Improved Writing / ENC 2300, Fall 2012

Class location: TH 323 / SBI 005  Days/Time: T/R 330-445 & 500-615
Instructor: Dr. Kendra N. Bryant  E-Mail Address: drknbryant@gmail.com
Office Location: TBA  Office Hours: MWF 9-10 a.m.; T 215-315

Course Description
Improved Writing is a course intended to assist students in refining their writing skills, as well as their critical thinking and reading skills, so that they can successfully (and ethically) communicate with various audiences via the written form. This course also intends to cultivate student compassion, patience, and understanding by way of readings and class activities that are grounded in contemplative knowing, for writing is an art form that allows both writers and readers to claim their humanity. Furthermore, Improved Writing aims at teaching students the art of persuasion so that they not only learn to write their own arguments, but are able to critically analyze the world that encourages their individual ways of being. With all of that said, Improved Writing is an introduction to particular writings such as business/professional documents, memoir, and argumentative essays; it is also an invitation for students to engage in writing film reviews, to improve their technological skills, and to develop their sentence structuring techniques.

Course Objectives
Through class meetings and out-of-class preparation, students should expect to do the following:

1. Understand business communication in today’s workplace
2. Master team skills and interpersonal communication
3. Plan and write business messages
4. Craft messages for electronic media
5. Write persuasive essays
6. Develop oral and online presentations
7. Write resumes and cover letters
8. Improve overall written communication skills
9. Develop skills to write for specific target audiences and purposes
10. Develop skills necessary for writing expository prose

Prerequisites
ENC 1101 and ENC 1102

Required Textbooks/Resources
• Courtland Bovée and John Thill, Business Communication Essentials, 4th edition, ISBN 978-0136084419. Note: Any version of the 4th edition is allowable for this course, including digital, unbound, or used copies. Students may wish to use http://www.bookfinder.com/to help them find the cheapest copy available.
• Kendra N. Bryant and Jessica D. McKee’s *Power to the Pen: Finding Agency through Argument*
• *Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)* [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)

**Required Class Materials**

- Three-ring binder (at least 1” rings), lined paper, blue or black ink pens, highlighter, and one colored ink pen

**Method of Instruction**

- During the first half of the semester, students will be assigned particular chapter readings from their Bovée and Thill text, as well as the Purdue OWL site, in order to engage in business/professional writing activities, as well as to develop their technological skills, persuasive writing skills, interpersonal communication skills, and grammar, mechanics, and usage skills. Students will explicate the ideas of each particular chapter and/or apply the methods of each chapter via writing assignments per the text book’s and instructor’s suggestion.
- During the second half of the semester, students will be given a weekly essay reading on a contemporary topic to which they will engage in classroom discussion and write a reader’s response via their own personalized blogging site. Students will also read excerpts from Bryant and McKee’s *Power to the Pen* in order to understand argumentative essays.
- When appropriate, students will participate in collaborative work, including peer review; teacher will also lecture.
- When necessary, students will be given practices in grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure using student assignments. More specifically, if the majority of students are struggling with pronoun agreement and reference, for instance, then the instructor will extract sentences from student writing that suffer with pronoun issues and use them to explicate correct usage.

**Weekly Assignments** *(Note: All assignments are subject to change.)*

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<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Chapter Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| August 28, 30 (Independent study/online instruction and communication) | | • Review Class Syllabus, retrieve required texts, and peruse Purdue OWL site  
• 1-2 page essay: Who are you and what is your purpose? |
| September 4, 6 (Independent study/online instruction and communication) | Bovée and Thill, Chapter 6: Crafting Messages for Electronic Media | • Set up blogging site using WordPress.com  
• 1-2 page essay: Do you consider yourself a writer? Why or why not? How do you use writing to express yourself? |
| September 11, 13 (Independent study/online instruction and communication) | Bovée and Thill, Chapter 13: Building Careers and Writing Resumes; Purdue OWL: Resumes and Vitas | • Write your resume |
| September 18 (Independent study/online instruction and communication) | Bovée and Thill, Chapter 14: Applying and Interviewing for Employment; Purdue OWL: What is a Cover Letter? | • Write your 1-1.5 page application letter |
| September 25, 27 (Face-to-face class resumes) | Purdue OWL: Writing the Personal Statement | • Write your 1-1.5 page personal statement |
Note: Specific details for most assignments will be placed on Blackboard and/or distributed in class via memorandums. However, it will behoove students to come to class everyday so that they can receive personal direction and instruction.

**Blackboard**

Students are strongly encouraged to check Blackboard on a daily basis. Here, students will find the class syllabus, some memorandums and handouts, as well as assignment instructions. I will also use Blackboard to inform students of any unforeseen class cancellations and updates.

**Grading**

Final grades will be based on the following weights (and are subject to change):
**Grading Criteria**

Students will be given a letter grade for each assignment given. Please note that I will be using FAMU’s grading scale. However, for your information, know that an A=Excellent, B=Good, C=Satisfactory, D=Poor, and F=Unsatisfactory. Also note that students will have opportunities for revision throughout the semester. More about that to come later.

**Disabilities**

Students with a disability and thus requiring accommodations are encouraged to consult with the instructor during the first week of class to discuss accommodations. For more information, see [www.famu.edu/cedar/](http://www.famu.edu/cedar/). Each student making this request must bring a current Memorandum of Accommodations from the CEDAR office.

**Deadlines**

Deadline for submitting written work will be strictly observed. I do not accept late work. Students who are absent from class for whatever reason who want credit for their work must submit their assignment(s) to me through any means necessary—except via email, unless otherwise noted, (and of course, until September 25 all work will be submitted via email). *Note: After September 25, students can submit work to me in my office up until the end of my designated office hours.*

**Religious Holidays**

You are excused from class for major observances of your religion, which need to be brought to my attention by the second week of class.

**Plagiarism**

See [http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?judicialAffairs&StudentCodeofConduct](http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?judicialAffairs&StudentCodeofConduct) for FAMU’s Undergraduate Catalog’s definitions and policy, and consult with me if you have any questions. Even though I recognize the possibility of confusion, I will not tolerate any unethical behavior, which includes using material from sources without proper citation and collaboration beyond the boundaries of what I have stated is acceptable.

**Notes and Tapes of Lectures**

It is not permitted to sell notes or tapes of class lectures.

**Classroom Policies**

- Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. What does that mean? Basically, please respect differences of opinion, religion, dress, ethnicity, and demeanor. We are a community of learners, and we will fellowship with loving-kindness.
- All cell phones must be **turned to vibrate or silent**. I expect the same etiquette one might use at a business meeting. If students must use their cell phones, please step outside. Similarly, be wise about laptop use. While I don’t mind if students bring their laptops to class, I expect students to pay attention during class lecture or class discussion.
- **Attendance** is mandatory; however, students are permitted **two absences** which cover sickness, special holidays, and documented emergencies. Students are encouraged to email or phone **their classmates** to find out what happened in class on the days that they are absent. *Note: I do not reteach lessons just because a student was absent. In addition, I do not respond to emails that ask that I do so. Finally, an email explaining student absences is unnecessary.*
- **Preparation:** Please come prepared for class. Have something to write with and write on. Bring your materials and resources DAILY. Bring any due assignments. Bring your voice—your opinions, your confusions, your questions, your successes. Be awake. Be present.
• **Participation:** There are individual and group tasks that must be done. There are no “spectator” roles—at least not all of the time. Students are expected to be active participants in all of their work, which include actively reading and actively listening.

• **Timely Completion:** Part of being successful in a classroom environment involves being responsible for timely completion of assigned tasks. If students fall behind schedule, they are encouraged to meet with me to resolve the problem before it is too late to do anything about it.

• **Emails:** I am not available to receive emails 24/7. However, I will respond to them Monday through Friday until 7 p.m. I will not respond to emails over the weekend. Also, all emails should be formally and thoroughly written to include a greeting, a body, as well as a proper closing. Emails that are not professionally written will not receive my response.

**Writing Center**  
FAMU has an excellent free tutoring center available for anyone who would like help with any aspect of writing:

• **The FAMU Writing Center** ([www.famu.edu/wrc/](http://www.famu.edu/wrc/)) “Through individualized, self-paced instruction, the WRC affords students the opportunity to reinforce, review, and apply skills that are taught in college preparatory and fundamental communicative skills courses, thereby enabling students to advance to and succeed in upper division courses.”

**Emergency Plans**  
In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for FAMU to suspend normal operations. During this time, FAMU may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It’s the responsibility of the student to monitor the Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, as well as the main FAMU, College, and department websites, and emails, for important general information.