

## English 203: Business & Professional Communication

### Professor Sharon Lalla

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#### Course Information

##### Course Title/Number/Date/Location

English 203, M70: Business & Professional Communication (Web)

January 17, 2013 – May 10, 2013

Log in to Canvas at <http://learn.nmsu.edu> using your NMSU username and password.

##### Course Time

This class is designed to be flexible; however, it is paced through sixteen weeks, and it is guided. This means that each week you will be expected to contribute to discussions at least **three times on three different days** each week. The week begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday at midnight.

Although there are no requirements for this class to meet at the same time either in a classroom or virtually, I would like to get the opportunity to meet with each of you at least once this semester by appointment. It is up to YOU to set that appointment between the third week of this course and the tenth week of this course.

##### Course Prerequisites

Successful completion of ENGL 111 with a grade of “C” or its equivalent is a prerequisite for enrolling in ENGL 203.

##### Online Preparation

Plan to spend at least as much time in this web course as a three-credit classroom lecture course. A classroom lecture course requires three hours a week in class with approximately 3-6 hours of homework. Expect to spend the same amount of time or more. Although this course is designed to be flexible, it is not self-paced. There are weekly discussions and intermittent deadlines.

If this is your first online class or if you would like to increase your chance of succeeding in an online course, refer to the Preparation Self-Test at [http://distance.nmsu.edu/prospective/self\\_eval\\_dl.html](http://distance.nmsu.edu/prospective/self_eval_dl.html).

##### Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to effective writing for courses and careers in business, law and government, and other professions. It will focus on strategies for researching and writing correspondence and reports. Emphasis is on understanding and responding to a variety of communication tasks with a strong purpose, clear organization, and a professional style.

## Learning Objectives

In this course you will learn how to:

- Write, edit and prepare business documents that meet the expectations of professional, ethical, and academic discourse;
- Apply principles of design as you format a document, organize information, or argue with visual data;
- Develop effective rhetorical strategies for designing persuasive ethical and informative documents that target primary and secondary audiences;
- Critically read and interpret a text;
- Prepare and conduct an oral presentation;
- Analyze professional communication problems and identify potential solutions;
- Integrate research correctly and ethically from credible sources;

## Instructor Information

### Announcements

I will send urgent and regular communication to *all* students using the Announcements tool in Canvas. It is a requirement in this class that you set your New Announcements in Notifications to “Right Away” to ensure that you receive any announcements. (Go to **Profile>Notifications**, find **for new announcements** and set to **Right Away**).

### Email

In Canvas, email is called *conversations*. There is one global email box in Canvas. This means that all email for all classes will be displayed similar to the style used by the Facebook. Once you log into Canvas, select **Inbox** located at the top of your Canvas window. Note: Canvas conversations are not the same as your NMSU email.

### Virtual Meetings

You can visit with me by appointment in my virtual office via Adobe Connect or Skype on Mondays from 8 pm to 9 pm MST. If Monday is not a good time for you, I can also meet with you by appointment on Saturday mornings at 9 am MST.

I think it's important to connect with you one-on-one at least once during the first ten weeks of this course so I have required at least one virtual meeting with each of you, which is valued at 25 participation points. It will be up to **YOU** to schedule that appointment to occur during my virtual office hours. We can meet either through Adobe Connect, Skype, or Telephone.

Also, if you find me online through Skype, feel free to communicate with me anytime.

Skype ID: docslalla

Adobe Connect URL: <http://nmsu.na5.acrobat.com/lalla>

### Phone Number

If you leave a message (name and phone number), I will get back to you as soon as I can. My telephone number is 575.496.7086. My preferred contact is via Canvas email.

## Teaching Philosophy

My teaching style is that of a guide on the side instead of a sage on the stage. My role will be to facilitate activities in this class but not drive them. Having experience in industry and academic work environments, I can share my perspective about writing from both work environments; however, I believe that students should take charge of their own learning so you will be participating in writing projects that are relevant to you but also reflect the objectives of this course. As a result, your active participation and collaborative efforts are required in this course. I will make the objectives and rubrics easily available to you so that they guide you to successful completion of this course.

## Expectations: Yours and Mine

### Student Expectations

1. Because this is a writing course, you will write five professional documents and create one presentation. Writing is a skill so you will have an opportunity to practice writing a number of drafts prior to receiving your final grade. To write effectively, you will read, discuss, write, edit, and critically analyze the differences between various types of business documents. During this process, you will learn how to choose appropriate rhetorical strategies.
2. Throughout each week, you will collaborate with your peers on the writing topic(s) of the week. Don't underestimate this expectation as your contributions will be graded for quantity, quality, and critical thinking each week. You will learn to situate your discussions in broader conversations.
3. There is a lot of work in this course and it relies heavily on weekly peer discussions. If you don't want to invest your time in an interactive, engaging course, you may want to think about taking a different course. This online course is NOT a correspondence course.
4. Take the netiquette pledge in the discussion forum during the first two weeks of this course.
5. You will listen to the brief recorded lectures that I have provided in each **module** to assist you with clarity, context, and terminology.
6. You will also meet with me at least once, one-on-one, virtually via Skype, telephone, or Adobe Connect during the first ten weeks of this course.
7. You are expected to turn in assignments on time. Because writing is a skill, you have an opportunity to get feedback from me up several times. There are three review weeks available in the semester.
8. Add an image to your profile by going to your [Student Support](#) page and clicking on the [Uploading and Image to your Profile](#) link to get instructions on how to add an image.
9. You can turn in your final draft any time as long as you do not miss the final deadline. Note, however, that you will typically get feedback for the draft during review weeks or after the final deadline.

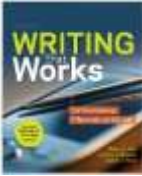
10. If for some reason you cannot participate in this course, it is up to you to promptly contact me to explain your situation and to get the necessary paperwork completed for withdrawal.

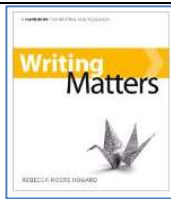
## Instructor Expectations

1. I will refrain from contributing to discussions. This is your environment. I will be reading the postings and will comment to you individually on a weekly basis.
2. Three times during the semester (See the schedule), I will offer a Draft Review week. The Draft Review week is designed for you to submit your draft to me through the relevant module. During Draft Review week, no discussion topic will be offered. However, you will be reviewing your peers' drafts. I will also be reviewing drafts that are submitted in the assignment box. Use this discussion time to ask the questions you have about your drafts or to submit drafts for my feedback. My feedback will be in the form of a rubric score. The Draft Review discussion will be a public forum so that others will benefit from any questions and answers.
3. I will email each one of you at least twice during the semester to see how things are going. I have designated virtual meeting times for Monday at 8 pm MST for virtual appointments; however, I can offer an alternative time to meet virtually on Saturdays at 9 am MST.
4. I will grade each assignment and send you constructive feedback within two weeks of the due date, using the rubrics that are tied to the assignments. If I cannot provide feedback as planned, I will let know when I can.
5. Should you have content-related questions, let me you know how I can help. Contact the Help desk for any questions regarding Canvas and your computer tools.
6. When relevant, I will interject comments to you throughout the semester through Announcements in Canvas.
7. I reserve the right to modify this syllabus or materials and assignments as necessary at any time during the semester to meet the objectives of this course.

## Required Textbooks

You will use this required textbook often throughout your course work.

Textbook	Title
	Alred, G., Brusaw, C., & Oliu, W., (Eds.) (2010), <i>Writing that works: communicating effectively on the job</i> . 10 <sup>th</sup> ed., Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. ISBN: 9780312692179 (\$70 used, \$93.35 new, \$42.99 <a href="#">ebook*</a> 180 days)



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OPTIONAL

Howard, R. M. (2010). *Writing matters: A handbook for writing and research*,

MCG Custom, ISBN: 9780077674434

(\$46.30 used, \$64.30 new)

OR

Hacker, D. and Sommers, N. (2011). *A Writer's reference*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's

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## Required Skills

You will need to meet certain technology responsibilities to complete work for this course. If you have questions about technical requirements for the course, please contact me immediately.

To complete this course successfully, you must:

- Read this syllabus carefully and contact me immediately if you have any questions. You are responsible for the content and assignments in this syllabus.
- Obtain access to an internet connection, preferably broadband, and a working computer.
- Demonstrate proficiency with all software applications required for course projects.
- Familiarize yourself with the tools available on the course site.
- Be able to send and receive emails and email attachments in an out of class.
- Know how to change your Canvas Notification settings.
- Know how to read email in Canvas.
- Maintain backups of all work you create for this course, using a variety of data storage media such as Blackboard, e-mail attachments, flash drives, CD-RW's, server space, and your computer's hard drive.

Please see Required Tools for information about the tools you will use in this course.

## Grading Information

### Assignments

The following assignments are required for successful completion of this course:

Assignment	Points	Percentages
Discussions (10)	200	20
Professional Papers (5)	500	50
Presentation (1)	100	10
Final Paper	100	10
Participation	100	10

## Grading Scale

The following grading scale will be used to determine your final grade:

Percentage	Grade
91-100	A- to A+
81-90	B- to B+
71-80	C- to C+
61-70	D- to D+
60 and Below	F

Rubrics are provided for each assignment so that you can see how your assignment will be graded. You can view the rubrics within the Canvas course.

## Grade/Feedback Availability

Grades will be available through the Grades tool in Canvas. Feedback for assignments will be available two weeks after due date unless I specify otherwise.

## Late Work

All discussions end on Saturdays at 11:59 pm. There are no makeup discussions. Final papers must be turned in on the day they are due. No late papers will be accepted since I give you every opportunity throughout the semester to submit drafts early. In case of a documented emergency, contact me *before* an assignment is due. To get an extension due to a documented emergency, you must email me in advance asking for an extension and proposing a reasonable deadline for completing work (which you then must keep). Failure to contact me in advance will automatically result in a lower grade.

Please remember that at the end of the semester, the course is over, and there will be no more opportunities to submit additional or late work. To be fair to students who have made a commitment to this class all semester long, extra credit assignments will not be available except those already in your modules.

## Incomplete Grades

The grade of "I" may only be assigned if the student is unable to complete the course due to circumstances beyond the student's control that develop after the last day to withdraw from the course.

## Class Withdrawals

It is your responsibility to know important dates such as the final day to withdraw from classes. You must officially withdraw from any class that you intend to drop.

## Assignments

### Discussions (10 discussions, 20 points each)

Participating in discussions is a core activity in this course. In fact, it is 20% of your grade. You cannot get an "A" or possibly even a "B" in this course if you don't participate in discussions.

This is how important discussions are in this class. The purpose of the discussions is to articulate your ideas about particular topics, exchange ideas, obtain different perspectives, and even challenge ideas or pre-existing knowledge about subject matter related to business writing. You can learn a lot from your own reflections and from your peers if you read the textbook and other resources and actively engage in the conversations. You will be expected to contribute three times on three separate days each week (Sunday-Saturday) with quality responses using your textbook or other resources to support all ideas.

There will be eight graded discussions throughout the semester. You are expected to reply to each initial topic using your textbook or other resources to support all responses. You are then expected to comment on a minimum of two of your peers' replies--again using your textbook or other resources to support your responses. Carefully read each reply, read the textbook chapter, and critically think before you comment. Use APA style to cite your resource(s). I will grade your responses each week with a rubric for quantity, quality, and critical thinking.

Merely agreeing or disagreeing is insufficient. For example, you can summarize ideas, introduce thought-provoking ideas, challenge the status quo, and

/or compare and contrast ideas. Examples of quality discussions are in the first module of this course.

### **Resume & Cover Letter (200 Points)**

In this course, you will learn how to create or revise a professional resume and cover letter that will prepare you to seek employment. While creating or revising your resume, you will learn how to construct lists, choose concise language, and utilize design principles to improve the overall appearance of your resume. The resume must be no longer than two pages.

Your cover letter should address a "real" position. You must find a real job posting and write a letter as if you are applying for the position. You must also use a "real" recipient for your letter. I am not the recipient of your letter. Your resume will supplement your cover letter. In your cover letter, you need to be concise but very specific about personal examples that correlate with the qualifications required. While drafting an effective letter, you will practice your rhetorical (persuasive) skills and overall tone. You will also learn basic letter structure and letter design.

### **Memo for Presentation (100 Points)**

At the beginning of the semester, you will begin thinking about your formal report that will be due at the end of the semester. In anticipation of the formal report, you must obtain approval about your report topic idea prior to beginning the writing process. This is not unlike requirements in the work environment. This email assignment will be **formal** and the recipient of your email will be me--your instructor. The purpose of this memo is to get my approval prior to working on your report project. I will be evaluating the *scope* of your project to ensure that it is doable. In this assignment, you will learn how to write a formal memo, practice your rhetorical skills, and learn basic memo structure.

**Presentation (100 Points)**

The most effective way to become an asset to your organization is to become part of the solution, not the problem. As a result, you will find a problem within your work or school environment and devise an action plan in the form of a presentation to resolve this problem. Your primary reader will be the person who WOULD BE the recipient of your idea should you choose to actually send the presentation to him/her. In this assignment, you will learn the basic structure of a presentation, form a concrete problem statement, conduct primary research, and cite secondary research using APA style guidelines. You will also practice rhetorical, organizational, logical, and design skills to create an effective and professional presentation. You will propose two solutions that would result in a win-win situation for your primary readers.

**Formal Group Report (100 Points)**

You will be put into small groups and will select one of the presentation ideas proposed by your team members to create a formal report. As a group, you will work as a team to learn the basic structure of a report, conduct primary research or secondary research as needed, and compose a formal report that is representative of an effective and professional report. You will also practice editorial and project management skills.

**Complaint Letter (100 Points)**

In this assignment, you will write a letter of complaint to any organization/business you choose. This can be a chance for you to write that real complaint letter that you've wanted to do for a long time but never had taken the time to do. You can be as creative as you would like, but it needs to be a real complaint. You will practice tone and letter writing skills. You will also consider purpose and overall effectiveness.

**Final Paper (100 Points)**

Your final paper will concentrate on your ability to construct a persuasive and formal email to me--your instructor. I am your primary audience for this paper. While you will not see the question until the last weeks of the semester, suffice it to say that it will relate to the objectives of this course. I would suggest that you maintain a log of "aha" moments throughout the duration of this course that you can use as detail.

**Other Participation (100 Points)**

- Taking notes throughout the semester will help you prepare for the final exam. Document "aha" moments as they apply to the objectives of this course.
- You are required to meet virtually with me at least once during the first ten weeks of this course. It is up to you to schedule that appointment during my virtual meeting times. (50 Points)
- You are required to completing all non-graded discussions, checklists, and course evaluations as they are due. (50 points)



## Required Tools

### Computer Hardware & Software

- Access to a Windows or Macintosh computer (with minimum OS and configuration)
- Internet access
- Computer sound and speakers (Headsets with microphone optional.)
- Microsoft Office 2007 or higher.
- [Adobe Reader \(for reading PDF files\).](#)
- Adobe [Flash Player 11.3](#)
- [Skype](#)
- [My Adobe Connect Room](#)
- GoogleDocs (Optional).

### Learning Management System

- Instructure Canvas: <http://learn.nmsu.edu>
- Canvas Instructions: <http://studenttech.nmsu.edu/canvas.html>
- Canvas Announcements: I will use Announcements to send time sensitive information to the entire class. Because you can set your own notification preferences in Canvas, you will need to make sure you receive announcements daily. You are required to set your notifications for **New Announcements** to be **Right Away**.

### Web Browsers

Use one of the following three browsers in Canvas. Please remember to update the web browser you are using to access Canvas. *Internet Explorer is not recommended for use with Canvas at this time.*

- Firefox - <http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>
- Chrome - <https://www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/>
- Safari - <http://www.apple.com/safari/>

### Accessibility Tools

- [Canvas Accessibility 508 Statement](#)
- [Adobe Connect Section 508 Statement](#)

## Institutional Policies

### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and any other kind of academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade and may result in further disciplinary action by the university. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's language or ideas (intellectual property) as your own. This includes copying from your peers. You may be guilty of plagiarism if you fail to properly quote and/or cite any borrowed

material. Submitting your own previously written work to satisfy an assignment for this class or submitting the same assignment to me and another instructor without permission from both of us constitutes academic dishonesty. In addition, you are responsible for protecting your own work from being misrepresented. If you allow your work to be copied and submitted as someone else's you are guilty of academic misconduct and may be reprimanded.

Please see the [NMSU Student Code of Conduct](#) for details about student rights and responsibilities.

## **Accessibility Services**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

- Trudy Luken, Director, Student Accessibility Services (SAS)
- Corbett Center, Rm. 244
- Phone: (575) 646-6840
- Email: [sas@nmsu.edu](mailto:sas@nmsu.edu)
- Website: [www.nmsu.edu/~ssd/](http://www.nmsu.edu/~ssd/)

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status.

Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment and retaliation.

For more information on discrimination issues, Title IX or NMSU's complaint process contact:

- Gerard Nevarez, Executive Director or Agustin Diaz, Associate Director
- Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)
- O'Laughlin House
- Phone: (575) 646-3635
- E-mail: [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu)
- Website: <http://www.nmsu.edu/~eeo/>

## **Technology Support**

The ICT Customer Service Center is equipped to deal with your information technology (IT) and telecommunications needs at NMSU. The ICT Customer Service Center hours of operation are from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm MST Monday through Friday. Please feel free to contact them at 646-1840 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@nmsu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@nmsu.edu)

For general support, you can go to the [Student Technology Help](#) web page. For Canvas help, you can go to the [Canvas Help](#) web page, which is also available from the Student Support link on the Canvas login page.

For academic advising services, visit the [Advising Center](#) and learn more about the advising process at [Your NMSU's Academic Advising 101](#)

## Student Support

Support services are available to you. Such services include university advising and registration, college advising and registration, and financial aid.

- [Academic Calendar](#): Find out when classes start, last day to drop, holidays, etc.
- [Accessibility Services](#): Students can contact the student accessibility services to ask questions or seek accommodations.
- [Career Services](#): Career Services provides career planning and employment services to students living both in and outside the Las Cruces area. Personal advising is available via, email, phone and Skype.
- [Counseling Center](#): The NMSU Counseling Center has a range of counselors and psychologists that are here to assist NMSU students with career and personal counseling.
- [Military and Veterans Services](#): For veterans and active-duty military and their families.
- [NMSU Services](#): Dozens of resources are available for current students, like Aggie Transit, campus dining, Greek life, campus activities, student groups, and so much more.
- [Office of the Registrar](#): Help/info related to: transcripts, degree audits, FERPA, graduation requirements, etc.
- [Student Guide to NMSU](#): "Your NMSU" is a great website of resources for student success

## Academic Support

- Improve your study skills and test preparation through workshops at [Student Success Center Hardman](#)
- Access both face to face and online tutoring at [Student Success Center Zuhl](#)
- Receive feedback, consultation, and assistance on any writing assignment at the [Writing Center](#)
- Undergraduate math tutoring and placement services are available at [Math Success Center](#)
- Access additional student support resources at [Your NMSU's Academic Life Support](#) page
- Ask a librarian at [NMSU Las Cruces Library](#)
- The [Online Writing Center \(OWC\)](#) is an outreach service that provides free writing feedback. Students can request an e-mail appointment for consultation at any phase of the writing process, including idea generation, the drafting stage, and the final revision. Students receive e-mail feedback on written documents, visual presentations, and on assignment details. Feedback consists of email exchanges, collaborative writing and idea input, comments, and suggestions for revision. The [Center](#) is staffed by NMSU

English Department graduate assistants who also teach various undergraduate writing courses.

- Additional resources can also be found through the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)

## Revisions to this Course

I reserve the right to modify this course or course schedule anytime during the semester to meet the course objectives. Since Canvas is new to both of us, I shall also make accommodations to the course design and technologies as I deem necessary to ensure success. When substantive changes are made, I will send an Announcement to the entire class. Changes will be highlighted in “red” on the materials (such as on the syllabus or wiki pages).