

Written Communication: Business

ENGL 100WB

Fall 2025 Sections 02, 03, 04, 05 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/20/2025

Contact Information

Class meets in the Boccardo Business Center (BBC) Room 130, T/Th, 9:00 - 10:15 a.m.

Email: sian.sloan@sjsu.edu

Office: Faculty Office Building (FOB) 221

Office Hours: 12-1 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday in my office in FOB. We can also set up a Zoom meeting on Monday or Wednesday.

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

Course Format, Canvas, Tips for Success, Technology

Basic Course Description:

- This is a semester long in person course.
- We will meet twice a week in person at the above days and times.

- The organization of the course is module-based.
- There will be 16/17 modules, one for each week of the class.
- Module contents will be available at the start of each class.
- You can find due dates for major assignments in the syllabus.
- Throughout this program you will work closely with fellow business students, especially in your concentrations, as well as with your professor.

Course Reminders:

- You are responsible for checking your email and the Canvas course page regularly.
- Online readings, copies of major assignments, and important announcements will be posted on Canvas.
- If, for any reason, Canvas is not working or a link/document is not working, please contact me as soon as possible.

Email Guidelines:

- Check your SJSU email regularly.
- Use SJSU email or Canvas messaging when contacting me through email, not your personal account.
- This is a business communications class, so use proper email etiquette.
- I will try to respond to emails on the day they are received, but emails received after 7 pm may not be answered until the next day.
- Emails received on weekends may not receive replies on the same day.

Tips for Succeeding in the Course:

- Get to class on time (figure out your parking/transportation routine now!).
- Attend class regularly. This class is very attendance-based.
- Use Office hours if you want help with a draft assignment, or for clarification on an assignment.
- Complete all assignments, large and small.
- Bring a positive attitude.
- Don't define yourself as "bad at writing". All students can succeed in this course if you just put in the work!

What to Do if You Have to Miss a Class:

- Let me know, via Canvas messaging, with a simple reason. Details about your illness or specific personal challenges aren't necessary, it's ok to keep them private.
- FYI, I may not have time to respond to messages sent right before class.
- Check that week's Canvas Module for material you have missed.
- You can also ask a classmate to help you catch up on what you missed.
- Only ask me what you have missed after you check course modules.
- Note: I won't reteach missed course material so it's up to you to catch up.

Technology Use

Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop or tablet). SJSU has a free [equipment loan program](#) available for students.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have access to reliable Wi-Fi during classes. If students are unable to have reliable Wi-Fi, they must inform the instructor, as soon as possible.

See [Learn Anywhere website](#) for current Wi-Fi options on campus.

AI Policy

- Only use AI for grammar corrections (Grammarly)
- Use AI when asked
- You can use AI to brainstorm ideas for assignments or titles for assignments
- Do not use AI (ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) to write papers
- Turnitin will be used for most assignments

Attendance and completing in-class assignments out of class

- If you miss 2 weeks of class (4 classes) I will contact you to check in about the reason for your multiple absences
- If you miss more than 2 weeks of class I will suggest you withdraw from the class
- I will not work with you to pass the class if you don't attend most classes
- I will allow you to complete 2 in-class assignments out of class for the full points
- After that if you make up in-class assignments out of class you will get 50% of the points.
- I will close in-class assignments 1 week after they are due so you have one week to catch up

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 Goals

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Create texts and make presentations that are appropriate for a variety of business audiences and situations
- Analyze organizational and rhetorical situations in business communications and employ appropriate strategies for communicating based on audience, purpose, and context
- Identify and explain genres and written and visual conventions used in business communications
- Participate in both intra-organizational communication as well as communications with others outside of the organization
- Explain the role of ethics in business communications
- Understand the role of collaboration in business communications
- Use photos, illustrations, and other tools as appropriate in business communication.
- Communicate complex data
- Understand the basic principles for document layout and design
- Adapt a text to meet the needs of varying audiences

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

- **Learning Outcome 1:** Produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, and clarity of expression
- **Learning Outcome 2:** Explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse.
- **Learning Outcome 3:** Organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences.
- **Learning Outcome 4:** Organize and develop essays and documents according to appropriate editorial and citation standards.
- **Learning Outcome 5:** Locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing.

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this class.

I will provide all class readings as pdfs or links to online articles in weekly Canvas modules.

Course Requirements and Assignments

5 Main Writing Assignments (70% of your grade)

Writing Assignment 1: Professional Biography 15%

- The Professional Biography will give you a chance to write about your education and experiences, previous paid work and volunteer work, and your future goals and aspirations.
- It will act as the foundation for your job search assignment, LinkedIn profile and resume.

Writing Assignment 2: Job Documents and LinkedIn 15%

- You will conduct a job search, write a job ad analysis, and create a cover letter and resume based on your analysis.
- We will follow best practices from the SJSU Career Center for this assignment.

Writing Assignment 3: Interviewing Skills 10%

- You will learn interviewing skills
- Your midterm will be writing practice answers to common interview questions
- You will also learn to use and record interview answers with the Big Interview app

Writing Assignment 4: Writing Emails and Messages 10%

- You will learn how to write networking messages: thank yous, recommendation requests, networking request and mentorship requests.
- You will write thank you emails to interviewers and professors/teachers
- You will write recommendation requests to employers and professors/teachers
- You will write networking messages for LinkedIn and via email
- You will learn SJSU2, the SJSU Mentoring and Meetup app and write a sample mentor request

Writing Assignment 5: Proposal Report and Presentation at Final (in concentration groups) 20%

- You will learn how to format a standard business report
- You will create a proposal report topic in concentration groups
- You will write and complete a proposal report as a group
- You will create and present a group presentation based on your proposal report
- You will present it as a group in our final classes

Many writing assignments will require:

- Rough Draft
- Revised Draft and Peer Review
- Final Draft

Homework and in-class assignments (30% of your grade)

Homework Assignments - approximately 15%

- These consist of things like reading notes and drafts, and other various assignments that will help you learn and practice the course material.

In-Class Assignments - approximately 15%

- These are a mixture of individual in-class writing and group work.
- These assignments are important. Missing them will affect your grade if you miss class and don't complete them.
- You can make up 2 of these assignments out of class.

✓ Grading Information

Six Major Categories for Text Assessments:

Rhetorical/Contextual Awareness:

Probably the top criteria. Students are expected to demonstrate a clear awareness of the rhetorical situation and the context into which they are writing. This includes a demonstrated awareness of purpose, audience, message, constraints (legal, ethical), power structures (hierarchy), etc. In all aspects of grading, awareness of rhetorical/contextual ideas will be most important. For example, a student may write a letter which uses several supporting sources; however, if the audience for that letter has reason to distrust those sources and thus would be not persuaded by them, then the student has not used appropriate support.

Focus:

Students are expected to maintain a clear and specific focus in their texts, and that focus should be clear to the reader (in some cases, it is stated directly). All supporting details should adhere to this focus.

Structure & Organization:

Students should structure and organize their texts appropriately. The appropriate structure and organization will depend on the type of text the student is creating and will sometimes be outlined by the assignment itself, or by the reading. This includes in-class notes, but is even more important in large assignments.

Development & Support:

Students should provide appropriate levels of development and support in their texts. Development simply means that there is an appropriate amount of detail for the rhetorical/contextual situation. For example, an average person may not need an explanation of the technical details of a new platform, but the UX designer for that new platform certainly would need those details. Support refers to backing up claims made in the text by using additional sources (i.e., not just asking someone to take your word for it).

For example, this is why I ask you to leave out a "soft skills" section on your resume. Those one word skills are an example of unsupported claims. When these skills are in bullet points with the details of how you acquired them then they are supported. Sources can be anything from personal experience, photos or

illustrations, to academic articles—the type of sources you use will largely be determined by your audience and purpose.

Style:

Students should maintain an appropriate style for their texts, based on the rhetorical and contextual situation. Style refers to the way that something is written, presented, or created. Sometimes you'll change or vary your style depending on your organization's style or your relationship with the audience. Style may also refer to the *way* you present the information. If you're going for a playful, informal style, you may include a meme in your presentation, whereas if that's not appropriate for your formal presentation, you may stick with graphs and charts.

In the age of AI style also refers to whether your style is authentic and original or robotic and generic. For most assignments in this class your grade will be improved when you sound "like yourself", uniquely you, versus "sounding like AI".

Formatting & Mechanics:

Though formatting and mechanics is the last grading criterion, students are still expected to use appropriate formatting and mechanics. Readers in professional environments will expect texts to look the way they are "supposed" to. For example, when you send a memo to your co-workers, they might be confused if it doesn't *look* like the memo. They may then throw it away, thinking it is just junk mail. Similarly, if you send a correspondence that is full of mechanical errors, a reader may become frustrated. Keep in mind, distracting mechanical errors are different than just a forgotten comma—these errors are consistent and often interrupt the flow of the text or impede the readers' ability to understand the text.

More specific grading rubrics and instructions are also provided in some prompts for assignments when more detail is needed.

Breakdown

Grading Information/Late Policy:

- You can do 2 "in-class assignments" out of class if you are absent, for full points. After that you only get half the points if you do the assignment out of class.
- You can rewrite one major assignment for a better grade. You must rewrite the assignment within one week of it being graded.
- Talk to me if you need to turn in a major assignment late. I will try to work with you if you are sick or have some kind of emergency. Generally, I don't accept assignments late, but if you have something that interferes with on-time submissions I'll work with you.

The department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C= average; D= below average; F = failure.

Final Grading Scale

A: 940 pts and above	A-: 939-900 pts	
B+: 899-870 pts	B: 869-840 pts	B-: 839-800 pts
C+: 799-770 pts	C: 769-740 pts	C-: 739-700 pts
D+: 699-670 pts	D: 669-640 pts	D-: 639-600pts
F: 599 and below		

This course must be passed with a C or better as an SJSU graduation requirement.

An "A" text is excellent. It demonstrates mastery of the skills for that unit and exceeds expectations in each of the six grading criterion.

A "B" range essay demonstrates competence in the same criteria as an "A" essay, but it may show slight weakness in one of these areas.

A "C" range essay will complete the requirements of the assignment, but it may show weakness in a few of the major criteria (or some weakness in criterion 1).

A "D" range essay will neglect to meet all the requirements of the assignment or will completely disregard the rhetorical/contextual situation (criterion 1).

An "F" range essay does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

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

Week 1 , Th, 8/21 - Introduction to class and each other

Th, 8/21 Class Agenda

Roll, brief class overview, group activity and class discussion.

Homework due by class T, 8/26:

- Read the "SJSU Official Syllabus" in Canvas
- Complete assignment "Write an email to your Professor"
- Post and respond to Discussion "Introduce Yourself to your Fellow Students"

Week 2 – T, 8/26 and Th, 8/28 - Introduction to Business Writing

T, 8/26 Class Agenda

- Syllabus Review. Attendance/late work, etc.
- "Write an email to your Professor" discussion.
- 7 C's presentation and writing. Business Writing Goals "Plain Language".

Homework due by class Th, 8/28:

- Designing Your Life worksheet, "Accepting Where You Are" and "Building Your Compass"

Th, 8/28 Class Agenda

- Discuss Designing Your Life assignment.
- Group assignment: "14 LinkedIn Profiles" Evaluate tone and style.
- Professional Biography - Introduction.

Homework due by class T, 9/2:

- Chapter 1 pdf reading (Canavor, Chapter 1, 13 pages) and homework (I and IV, Practice Opportunities)
- Professional Biography Brainstorming

Week 3 – T, 9/2 and Th, 9/4 - The Professional Biography Drafting and Editing

T, 9/2 Class Agenda

- Read Professional Biography prompt.
- Group review of student professional biography examples.
- Organize drafts to prepare for rough draft due Th, 9/4

Homework due by class Th, 9/4:

- Professional Biography Rough Draft, Version 1 (3 paragraph)

Th, 9/4 Class Agenda

- The Professional Biography - Editing and Seven C's review.
- Editing Rough Draft: Words/Sentences/Paragraphs/Tone

Homework due by class, T, 9/9:

- Revised Draft for Peer Review (including versions 1, 2 and 3 of professional biography)

Week 4 – T, 9/9 and Th, 9/11 - Professional Biography Peer Review/LinkedIn

T, 9/9 Class Agenda

- How to write peer review comments
- Peer Review of Professional Biography drafts

Homework due by class, Th, 9/11:

- Professional Biography FINAL DRAFT

Th, 9/11 Class Agenda

- Review final draft of professional biography
- In class LinkedIn assignment
- LinkedIn individual class assignment.

Homework due by class, T, 9/16:

- LinkedIn "About" summary

Week 5 - T, 9/16 and Th, 9/18 - LinkedIn Profile and Job Documents Assignment Introduction

T, 9/16 Class Agenda

- LinkedIn Profile About summary edits
- Job Documents assignment introduction
- Job Ad analysis draft

Homework due by class T, 9/23

- Choose a job on Handshake

- Write a draft of the job ad analysis

Th, 9/18 - CLASS NOT MEETING

Week 6 - T, 9/23 and Th, 9/25 - Resume presentations/Job Ad analysis and resume accomplishment statements

T, 9/23 Class Agenda

- Resume Presentation by Judi Garcia from the Career Center for a.m. classes
- Take notes in class
- Work on job ad analysis and resume accomplishment statements for p.m. classes

Homework due Th, 9/25

- Have access to your most up to date resume

Th, 9/25 Class Agenda

- Resume Presentation by Judi Garcia from the Career Center for p.m. classes
- Take notes in class
- Work on job ad analysis and resume accomplishment statements for a.m. classes

Homework due T, 9/30

- Draft of job ad analysis and resume

Week 7 - T, 9/30 and Th, 10/2 - Resumes and Cover Letters

T, 9/30 Class Agenda

- Editing Resume using Career Center resume guide

Homework due Th, 10/2

- Edited resume

Th, 10/2 Class Agenda

- Creating Cover Letters
- Professional Letters

Homework due T, 10/7

- Draft of all Job Documents: Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume

Week 8 - T, 10/7 and Th, 10/9 - Job Documents Editing and Peer Review

T, 10/7 Class Agenda

- Detailed editing of all job documents

Homework due Th, 10/9

- Revised draft of all Job Documents - Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume

Th, 10/9 Class Agenda

- Peer Review of all Job Documents - Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume

Homework due T, 10/14

- Final Draft of all Job Documents - Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume

Week 9 - T, 10/14 and Th, 10/16 - Interview Skills

T, 10/14 Class Agenda

- Interview Questions practice in groups
- Big Interview app Getting Started

Homework due Th, 10/16

- Fast Track curriculum from Big Interview - Interview Questions

Th, 10/16 - Class Agenda

- "How to Talk So That People Want to Listen" TED Talk by Julian Treasure
- Class notes and discussion

Homework due Th, 10/21

- Fast Track curriculum from Big Interview - Analyzing a Job Description

Week 10 - T, 10/21 and Th, 10/23 - Interview Skills, Mid-Term Prep and Mid-Term

T, 10/21 - Class Agenda

- Using the "Designing Your Life" writing to answer Interview Questions
- Using Job Documents and Job Ad to answer Interview Questions
- Preparing Notes for midterm one-sheet

Homework due Th, 10/23

- Prepare one-sheet and print out to bring to midterm

Th, 10/23 Class Agenda

- **Midterm**
- Reminder of how to record and get AI feedback in Big Interview app

Homework due T, 10/28

- Record practice interviews in Big Interview and assess AI feedback

WEEK 11 - T, 10/28 and Th, 10/30 - Writing Messages and Emails: Recommendation Requests; Thank You Notes; Networking and Mentorship Messages.

T, 10/28 - Class Agenda

- Presentation on strategizing your messages
- Interviewing Guide Career Center - Thank yous
- LinkedIn Guide Career Center - Recommendations and Networking
- Brainstorming and drafting thank yous and recommendation requests in class

Homework due Th, 10/30

- Write thank yous and recommendation requests

Th, 10/30 - Class Agenda

- SJSU Clubs - Networking
- SJSU Alumni networking - LinkedIn Guide Career Center
- SJSU Mentoring - use SJSU2 and how to choose and request a mentor
- Research, Brainstorming and Drafting network and mentors

Homework due T, 11/4

- Networking and Mentor messages

WEEK 12 - T, 11/4 and Th, 11/6 - Business Reports

T, 11/4 - Class Agenda

- Business reports format and content
- Proposal Report prompt
- Groups meet

Homework due Th, 11/6

- Brainstorming possible report topics in your concentrations

Th, 11/6 - Class Agenda

- Groups meet about report ideas
- How to write group reports
- Prepare to outline report

Homework due T, 11/11

- Report outlines

WEEK 13 - T, 11/11 (NO CLASS - VETERAN'S DAY) and Th, 11/13 - Researching and Editing Business Reports

T, 11/11 - NO CLASS - VETERAN'S DAY

Th, 11/13 - Class Agenda

- Drafting reports

Homework due T, 11/18

- Rough Draft of reports

WEEK 14 - T, 11/18 and Th, 11/20 - Business Reports Editing and Peer Review/Presenting Reports

T, 11/18 - Class Agenda

- Editing reports
- Review Presentation Prompt
- Presentation Rough Draft

Homework due Th, 11/20

- Revised draft of report

Th, 11/20 - Class Agenda

- Peer Review for reports
- Presentations drafting

Homework due T, 11/25

- Almost final reports
- Revised draft presentations

WEEK 15 - T, 11/25 and Th, 11/27 (NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING) - Presenting Reports

T, 11/25 - Class Agenda

- Please fill out evaluations for all your classes!
- Meet with professor about reports and presentations
- Work in groups finalizing reports and presentations

Homework due T, 12/2

- Final draft presentations

Th, 11/27 - NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING

WEEK 16 - T, 12/ 2 and Th, 12/4 - Final Presentations

T, 12/2 - Class Agenda

- First groups present and other groups serve as committees

Homework due Th, 12/4

- Final draft reports

Th, 12/4 - Class Agenda

- Second groups present and other groups serve as committees

CLASS OVER - THERE IS NO FINAL DURING FINALS WEEK FOR THIS CLASS

Final grades due from faculty by Friday, December 19