Writing 200: Introduction to Professional Writing

Syllabus

Contact Information
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Course Description
This course will introduce you to the world of professional writing by surveying its current issues, theories and practices, career opportunities, and important tools. You will get a first-hand view of the work lives of professional writers, learn how to respond effectively to professional and workplace writing scenarios with rhetorical principles and strategies, have a basic understanding of the opportunities and demands of a career in professional writing, and start developing a portfolio of some of your best professional written work that will set you on this career path. This course will serve as a foundation for future work in professional writing.

Course Objectives

- Understanding what "professional writing" means and the challenges a professional writer faces in a visual and digital age
- Analyzing a variety of professional contexts and designing communication that fulfill goals of those contexts
- Employing rhetorical strategies and principles of user-centered information design for effective communication
- Employing writing as a research process and practicing important research skills for professional writers
- Learning proficiency in using significant tools for professional writers
- Learning effective collaboration strategies

Text
Required: Susan Blau and Kathryn Burak: Writing in the Works

Assignments

Profiles: Writing about Others
Write a five- to seven-page profile. Choose a person who identifies as a professional writer or whose job includes a significant amount of workplace writing. Choose a person to whom you have access and whom you can interview in person. Paint a word portrait, complete with interpretation and analysis.

Websites: Writing for Electronic Sources
We will localize one of our other assignments for a particular online source.

Memoirs: Writing a Narrative
Write a memoir, a true story about some part of your life. Your story can relate a single event or a series of closely linked events. Show a change of mind or heart, a discovery, a confirmation or contradiction of a belief, a disappointment, or a decision.

Public Service Messages: Writing Appeals
Find a nonprofit group or organization in your community that offers information or services that could benefit the public. This organization will be your client. Develop a portfolio of three public service messages and one pitch letter introducing
your work to this new client. Your aim is to serve your community by raising awareness of an issue, initiating a new behavior or attitude, or changing a behavior or attitude. Genre form: advertisement, brochure, script, or website.

Proposals: Writing for your Community
Write a three- to five-page proposal that suggests a fresh way to help solve a local, community, or global public problem. Your proposal might take the form of a grant proposal, a letter requesting funding or other support for a program, an editorial-article that proposes a solution. Proposals are often written by teams such as groups of citizens or staff members. You can make this a group project and experience the kind of debate and compromise that goes into the process of effecting social change.

News Stories: Writing the Public Record
Write a two- to three-page news report suitable for publication in a local newsletter or internet magazine. You can focus on such things as a public lecture or meeting, a poetry reading or literary event, a community event or public program, a special event in the life of a local person.