ENGLISH 420E: Business Writing for Entrepreneurs

English 420E CRN: XXXX Time: XXXX Location: XXXX	Instructor: Daniel Ernst Office: XXXX Office Hours: XXXX Email: ernst9@purdue.edu

Required Course Materials

- *Business Communication Today*, by Courtland Bovee and John Thill (14th edition). ISBN: 9780134562186
- Access to a webcam and microphone
- Access to Adobe InDesign (all ITaP computers have this software)
- Additional readings as needed (on Blackboard or the Web)

Course Description

English 420E teaches students the rhetorical principles and writing practices necessary for producing effective business letters, memos, reports, and collaborative projects in professional contexts. It also emphasizes effective communication skills in the more narrow context of entrepreneurship. The course is informed by current research in rhetoric and professional writing and is guided by the needs and practices of business, industry, and society at large, as well as by the expectations of the English department and Professional Writing program.

The course teaches the rhetorical principles that help students shape their business writing ethically, for multiple audiences, in a variety of professional situations. In particular, this course will sharpen your ability to communicate to a variety of stakeholders in the business world, including clients, industry peers, investors, and the public more broadly. Entrepreneurship is more art than science, so in addition to training in practical skills, this course will provide an arena to stretch your critical thinking muscles and apply creative and design thinking to hypothetical business scenarios. Throughout the semester, we will also confront complicated ethical questions as they relate to business and industry, challenging you to think holistically about professional domains beyond the communicative aspects. By the end of the semester, you will gain experience in conducting market research, proposing business plans, campaigning for investments, and working closely with a team.

Assignments & Units

Unit 1 – Job Application Documents (~5 pages + 10 min interview) | 25%

This unit will challenge you to construct a professional identity. You will create a series of job documents, including a resume, cover letter, and job ad analysis, and you will prepare for and complete a mock professional interview with me, all of which will aid you in your professional development.

Unit 2 – White Paper and Market Research (10+ pages)| 25%

In this unit you will write a white paper, a longform research document often used to summarize what is known about a given subject. This report will require extensive research and document design, as you will aim to construct a report that is both comprehensive and engaging as a public facing document. Your white paper will compile market research in a particular industry and propose a new business service or product to fill an identifiable market gap.

Unit 3 – Crowdfunded Campaigns (10 min presentation) | 25%

For the final unit of the course, you will work collaboratively with a team of other students in order to create a multimodal, digital campaign seeking either funding for a product/service you wish to promote or awareness/action for a social problem you seek to solve. (Note: teamwork is not optional.) The final product will come in the form of a web-based campaign that includes many types of media like video, images, text, promotional materials, and more. Campaigns will be presented to the class.

Blackboard Responses + Small Assignments| 15%

You must complete weekly Blackboard posts in response to the week's readings, due Fridays at midnight. Additionally, there will be small assignments to be completed both in and outside of class throughout the semester. There may also be brief quizzes over reading material and class concepts.

Participation and Professional Ethos | 10%

Participation in this class is necessary and takes many different forms, including: attendance, being on time, and being prepared for classes; actively participating in class discussions by offering up relevant examples from the reading, your own ideas, and other forms of evidence; working diligently on in-class assignments, including individual in-class writing, collaborative work, and short writing assignments; and being a positive and professional member of the class.

Selected Course Readings Outside Textbook
- [Most Likely to Succeed](#)
- [The Ethics of Crowdfunding](#)
- [Organizations Appear More Unethical Than Individuals](#)
- [Democracy's Wisdom: An Aristotelian Middle Way for Collective Judgment](#)
- [Elevator Pitches, Crowdfunding, and the Rhetorical Politics of Entrepreneurship](#)