

Persuasive Business Writing

Instructor: Mitchell Gray, MA, MJ

Required Text(s): I will provide all course readings in class.

Course Description

Get your message across more effectively and hone your persuasive skills with a blend of theory and practice. This course is designed for anyone who needs to reach readers or listeners with an important message. Learn to use powerful rhetorical strategies to engage, inform and inspire, and gain experience by creating and presenting your own project. You will obtain the skills required to craft documents that support you in building and maintaining strong business relationships with colleagues and clients. Explore attention-catching tone and content strategies that you can apply to emails, reports, web copy, policy papers and beyond.

Instructor Availability

The best way to contact me is by email at mitchell.gray@ubc.ca. I check email frequently and generally respond within one day.

Readings

The course includes many handouts and a selection of readings. I will provide all materials in class.

Administrative Information

If a class needs to be cancelled for any reason, you will receive an e-mail from Writing Programs with details. Sessions will be added to the course schedule to make up for cancelled classes. Make-up sessions are not available for regularly scheduled classes that a student has not attended.

If there is a room change or other change, you will receive an e-mail from Writing Programs.

Course Policies

Withdrawal and Cancellation Policies

Part-Time and Online Courses

Please note that our refund policy has changed. No refund will be made for cancellations received later than three business days before the course begins. If you need to withdraw from the course due to



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extenuating circumstances, please contact Writing Programs office at 604.822.9564 or writing.exl@ubc.ca.

Summer Institute Programs

The withdrawal deadline for our intensive summer institutes is one week before the course start date. A \$100 administration fee is deducted from each refund; no refunds are possible after the deadline.

Transferring to Another Course

Please note that we cannot transfer students between courses or between an online and face-to-face section

English Language Proficiency Requirement

English is the primary language of instruction for Writing Centre courses. All prospective students are required to have a minimum level of English. Non-native English speakers may be asked to demonstrate a score of 570 or higher on the paper-based TOEFL exam (88 or higher on the Internet-based TOEFL), or equivalent English language proficiency test results.

Behaviour Policy

Because of the personal nature of our writing courses, the Writing Centre asks that students demonstrate the utmost respect for each other and for their instructor. This includes respecting the work, experience, and expertise that others share in the classroom and respecting everyone's time. When discussing personal experiences in class and talking about others' work, please be sure that you remain constructive and supportive, and think about how your feedback will sound before you present it. We also ask that you respect the classroom time by allowing everyone a chance to participate equally in the discussion and by following the instructor's lead as s/he moves the discussion from point to point. We do give our instructors the right to ask a student to withdraw if the behaviour policy has been violated.

Participation

This course is intended to stimulate a dynamic exchange of ideas between the instructor and students. Classes will be most productive and enjoyable if every student makes regular contributions to class discussions and group work. This includes sharing your ideas and experiences and asking questions. I will assign homework each week. You will usually be able to complete these homework assignments in 30-90 minutes. By completing the homework and volunteering your work as an example during feedback and discussion sessions, you help to ensure a meaningful classroom experience. You will also benefit most from this course if you complete all assignments to the best of your abilities. Remember to focus on using the writing strategies covered in class.

Offering Feedback

Please do not hesitate to share your ideas. Receiving frequent feedback is important to anyone seeking to improve his or her writing.

Providing feedback on other students' work offers your classmates a range of ideas they can examine and evaluate. Your perspectives are valuable. I encourage you to highlight things you like about their writing. And when you have suggestions for improvement, remember that you are not saying your classmate did something wrong, but rather suggesting something you might have found more engaging or convincing.

If you feel uncomfortable making comments on other students' work, try phrasing your suggestion as a question. Rather than saying, "You should target this email to your audience," you could ask, "To what audience have you targeted this email?"

Assessment

Certificate Students

If you are a student in our professional communication certificate or our creative writing award of achievement, your assessment may differ from that of your classmates. Please note that part of that assessment will be a final portfolio that will require you to submit a piece of writing or other project from this class.

Assessment for the Course

Each student will receive a final evaluation of either "pass" or "fail." Achieving a "pass" evaluation requires demonstrating a commitment to learning by engaging actively in the coursework and classroom proceedings.

Letters of Completion

In order to be eligible for a letter of completion, you will need to attend at least 80% of the classes (or the online equivalent) and complete the assignments. You can request a letter of completion by emailing us at writing.exl@ubc.ca after the course has finished.

Instructor Feedback

I will provide individualized written feedback on a range of assignments. In class, I will also highlight learning points from student assignments through which all students can benefit. Additionally, I will provide examples of how to complete assignments successfully. You can compare these examples to your writing to make improvements.

Additional Information

You should expect students with a range of skill levels in this course. Some may possess more highly developed language or writing skills than you. Remember that each student learns at his or her own pace. The goal is not to be perfect, but simply to work hard and enjoy the learning process no matter what skill level you possess at the start of the course.

Course Schedule

Each class will focus on one main topic in addition to work on writing skills and exploration of critical business-writing concepts. I will assign homework and readings each week based on class progress, and the last class will feature an in-class presentation project.

The main topics for each week are as follows:

Class One

- A Theoretical Foundation for Persuasive Communication

Class Two

- Highlighting Implications and Addressing Counterarguments

Class Three

- Memorable (“Sticky”) Business Writing

Class Four

- Story and Performance in Business Writing

Class Five

- Three Fundamental Skills of Successful Communication

Class Six

- Cognitive Framing of Your Message

Class Seven

- Promoting Yourself / Your Business

Class Eight

- Small-group Presentations

NOTE: This course outline is still evolving to ensure the best possible learning experience for students. The specific topic of some of the classes listed above may change, but powerful strategies for convincing your audience will remain the focus.