

GRAD 710 PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION: WRITING

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REQUIRED TEXTS

The following texts are required (copies of these texts will be placed on reserve at the UNC Undergraduate Library):

Technical Communication: Process and Product, 9th ed., Sharon and Steven Gerson (2017). ISBN 978-0134094038
Style Guide for Business and Technical Communication, 5th ed., Stephen Covey (2012). ISBN 978-0133090390

COURSE INFORMATION

Class Sessions

Our first class meeting will be on Wednesday, August 23, 2017 from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. We will be holding class sessions every Wednesday from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. All of the class sessions are noted on the schedule below. The format of these class sessions will vary, and will include collaborative work on editing and peer review. These classes will meet in Genome Sciences.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Weight
Introduction Message	Required to pass
Email Message 1	10 percent
Email Message 2	10 percent
Short Report 1	15 percent
Executive/Informative Summary	25 percent
Short Report 2	35 percent
Peer Review Participation	5 percent

Peer Review & Discussion Forum Participation

A lot of this course is grounded in peer review, which is the process by which you give and receive feedback on your work as it goes through multiple versions ahead of the final product. Each assignment includes an embedded round of peer review, and your full participation in the peer review process is part of your grade for the course. Peer reviews will be graded with a check or no-check system.

Here's how peer review works. At the beginning of the course, I will place you into working groups of three to four students. For each assignment, you will be providing feedback to the other members of your group (for our group of four, this will be in a "round Robin" format) in a variety of formats, including written and verbal feedback. I will be

providing specific peer review guidelines for each assignment. Also, you will work in groups in breakout sessions during our synchronous class meetings.

Writing Assignments

Your writing assignments will be the central element of this course. For all but the first assignment (the Introduction Message), you will post your draft to the Discussion Forum to receive feedback, and you will also review your peers' drafts. Then, based on the feedback you receive, you will submit a final draft via Assignments.

INTRODUCTION MESSAGE

You will complete your first writing assignment during the first week of class by writing a message to the class to introduce yourself. You will post this message via the Discussion Forum. Also, please take the time to read the introduction posts from your fellow classmates so you can get to know them better.

EMAIL MESSAGE 1

You will write a short informative message for a target audience in a memo format.

EMAIL MESSAGE 2

You will write a second message in which you identify two or three peer-reviewed articles that you plan to use for the upcoming Executive Summary assignment.

SHORT REPORT 1

You will write a short report that assesses the readability and use of plain language in a technical or scientific document and give recommendations for improvement.

EXECUTIVE/INFORMATIVE SUMMARY

You will write an executive summary that explains the technical details of two or three peer-reviewed articles (of your choice) for a non-expert audience.

SHORT REPORT 2

For your final assignment, you will write a report that recommends a new methodology or process solution for a problem or opportunity at work (or for a campus or community organization to which you belong).

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Please review the rubric attached to each assignment to understand how I'll grade the assignments. Here are the numerical equivalents and ranges for the letter grades:

Grading Scale

H	94–100
H-	90–93
P+	87–89.9
P	83–86.9
P-	80–82.9
L	70–79.9
F	Below 70

Graduate courses are graded on the scale H (high pass), P (pass), L (low pass), F (fail). I use the plus/minus system for the assignment grading in order to give you more context for your grade.

I reserve the right to adjust final grades based on participation in the discussions and peer reviews.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of online resources. Please consult the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) on topics such as copyright, net-etiquette, and privacy protection.

As part of this course, you may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Please be respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC-Chapel Hill [Information Security Policies](#) when participating in online classes.

When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill, such as Google or YouTube, please note that the Terms and Conditions of these companies and not the University's Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC-Chapel Hill.

When links to sites outside of the unc.edu domain are inserted in class discussions, please be mindful that clicking on sites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

Honor Code

Remember that as a student of UNC-Chapel Hill, you are bound by the University's [Honor Code](#):

It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University students or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.

An especially serious Honor Code violation is plagiarism. The [UNC Libraries Plagiarism Tutorial](#) offers tips on how to avoid plagiarism in a fun and informative format. Also see the UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center's page on [plagiarism](#)—what it is and how to avoid it.

Office of Accessibility/Special Accommodations

If you are a student with a documented disability, you can receive services through [Accessibility Resources & Service](#). You must self-identify through Accessibility Resources to receive services or accommodation from either of these offices. Accessibility Resources works closely with programs, offices, and departments throughout the University to help create an accessible environment.

The office is located in Suite 2126 of the Student Academic Services Building (SASB), 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC, and is open from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. You can contact them by phone at 919-962-8300 or 711 (NC-RELAY) or by email at accessibility@unc.edu.

UNC Title IX Policy

The Policy prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment based on protected status. It expressly, therefore, also prohibits sexual violence and sexual exploitation, which by definition involve conduct of a sexual nature and are prohibited forms of sexual or gender-based harassment. This policy further prohibits stalking and interpersonal violence, which need not be based on an individual's protected status. Finally, this policy prohibits complicity for knowingly assisting in an act that violates this policy and retaliation against an individual because of their good faith participation in the reporting, investigation, or adjudication of violations of this policy. University students and employees who violate this policy may face discipline up to and including expulsion or termination. For more information, please go to the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office.

COURSE SCHEDULE (highlighted material to be added next time)

Dates	Lesson Topics	Class Sessions & Assignments
Aug 23–Aug 29	Lesson 1: The Writer and the Audience	<p>Class on Aug 23 Introduction Email due to Sakai forum by Aug 25 Respond to 3 classmates' emails by Aug 28</p> <p>Reading Gerson & Gerson, Chapters 3 and 5 Fransil Covey Electronic Messages 74-78 Kenan Flagler Tip Sheet on Email</p>
Aug 30–Sep 5	Lesson 2: Making Your Writing Reader-Friendly	<p>Draft of Email Message 1 due in class Aug 30 In class peer review of Email Message 1 (have a copy on your computer) Final Draft of Email Message 1 due to Sakai Assignments Sep 1</p> <p>Reading Gerson & Gerson, Chapters 2, 7, and 9 Franklin Covey: Emphasis, Organization, Page Layout, and Writing and Revising SEC's Plain Language Handbook, Chapter 6</p>
Sep 6–12	Lesson 3: Persuasive Messages	<p>Draft of Email Message 2 due in class Sep 6 In class peer review of Email Message 2 Final Draft of Message 2 due Sep 9</p> <p>Reading Gerson & Gerson, Chapter 11 Covey, Organization, Persuasion, Scientific/Technical Style, and Summaries</p>
Sep 13–19	Lesson 4: Strategic Organization, Message Framing, & Transmittal Messages	<p>Draft of Short Report 1 due in class on Sep 13 In class peer review of Short Report 1 Final Draft of Report 1 due Sep 15</p> <p>Reading Gerson & Gerson, Chapter 8 FranklinCovey, Memo and Transmittal Memo</p>
Sep 20–26	Lesson 5: Executive Summaries & Writing for Clarity	<p>Draft of Executive Summary due in class Sep 20 In class peer review of Executive Summary Final Draft of Executive Summary due Sep 22</p> <p>Reading Gerson & Gerson, Chapters 17 and 18 FranklinCovey, Reports, Summaries, Word Problems, Wordy Phrases</p>
Sept 27-Oct 3	Lesson 6: Visual Aids & Recommendation Reports	<p>Draft of Short Report 2 due in class Sep 27 In class peer review of Short Report 2 Note: Sign up for scheduled conferences with Dr. Geil this week</p>

		<p>Reading Gerson & Gerson, Chapter 4 (and review Chapters 7–8) FranklinCovey, Graphics for Documents, Graphs, and Illustrations</p>
Oct 4–11	Lesson 7: Revision Strategies & Job Documents	<p>Revised draft of Short Report due in class Oct 4 In class peer review (round 2) of Short Report 2 Special Topics: Job documents Course Recap Final Short Report due October 6</p> <p>Reading Gerson & Gerson, Chapter 4, 10 (and review Chapters 7–8) FranklinCovey, Graphics for Documents, Graphs, and Illustrations</p>

GRAD 710 FALL 2017 ASSIGNMENTS

Introduction Email: Using a standard email format and an effective professional style, write a message to the class introducing yourself. You might include information such as your career goals, your areas of specialization, and your writing experiences. Include your schedule, indicating times available outside of class for group project work.

Email Message 1: Using memo format, write a short informative message for a target audience (up to one page if the document were printed). Assume you belong to a community or campus organization, and you need to provide information for the other people in the organization. Here are some possible topics:

- Explain a new process the organization is implementing
- Explain to new members how the organization typically operates
- Update the rest of the group on something that is positive
- Some other topic of your choosing (please check with me if you decide to go this route)

Upload the message to the Discussion Forum as a Word document. Your message should be visually accessible and follow best professional writing practices at all levels (word level, sentence level, paragraph level, and document level).

NOTE: For memo format, see FranklinCovey pp. 182-184. For emails, the email heading takes the place of the memo heading, but be sure to use the subject line effectively.

Email Message 2: Write an email message to me in which you identify the two or three peer-reviewed articles (same/very closely related topic) you plan to use for the executive/informative summary assignment. In your message, please explain what your topic is, why the topic is important, and how you identified the target journals and articles you selected. You should also identify a target audience for the executive/informative summary you'll eventually write and explain why you believe they'll be interested in the information.

Upload the message as a Word document to the Discussion Forum. Your message should be visually accessible and follow best professional writing practices at all levels (word level, sentence level, paragraph level, and document level). Use APA formatting to cite the articles.

Note: I've asked you to submit the document as a Word file (not embedded in an actual email message), so we can use the commenting tool in Word to provide written feedback on your work.

Short Report 1: Select a document that addresses a technical or scientific topic and assess the document using the [Plain Language Checklist](#). Using memo format, write a short report (two or three pages) that follows best professional writing practices (word level, sentence level, paragraph level, and document level). Address the report to me and use APA style formatting to cite the article in your examples. Include specific examples to support your claims.

Please address the following questions in your analysis:

- What plain language strategies has the writer used that worked well?
- What could they have executed more effectively?
- What recommendations would you make for the writer?

Upload the message to the Discussion Forum as a Word document. Your message should be visually accessible and follow best professional writing practices at all levels (word level, sentence level, paragraph level, and document level).

Executive Summary: Select two or three peer-reviewed articles (same/very closely related topic) published in your field and write an executive/informative summary that explains the technical details for a non-expert audience.

Your executive summary should be formatted according to the guidelines we'll discuss in class. In addition, it should follow best professional writing practices at all levels (word level, sentence level, paragraph level, and

document level). Use **APA style formatting** to cite the articles. Upload the message to the Discussion Forum as a Word document.

Short Report 2: Recommend a new methodology or process solution for a problem/opportunity for improvement at work (or for a campus or community organization to which you belong). The report should include information about the situation, an analysis, and a plan for incorporating the process into the regular workflow. (The solution should draw upon your technical/scientific expertise.) You may decide to evaluate two or more alternatives as you're building the argument for your recommended solution. Keep in mind, doing nothing or delaying action can be one of your alternatives.

Tips for success on this assignment:

1. Be sure you identify a problem/opportunity for improvement that's real. The problem/challenge should be important enough to be worth solving. Importantly, select an issue that's narrow but challenging. The data that you include should be:
 - sufficient to document the severity of the problem
 - sufficient to prove that the recommendation will solve the problem
 - available to you
 - comprehensible to you (so you can explain it in plain language)
2. In process, you'll reach your recommendation after you've completed your information gathering and your analysis. However, when you write up your final report, you'll want to provide this bottom-line information very early in your document.

Using memo format, write a short report (three to five pages) that follows best professional writing practices (word level, sentence level, paragraph level, and document level). Address the report to the target audience, and use APA style if you cite any articles. The document must include a table and/or a figure. (Remember to cite the information in the visual, too, if appropriate.)