and the problem they are trying to solve or cover up. The problem could be a realistic one or an imaginary fantastic one. You will write an entry using whatever genre we are studying at that time. Have fun with it! After you post, visit the blog sites of other students and comment on at least one post.

**Attendance**

Although this course has an online component, this is not an online class. Attendance and participation are essential. If you must miss class, contact me through phone or email and make arrangements to make up the work. You have three absences for any occasion, including emergencies. Fourth and subsequent absences will result in eternal damnation—or 10% off your final course grade per absence.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Points</b>
In-class Participation	10
Application Letter and Resume	30
Rhetorical Analysis Paper	40
Recommendation Report	50
Multi-modal Presentation (based on Recommendation Report)	30
Office Blog (A weekly bog post on Blackboard consisting of an email, memo, or letter related to an ongoing situation or problem in the fictional workplace you imagined. After you post, comment on at least one other student’s post.)	40
Letters, Emails, Memos, Charts	50
Team Project: Event Flier	20
In-class Quizzes and Quickwrites	30
Total	300

**Academic Integrity**

Turning in work that uses words or ideas from sources but without documentation may constitute **plagiarism**. See the “Academic Integrity” page on the Cal Poly website:

<http://www.cpp.edu/~judicialaffairs/academic-integrity-resources/academic-integrity.shtml>

Late papers will be accepted but the grade will suffer in consequence.

**Grading Scale for 300 Points**

A	278-300	C	218-229
A-	269-277	C-	209-217
B+	260-268	D+	200-208
B	248-259	D	188-199
B-	239-247	D-	179-187
C+	230-238	F	178 or less

**Schedule of Assignments and Readings**

Note: This is a workshop-style writing course so the schedule of readings and assignments is only tentative. Handouts will be available on Blackboard in "Course Documents." Other materials are available on the Internet and can be accessed through "Online Resources" in Blackboard or by pasting the URL into your browser.

**Accommodations**

Please see me regarding academic support and instructional accommodation for any special needs you may have.

## Course Calendar

*This syllabus is tentative and may change based on the needs of the class.  
Please check your CPP email every day to remain current.*

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics, Assignments, and Activities</u>
<b>Wk1</b>	
Tu. 1/2	Review syllabus, “Basic Business Letter,” and “Time Management” handouts.
Th. 1/4	Read Chapter 1 “Introduction to Technical Communication” in Markel. Discuss “Business Correspondence Epistolary Blog” (Handout in “Assignments on Blackboard”).
<b>Wk2</b>	
Tu. 1/9	Read Chapter 2, “Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations” in Markel. Discuss Rhetorical Analysis Assignment. Read documents from the Toyota unintended acceleration case.
Th. 1/11	Read Chapter 4, “Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose” in Markel (Note that we have temporarily skipped Chapter 3). Read “Document Analysis Checklist” (Handout in “Course Documents/Handouts”).
<b>Wk3</b>	
Tu. 1/16	Read Chapter 9 “Writing Correspondence” in Markel. Read “Email Guidelines” handout, in Course Documents/Handouts.
Th. 1/18	Look at “How to Email a Professor” in Online Resources. Read Chapter 10, “Writing Job Application Materials” in Markel. Discuss Resume and Application Letter assignment.
<b>Wk4</b>	
Tu. 1/23	Read “Resume Activity” in Course Documents/Discussion Activities. <b>Rhetorical Analysis Paper due.</b> Upload to Blackboard by midnight. In-class: Informal discussion of findings.
Th. 1/25	Bring draft of application letter and resume for in-class read around. Read Chapter 3 “Writing Collaboratively and Using Social Media” in Markel.
<b>Wk5</b>	
Tu. 1/30	Read Chapter 7 “Designing Documents and Web Sites” in Markel. <b>Application Letter and Resume due.</b> Upload to “Assignments” in Blackboard.
Th. 2/1	Read “How to Live Wisely” assignment. Read Chapter 8 “Creating Graphics” in Markel.

## Wk6

- Tu. 2/6 Discuss collaborative event flier assignment.
- Th. 2/8 Read Chapter 5, “Researching Your Subject” in Markel.  
**“How to Live Wisely” charts due.** Bring to class for discussion.

## Wk7

- Tu. 2/13 Read Chapter 6 “Writing for Your Readers” in Markel.  
**Event flier due.** Upload by midnight.
- Th. 2/15 Discuss “Recommendation Report” assignment.  
Read Chapter 11 “Writing Proposals” in Markel.  
In-class: Fill out mini-proposal for Recommendation Report.

## Wk8

- Tu. 2/20 Read Chapter 12 “Writing Informational Reports” in Markel.
- Th. 2/22 Read Chapter 13 “Writing Recommendation Reports” in Markel.  
Recommendation Report progress reports.

## Wk9

- Tu. 2/27 Read Chapter 15 “Making Oral Presentations” in Markel.
- Th. 3/1 Look at “Fire Ant Control: Feasibility Study” in “Online Resources.”  
Effective Style: Materials to be announced.

## Wk10

- Tu. 3/6 Continuing with “Effective Style.”  
Wrap-up and review. **Recommendation Reports due** by midnight.
- Th. 3/8 **Poster sessions. Prepare a poster, a short PowerPoint, or a handout with graphics.**

- Final Exam** Final evaluation consultations: Thu. 11:30 to 1:30.