

# Professional Writing

WR325.01

Spring 2017

MWF 10:50-12:05

Maryland Hall Room 240

Professor: Allen Brizee, PhD

Office: Maryland Hall 043L

Office Hours: M 2:30-3:30, T 2-4,  
W 4-5, by appt.

Mailbox: Maryland Hall 043

Email: [habrizee@loyola.edu](mailto:habrizee@loyola.edu)

**When you email me,  
write our course number  
in the subject line.**

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change. I will notify you of changes in class and through the course website. By remaining in this class, you agree to the requirements included in this syllabus.

## *Required Texts and Course Materials*

- *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Paul V. Anderson
- Course Websites: <http://www.allenbrizee.com>

Please bring *Technical Communication* to class every day.

## *Course Description*

From the Loyola University Maryland Catalog: This class prepares students interested in business, the humanities, and STEM fields for writing in the workplace. Using workplace technology, such as the Microsoft Office Suite, students produce memos, résumés, cover letters, reports, proposals, and presentations. These projects require students to consider the purpose, audience, and context of professional settings when writing on the job. Students also learn how to use text and visuals together in order to create clear and persuasive documents. For team projects, students collaborate with clients or community partners to develop experiential skills.

Specifically in this section, we will work with a contemporary rhetorical theory known as the reader-centered approach. The reader-centered approach will guide us as we compose professional communication individually and in teams. Using the reader-centered approach allows you to prepare for and respond to the different types of rhetorical situations you will face after you leave Loyola. Later in the term, we will also examine some of the roots of rhetoric as we work with ideas like *stasis* theory.

More than a class in writing, WR325 is also a course in research, reflection, decision-making, and project management. The documents you produce will form an intricate part of the projects we will complete this term. For these projects, you will have the option of working individually or working in teams on some assignments. For the team projects, you will be able to collaborate with a client or a community partner. If you choose the client team option, you will collaborate with the writing department. If you choose the community partner team option, you will collaborate with GEDCO/CARES Career Connections on York Road, and you will receive service-learning credit. This course is as a **service-learning optional** class.

Lastly, we will learn how to use our communication skills to bridge the gaps that often separate us rather than using rhetoric to merely win arguments. We will use our abilities to better understand all points of view to help bring about positive change. My goal, therefore, is help you become insightful problem-solvers who use your skills in rhetoric and writing to make educated and ethical decisions. These are lofty but attainable goals—it is no accident that Loyola considers *eloquentia perfecta* (perfect eloquence) as an essential part of your education and development as discerning adults.

## **Course Aims**

Over the course of the semester, students in Professional Writing will meet the writing department learning aims, which are as follows:

- Write widely across genres and for a variety of purposes, showing an ability to adjust your style appropriately to audience and situation
- Develop a distinctive voice with original ideas through frequent practice
- Situate yourself in a larger intellectual conversation in developing and researching your ideas
- Write multiple drafts of extended works in order to extend the rhetorical strategies you began in Effective Writing
- Develop an ability to critique other's writing constructively and to use the same to effectively work collaboratively through frequent group exercise (workshops) and conferences
- Learn to use technology to the best advantage of your writing through daily exposure, understanding both the various forms of media and their rhetorical effects

After successfully completing the course, students will be able to use rhetorically informed research and writing to collaborate with others and work toward bringing about positive change in civic and professional communities.

## **Service-Learning**

As noted above, this is a service-learning optional course, which means that you have the opportunity to work with two community partners to satisfy some of the requirements for this class. Specifically, the service-learning team will work with GEDCO/CARES Career Connections to help their unemployed or underemployed clients find and apply for jobs. Service at GEDCO/CARES will begin early in the term and occur on a weekly basis. Service-learning students will work at the GEDCO/CARES location on York Road, St. Mary of the Assumption Church. Service-learning students will also complete a deliverable for GEDCO/CARES—revisions of literacy and employment resources that will be used for community workshops in summer 2017 at Loyola's Clinical Center in Belvedere Square. Lastly, service-learning students will write three reflections on their experiences.

This project is part of Loyola's York Road Literacy and Employment Initiative (YRLEI), a community-based research and engagement project that began in spring 2011. You may read more about the YRLEI on my professional website here: <http://allenbrizee.com/community>. This project meets Loyola's criteria for a service-learning course and aligns with undergraduate learning aims.

## **Client Project**

The client team will work with me and other members of the writing department to research the department's curriculum, graduate school options for writing students, and employment options for writing students to create two infographics. These infographics will merge text and visuals to clarify the curriculum and experiential paths open to writing students that will best prepare them for graduate school and the workplace. This project involves research of the department's curriculum, interviews with writing faculty members and writing students, as well as some graphic development. Experience with InDesign and/or PhotoShop would help but is not necessary. I will work with this team outside of class time to assist in designing the infographics. Once the infographics are complete, they will be printed out and placed in the writing student lounge and hosted on the writing department website—so this is a great résumé-building project that will give you a professional deliverable for your portfolio.

## Course Policies

### Attendance and Tardiness

If you miss four days, your class participation grade will drop, and if you miss six days, expect to fail. Arriving late to class four times is considered one absence. This being said, please do not come to class if you think you have something contagious. Medical excuses allow you to make up missed work but will not excuse absences. If you are absent, contact me or another student to stay current. **Please note Loyola's semester breaks and make arrangements now.** You are required by the university to be in class on the days before and after these breaks. You are also required to take the tests and quizzes scheduled for those days **in class**.

### Submitting Assignments

Deadlines are important in academia. This semester, each assignment will have a specified due date, and unless stated otherwise, will be due in class on that date. If you must turn in late work, contact me, and I may grant an extension. Unless you have an extension, late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade each day they are late (this includes weekends). You will submit formal documents to me in a large envelope, so please obtain one now.

### Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty—cheating, lying, plagiarism, etc.—will result in failure of the assignment in question and may result in failure of the course. At the top of your projects, type this statement: "I understand and will uphold the ideals of academic honesty as stated in the Honor Code." The Honor Code states that all students of the Loyola Community have been equally entrusted by their peers to conduct themselves honestly on all academic assignments and tests. Loyola students have a collective and individual responsibility for the ethical welfare of their academic community.

All outside resources or information used should be clearly acknowledged. If there is any doubt or question regarding the use and documentation of outside sources for academic assignments, your instructor should be consulted. Also, please note that the writing you produce in this course should be new and original work that has not been submitted for other courses. In addition, when you submit the final draft of your work, you are responsible for ensuring that your work is complete and fulfills the requirements of the assignment. You may not use revision options as extensions. Lastly, receiving peer feedback is encouraged, but this feedback should be limited to the peers in this course. **Help from roommates, siblings, parents, online tutoring, or non-Loyola instruction is not permitted.**

Please refer to the Honor Code for more information and further clarification of the standards, types of violations, adjudication process, and sanctions that may be imposed for violations:  
<http://www.loyola.edu/academic/honorcode.aspx>.

### Class Preparation and Participation

Come to class having read and thought about the assignments. We will begin each class with a reading quiz, writing, or a question-answer session. Also, we will be taking class minutes, rotating this responsibility throughout the term. Your participation in these tasks and discussions affects your grade. Use the end-of-chapter exercises and questions in *Technical Communication* as prompts for class discussion. I will let you know when you need to actually complete the exercises.

### Cell Phones, Laptops, and Computer Lab Etiquette

Turn off your phone ringers at the door. Use cell phones for medical or family emergencies only. If you use a laptop to take notes in class, please do not use IM, Facebook, etc., and please do not surf the Internet unless it is part of a class activity. When we are in class, I expect your full attention. I will ask you to leave the class, and you will receive an absence, if you do not follow these guidelines.

## Course Requirements

### Informal Writing

Informal writing includes in-class reflection and homework, as well as taking class minutes. In-class reflection will allow you to think back on and write about class reading and your experiences. Reflections follow the What? So what? What now? model.

Quizzes (4) and the test (1) are short, and they are easy, if you have read the assignments. The grammar/mechanics test matches with the Big Seven handout available on the course website.

Ongoing in-class reflection through discussion and writing will allow you to explore course reading and service-learning/client experiences.

Homework will be assigned weekly; subject matter for homework will depend on what we are studying at the time, but assignments include rhetorical analysis, reflection writing, etc.

### Formal Writing

Formal projects (3) are titled, typed in 12 point Times New Roman font (or similar font), with 1-inch margins. Proper MLA, APA, or CMS documentation must be used. You must complete all projects to pass the class. You can rewrite one individual project for an average between your original and your revised grade. Your revised project is due with Project 3 on the day of our final exam. Please note that all of the major assignments require a detailed audience analysis.

The three major assignments are:

1. Project 1: Employment Project (audience analysis, résumé, job application letter) – individual
2. Project 2: Report on Professional Writing in the Workplace – individual
3. Project 3: Client or Service-Learning Collaboration – team OR Proposal to Address Local Issue – individual

I grade work based on the system below, which is informed by four of the five canons of rhetoric:

CONCEPT	STRUCTURE	DESIGN	STYLE & G/M
High level concerns: purpose, audience, effective research, knowledge of topic	Strong thesis, logical and detailed argument or exploration, effective paragraph organization	Document design, adherence to HATS, professional pages, accurate visuals	Sentence-level organization, prose, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, citation

The rough draft for Project 1 is worth 2 points, and the rough drafts for Projects 2 and 3 are worth 4 points. The grading scales (in points) for the formal writing assignments are as follows:

#### Project 1 (10 points)

10-9.3 A	7.6-7.3 C
9.2-9 A-	7.2-7 C-
8.9-8.7 B+	6.9-6.7 D+
8.6-8.3 B	6.6 D
8.2-8 B-	6.5-0 F
7.9-7.7 C+	

#### Projects 2 & 3 (20 points)

20-18.6 A	15.2-14.6 C
18.4-18 A-	14.39-14 C-
17.8-17.4 B+	13.79-13.4 D+
17.2-16.59 B	13.20 D
16.4-16 B-	13-0 F
15.8-15.4 C+	

**Final Exam**

Rather than take a final exam, you will submit Project 3 to me by exam time **on our scheduled test day** and present a fifteen-minute slide show on your project. During our final exam time, you may also submit a revision of Projects 1 or 2 if you choose to do one. **Attendance at your scheduled final exam time is required to pass. Please obtain university permission and let me know in advance if you need to reschedule your exam due to exam scheduling conflict.**

**Rough Drafts**

You are required to bring rough drafts to the writing workshops. Failure to bring rough drafts to the writing workshops will automatically deduct the rough draft points from your final draft grade.

**Conferences**

During the semester, we will meet individually to discuss your work. Failure to attend our scheduled conference day equals an absence.

**Extra Credit**

Extra credit assignments are available throughout the semester.

*Assignment and Course Grading*

The tables below detail assignment grade weight and the course grading scale. You may track your grades by filling in the grades you receive in the far right column. I also encourage you to meet with me to discuss your progress in this class.

**Assignment Grade Weight**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Titles</b>	<b>Point Value (%)</b>	<b>Your Grade</b>
Three Formal Assignments	Project 1: Employment Documents	10	
	Project 2: Report on Workplace Writing	20	
	Project 3: Client or Service-Learning or Proposal on Local Issue	30 points total (20 points for document, 10 points for presentation)	
Quizzes, Tests, & Homework	Reading quizzes 1 – 4	10 (2.5 points each)	
	G/M test	5	
	Memo	5	
	Document from your discipline	5	
	Flier	5	
	Class minutes	5	
Class Participation	Attendance, in-class participation, professionalism	5	
		<b>100 Points Total (%)</b>	

### Course Grading Scale

Course Points (%)	Grade	Loyola Grade Points
100-93	A	4.00
92-90	A-	3.67
89-87	B+	3.33
86-83	B	3.00
82-80	B-	2.67
79-77	C+	2.33
76-73	C	2.00
72-70	C-	1.67
69-67	D+	1.33
66	D	1.00
65-0	F	0.00

#### *Students with Disabilities*

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS), Newman Towers West 107, at [DSS@loyola.edu](mailto:DSS@loyola.edu) or call (410) 617-2750/2062. If you have registered with DSS and have requested an accommodations letter (and DSS has sent the letter to your professors via email), please schedule a meeting to discuss your accommodations.

#### *Student Athletes*

If you are a student athlete, please provide me with your travel and game schedule indicating when you will need to miss class to participate in athletic events. While travel for athletics is an excused absence, you will need to make up any missed work.

#### *The Loyola Writing Center*

The Writing Center is located in Maryland Hall 057. To make an appointment, call 410-617-5415 or email [lwc@loyola.edu](mailto:lwc@loyola.edu). You may also visit their website for more information: <http://www.loyola.edu/department/writingcenter.aspx>.

#### *Class Schedule*

Reading and writing assignments and exercises are due on the day they appear on the schedule on the course website. **Please make arrangements now for the semester breaks.**