SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities and the Arts · English & Comparative Literature

Written Communication: Business

ENGL 100WB

Fall 2025   Sections 01, 08   In Person   3 Unit(s)   08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025   Modified 08/01/2025

🕐 Course Information

ENGL 100 WB, Section 1 — Written Communication for Business

Fall 2025 — MW 1:30–2:45 PM

BBC 20

Class

1:30p - 2:45p
Monday, Wednesday, 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM, BBC 20

💻 Course Description and Requisites

Written communications for business majors; includes minimum of 8,000 words of writing spaced throughout the semester.

Writing in the Disciplines: Satisfies the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) if passed with "C" or better.

Prerequisite(s): A3 or equivalent second semester composition course (with a grade of "C-" or better); completion of core GE; and upper division standing. Or Graduate or Postbaccalaureate level. Allowed Declared Majors: All Business Administration majors, Industrial Arts, Industrial Technology, Professional & Technical Writing, Public Relations, Hospitality Management, Organizational Studies.

Letter Graded

✳ Classroom Protocols

AI Use Policy

Students should use AI tools (ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.) with full transparency and attribution. Final work must demonstrate **original strategic thinking**, judgment, and adaptation to audience and purpose.

Key Policies

- **Attendance**: Active participation is required; more than 2 unexcused absences will affect your grade.

- **Late Work**: Allowed only with prior notice or documented emergency.

- **Academic Integrity**: All work must be your own; plagiarism will result in course failure.

Final Portfolio Checklist

- Revised and polished versions of all deliverables

- 1-page personal reflection on learning and growth

- Peer review artifacts and drafts

ENGL 100WB - Section1

Course Theme: Minerva - Working Smarter, Not Harder

This course is inspired by the Roman goddess of wisdom, strategy, and practical intelligence. Students will develop strategic communication skills in real-world business contexts by forming teams, creating business ideas focused on social good, and producing key professional documents—grounded in clarity, collaboration, and communication excellence. AI is our Minerva but what Minerva can't do is solve the interpersonal collaboration skills required in work at work. Minerva can't decide for us where we want to apply our acquired skills and help those we most want to help.

This course develops applied writing and communication skills essential for business and professional settings, with a focus on clear, purposeful, and audience-tailored messaging. Are we getting our message across? Students will also engage in collaborative projects, crafting effective documents across key business genres while refining their work through feedback and revision. Emphasis will be placed on teamwork (great meetings), presentations, cultural awareness, and the strategic use of AI tools. Working in groups, students will explore an idea, a feature, or a product concept focused on "social good"—producing a portfolio of business communication artifacts from concept to final presentation.

Program Information

Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses develop students' abilities to communicate effectively in their major course of study and in their careers. With an emphasis on critical thinking, these upper-division core courses advance students' understanding of the genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing while preparing them for successful communication in their chosen professions. Completing Writing in the Disciplines with a C or better is an SJSU graduation requirement.

Writing in the Disciplines Learning Outcomes Upon successful completion of a Writing in the Disciplines course, students should be able to:

1. explain, analyze, develop, and critique ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse;
2. organize and develop complete discipline-specific texts and other documents for both professional and general audiences, using appropriate editorial and citation standards; and
3. locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing;
4. produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, and clarity of expression.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

📊 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Write clear, concise, purposeful business documents tailored to varied audiences.
- Understand and produce key business writing forms: memos, business plans, product documents, presentations, and meeting records.
- Collaborate effectively within diverse teams.
- Deliver and receive constructive feedback in both written and oral form.
- Navigate intercultural business communication.
- Deliver professional presentations using clear structure and visual support.

📘 Course Materials

Required Materials:

  - *The Elements of Style* by Strunk & White
  - *One Page Business Strategy: Streamline Your Business Plan in Four Simple Steps Paperback* – by Marc Van Eck (Author), Ellen Leenhouts (Author), Judith Tielen (Author)
  - *HBR's 10 Must Reads on AI (With Bonus Article "How to Win with Machine Learning"* by Ajay Agrawal, Joshua Gans, and Avi Goldfarb):

- **Case Videos**: as provided

- [How to Write a PRD](#) by Marty Cagan
- [Writing the MRD](#) by Pragmatic Institute
- [Writing an Effective Marketing Requirements Document](#) by The Daily MBA
- [How to Build a Pitch using AI](#) by Bryan Cassady

≔ Course Requirements and Assignments

Here are the **key assignments**:

1. Pitch + One-Page Business Plan

Prompt:
Write a one-page business plan (Lean Canvas or similar) that clearly articulates your team's startup idea, including value proposition, customer segments, key metrics, and revenue model. Then, deliver a short written pitch that captures attention and makes a case for your idea.

Rubric (20 pts)

- Clarity of Value Proposition (5)
- Completeness of Plan Elements (5)
- Strategic Focus (5)
- Style & Readability (3)
- Proper Format & Grammar (2)

2. Three-Page Business Plan

Prompt:
Expand your one-page plan into a comprehensive three-page business plan including market analysis, competitive landscape, marketing/sales plan, and basic financial projections.

Rubric (20 pts)

- Logical Structure & Flow (5)
- Use of Market Data (5)
- Appropriate Financials (5)
- Clarity & Persuasiveness (3)
- Grammar & Style (2)

3. Product Document (PRD or MRD)

Prompt:
Write a 2-page Product Requirements Document (PRD) or Market Requirements Document (MRD) that outlines your solution, user needs, features, and success metrics. Identify your intended audience and tailor the document accordingly.

Rubric (20 pts)

- Audience Awareness & Purpose (5)
- Feature Clarity & Logic (5)
- Conciseness & Organization (5)
- Professional Format (3)
- Grammar/Mechanics (2)

4. Meeting Documentation

Prompt:
Lead or co-lead a simulated meeting. Submit a professional meeting agenda and corresponding minutes summarizing decisions, action items, and follow-ups.

Rubric (20 pts)

- Clear Agenda (5)
- Comprehensive Minutes (5)
- Concise Summarization (4)
- Professional Format (3)
- Grammar/Mechanics (3)

5. Team Presentation Deck

Prompt:
Design and deliver a 5-minute, 5-slide team presentation showcasing your startup, with roles clearly divided. Slides must support storytelling, data, and delivery.

Rubric (20 pts)

- Visual Design & Slide Cohesion (5)
- Clear Messaging (5)
- Delivery & Timing (5)
- Team Collaboration (3)
- Q&A Preparedness (2)

Overall: The goals are clarity of communication not the cleverness or novelty of ideas.

✔ Grading Information

Grading Structure (Modular, Process-Based)

Module	Weight
Write (Artifacts & Drafts)	30%
Revise (Peer review, rewrites)	25%
Engage (Canvas discussions, participation)	20%
Reflect (Portfolio)	15%

Mechanics (Grammar, Voice, Style)	10%

No single assignment determines your final grade. Consistency, growth, and collaboration are emphasized.

🏛 University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

Weekly Schedule Overview

Week	Dates (M/W)	Topic	Activities	Video	Assignment
1	Aug 20, 25	Orientation & Team Formation	Form teams, explore Minerva metaphor, brainstorm business ideas	–	Team roster + concept proposal
2	Aug 27, Sep 1 (labor day - no class)	Clarity & Precision	Sentence surgery, plain language, eliminating jargon	[5 Whys (HBR)](#)	Memo using "5 Whys" logic
3	Sep 3 (No class: "Jumpstarting Digital Literacy" event this fall. [You can get more information here](#)), Sep 8	Tailoring Your Message	Adjust tone, format, and content for audience and context	Sep 3 (No class: "Jumpstarting Digital Literacy" event this fall. [You can get more information here](#)). Attendance contributes to class grade. [Use Strategic Thinking (HBR)](#)	Draft & adapt 1 message, 3 ways
4	Sep 10, 15	Business Communication Genres	Memo, press release, executive summary	–	Short-form document

5	Sep 17, 22	PRD vs MRD	Audience-centered product development	[What Is Design Thinking? (HBR)](#)	Mini PRD or MRD
6	Sep 24, 29	Meetings That Work	Best practices for meetings	Revisit [5 Whys] & [How to Write a Meeting Agenda](#) (MIT)	Meeting Agenda + Minutes
7	Oct 1, 6	Nonverbal Communication	In-person vs Zoom, tone, eye contact, body language	–	Observation + reflection write-up
8	Oct 8, 13	Cross-Cultural Communication	Hofstede's dimensions, case scenarios, etiquette	Hofstede, the basics: [Infographic](#)	Case reflection + tailored message
9	Oct 15, 20	Presentations – Structure & Style	Building decks, storytelling, rehearsing	[How to Build a Pitch using AI](#) by Bryan Cassady	3-slide personal pitch
10	Oct 22, 27	Business Plan – One Pager	Lean Canvas, strategic clarity	[Simplify Your Strategy (HBR)](#)	1-page plan draft
11	Oct 29, Nov 3	Business Plan – Three Pager	Market analysis, competition, financials	[Blue Ocean Strategy (HBR)](#)	3-page plan draft
12	Nov 5, 10	Final Presentations	Team venture pitch with deck and Q&A	5 minutes 5 slides	Team presentations
13	Nov 12, 17	Peer Review & Revision	Structured review of all major docs	-Extra credit: submit your idea [here](#) and include the analysis/scorecard provided in your portfolio.	Peer Review Packets
14	Nov 19, 24	Final Portfolio Assembly	Reflective writing + doc polishing	–	Final Portfolio (5 docs + draft reflection)

	Nov 26	No Class (Thanksgiving Break)		–	–
15	Dec 1, 3	Wrap-Up & 1-on-1s		–	Optional coaching
16	Dec 8 (Final Monday)	Final Reflection Due		–	Submit final reflection