Fall 2018

08

**Fall**



Writ 340: Advanced Writing for Business

AndREW Murr

PART-TIME lecturer of Business Communication

**Section**: 66789 | 6:30 – 7:50 p.m.

**Classroom**: JFF 312

**Office**: Accounting ACC 227

**Office Hours**: T-TH 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. and by appt.

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Course Description and Goals

Welcome to Writing 340! This is a course in Advanced Writing designed to assist you to write clearly and effectively in any environment—academic, professional or personal. In WRIT 340 you will analyze and write about issues of broad public concern and address questions of ethical decision-making. The course’s over-arching goal is to help you produce thoughtful writing that is clear, concise, correct and coherent. The skills you master here should serve you a lifetime.

The business version of WRIT 340, Advanced Writing for Business, is specifically designed to help you write more effectively in the workplace. You’ll improve your general ability to research and evaluate complex ideas; to appreciate and develop the skill of effective argumentation; and to write clear, grammatical, well-structured communications. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of analyzing audience and tailoring content and style to produce writing that has impact. No prior knowledge of business terminology is expected or required.

Building on the skills you gained in WRIT 140 (or its equivalent), you will explore business writing techniques and strategies through in-class lectures and exercises, individual writing assignments (in and out of class) and a team project. You’ll research and write three papers, revise two of them for an end-of term portfolio and, in a group project, help write and edit a business plan. In addition, students will meet me at least twice for attend one-on-one conferences to address individual issues.

WRIT 340 will require real work. But if you invest the effort, you’ll make significant gains in your writing very quickly.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on improving your understanding of the basic principles of good writing and how you may use these principles to write effectively in a wide variety of business-related contexts. You will learn to communicate effectively in writing using Plain English and traditional and new communication media for different audiences.

Specifically, at the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Practice writing in the clear, persuasive style of effective business writing by using **“Plain English” and its “4Cs”**: conciseness, coherence, clarity, and correctness *and planning, outlining, writing and revising a variety of business documents*.

2. Analyze your intended audiences and make effective choices about writing tone, style, and form *by learning how to tailor communication to specific audiences*.

3. Select and strategically utilize traditional and new communication media *by learning about the applications and preferred usages of those media*.

4. Plan, create, and perfect a variety of business documents—including, memos, letters, e-mails, blog posts, proposals, and reports—using appropriate headings, layout, and typography *by applying rules of document purpose and design*.

5. Conduct research using a broad range of sources *by applying secondary and primary methods of research, such as utilizing databases and open sources, practicing key word searches, and conducting interviews*.

6. Synthesize and evaluate the quality of collected information *by critically analyzing the value, credibility, and relevance of sources*.

7. Support written claims with logical, skeptical and persuasive reasoning, and critique the reasoning in the writing of others by applying critical thinking skills.

8. Understand the importance of business ethics and its implications for business and business communication *by discussing moral decision-making and approaches to ethics, such as utilitarianism, and how they translate into business contexts*.

9. Collaborate productively with others *by completing writing and editing tasks*.

10. Express your ideas and conduct yourself in a professional manner *by creating written communication under consideration of all objectives above*.

**Alignment with USC and Marshall’s Learning Goals**

This course is designed to meet USC’s requirement for Advanced Writing as well as selected Marshall Learning Goals listed in Appendix 1.

COURSE COMMUNICATION\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We will use the **Blackboard course management system** for posting assignments, grades, threaded discussions, and chat rooms. It is important, therefore, that you become familiar with Blackboard navigation and **check the course CONTENT and ANNOUNCEMENTS at blackboard.usc.edu and your USC email before every class.All materials posted on Blackboard are for your use only and you are prohibited from distributing them to anyone else. All out-of-class assignments MUST be submitted via Turnitin for grading.**

**Email:** You can forward the university email to your other accounts, but be sure that you check for email using your **USC Marshall address** before every class. When you email me, type the specific topic on the subject line **--** *EXAMPLE: Memo Assignment*

Prerequisites

**Other requirements:**

* Standard word-processing software (Microsoft Word)
* Access to a laser printer or equivalent
* A working USC email account that you check daily

WRIT 140 or equivalent.

TEXTBOOKS/READINGS

**Required:**

***The Business Writer’s Companion*** by Alred, Bruslaw and Oliu (available at the USC Bookstore)

Two to three Harvard Business School case studies, at a cost of about $6 each.

Supplementary material will be distributed on Blackboard during the course. Check CONTENT.

**Strongly recommended (optional to buy):**

* *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, or any other daily paper (Business Section, Opinion Section, “Career Builder” supplement, etc.)
* Magazines, journals, trade publications related to business (Barron’s, Fortune Magazine, The Economist, Bloomberg Businessweek, etc.)

**Podcasts/Radio Shows available on NPR**:

 Planet Money

 Marketplace

Assignments/Grading

The course has five major assignments – three papers, a group project and a final portfolio. Critical Thinking Analysis, Ethics Paper, Group Project, and Portfolio assignments are mandatory for all sections of Writing 340 - Advanced Writing for Business. I’ll assign other in-class exercises and homework.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Percent** | **Points** |
| Business Trend Analysis (Portfolio Eligible) | 17.5 | 175 |
| Critical Thinking Analysis (Portfolio Eligible) | 20 | 200 |
| Business Ethics Paper (Portfolio Eligible) | 20 | 200 |
| Portfolio | A **thorough** reworking and polishing of **two** papers  | 15 | 150 |
| Group Project | Individual and Team Contributions / Deliverables | 15 | 150 |
| Professionalism: Homework, Attendance, In-class writing assignments, Participation. In-class activities that you miss **cannot** be made up. Active participation including attendance, preparedness for class discussions, engagement with non-graded assignments and solid contributions to peer review and group assignments are each important. Homework must be submitted by the assigned deadline for credit.  | 125 | 125(approx.) |
| **TOTAL GRADE**  | 100 | **1,000** |
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**Assignment Submission Policy:**

All Assignments must be turned in on the deadline electronically via Blackboard**.** Late assignments will receive a full-grade deduction per day beyond deadline unless you’ve obtained my permission **in advance.** To pass the course, a student must complete the five major assignments (three papers, portfolio and group project).

**EVALUATION AND GRADING CRITERIA**

**Grading Rubric:**

I’ll evaluate your papers using the USC Writing Program’s Grading Rubric for Advanced Writing. The rubric assesses level of sophistication in exploring issues set forth in assignment, cogency and insightfulness of argument and analysis, support, organizational clarity and logical force, professional maturity in syntax, grammar/mechanics, mature awareness of the academic, professional, and public issues attending to majors, disciplines, and professions, I’ll also evaluate your paper in comparison to your peers’ writing. You’ll find the rubric in the Appendix. *Please allow at least ten working days for the grading of major assignments.*

**Final Grades**

Final grades will follow the guidelines issued by USC’s Office of Academic Records and Registrar: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/grades/gradinghandbook/gradingpolicies.html#Definitions%20of%20Grades%20and%2.0Marks>. Incompletes will only be considered under extenuating circumstances.

**Posting of Final Grades**

Final grades may be accessed on OASIS (<https://camel2.usc.edu/OASIS/Login.aspx>), or through USC’s TouchTone Grades System at 213-740-9088.

**Retention of Graded Papers**

Returned papers may be discarded four weeks after the University posts course grades, and hence, may not be available should a grade appeal be pursued following receipt of your course grade.

**Polished Drafts**

Because good writing requires rigorous re-writing, the drafts you exchange with other students in peer reviews must be ***polished (not rough)***. A polished draft is a preliminary version of the assignment that has been meticulously proofread. It must also be the correct length - as specified by the "Guidelines" for each assignment.

**Peer Review**

An important part of this course is a series of writing workshops in which students critique peer drafts for major assignments. In peer reviews, you will benefit from the feedback you receive. You’ll also benefit by reading the papers of your colleagues. Submission of your polished draft to me and your peers and participation in peer review are mandatory. All drafts must be submitted to Blackboard the night before the peer review session, when you exchange drafts with other students. Failure to participate will hurt your professionalism grade, as will half-hearted participation.

**The Portfolio**

Consider the portfolio your final exam. In it, you’ll rewrite and polish two of the three individual papers. Your grade will be a combination of the two papers’ grades. The new grade on the portfolio does not change the initial scores you received on the two papers.

ONE-ON-ONE WRITING CONFERENCES

We will meet one-on-one at least twice at my office. These mandatory sessions will offer you an opportunity to discuss specific writing issues; *they are not intended to be discussions about your grades*. Be certain to bring your last graded assignment as well as your in-progress writing so we have something to work with. Also, pay close attention to any special requirements for each conference that I might mention in class. *Failure to attend a scheduled conference will hurt your professionalism grade.*

In addition, I encourage you to stop by for non-scheduled visits during my posted office hours. Often, a short conversation about your particular writing questions can save you hours of trouble later on. If you have a class during my office hours, please see my about scheduling an office visit that works for us both.

PROFESSIONALISM: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Attendance and punctuality**

Consider the classroom a professional environment where active participation is paramount. Since if you fail to attend classes, you can’t take part in class discussions, in-class assignments and group activities, I expect you to attend ***all*** scheduled class sessions and to be in your seat, ready to learn, at the start of class. ***More than two unexcused absences will hurt your final participation grade***. If you have three or more unexcused absences or are consistently late to class prior to the last day to withdraw from a course with a grade of *W*, I may ask you to withdraw.

These policies maintain professionalism, boost participation and ensure a system that is fair to all students. Absences for non-emergency issues must be cleared with me **in advance**. Or course, absences will be excused for compelling personal reasons (death in the family, significant illness, hospitalization, etc.) or unavoidable professional reasons (job interview) with proper communication *before the fact*. You will be marked absent for the day if you are more than ten minutes late to class, or if you leave early without advance permission. (This means that just as you would do in a professional setting, you should keep me posted in advance on all unavoidable schedule conflicts). All attendance issues must be resolved within twenty-four hours of their occurrence. Don’t wait until the end of the semester to decide that an absence earlier in the semester should have been excused.

Participation and classroom demeanor

 All students should be *active contributors* to the class, not passive listeners. Please volunteer answers to the questions I ask; ask questions yourself; request clarification if I’m not clear; challenges me if you disagree with an idea I have presented; and contribute useful and relevant comments. Your active engagement makes the class more fun, engaging and meaningful. More bluntly, active participation helps your professionalism grade. Passivity, including answering only when called upon, does not.

Technology Use

 *Laptops and tablets are allowed in class* only for in-class assignments and note-taking. *All phones must be turned off.* While you are in class you are expected to conduct yourself professionally. I expect you’ll focus exclusively in class on WRIT 340. Unauthorized use of electronic devices will hurt your professionalism grade.

Preparation

Come to class fully prepared, with all required written assignments and reading completed, *even if you were unable to attend a previous class meeting.*

**Assignments and Due Dates**

Assignments must be turned in at the *beginning* of the class period. TWO submissions are required for each major paper: 1) an electronic copy to TURNITIN, and 2) a printed copy. *Any assignment turned in late will receive a grade deduction.* If you are unable to attend class on the day a major written assignment is due, make arrangements for it to be submitted on time. Later than one week, the grade on any paper will be 0 (zero) points. Late or not, however, you MUST complete ALL major assignments (three papers, group project and portfolio) to pass this course.

Assignment Specifics

**Document Format** (articles, memos, and letters)

* Type format: 11-12 point, Times New Roman font, single-spaced, one-inch margins, pages 2-x numbered.

Selected Electronic Resources:

 <http://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf>

<http://owl.purdue.edu/owl>

<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/business>

<http://webster.commnet.edu/writing/writing.htm>

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/>

WRITING CONSULTANT AND THE USC WRITING CENTER

You may schedule 30-minute appointments with writing consultants at USC’s Writing Center who are trained to assist you in planning, organizing, correcting, and revising your assignments. The Writing Center provides two options for meeting with writing consultants.

You may schedule an appointment with the USC Writing Center (WC) located in Taper Hall Room 216.

Writing consultations are excellent resources for students who want to improve their writing. Some WC consultants have special skills in working with students for whom English is a second language.

In addition to one-on-one consultations, the WC will offers a series of Writing Modules designed to help non-native speakers develop the skills they need to succeed in WRIT 340. The WC offers daily workshops on troublesome language and grammar issues open to all students. The USC Writing Center Web site is located at: <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>. You may also find two other online resources helpful. These meta-Web sites are: <http://webster.commnet.edu/writing/writing.htm> and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_edit.html>

It will usually be up to you to take advantage of the resources that Marshall and the Writing Center offer. On occasion, however, I will require visits to Stewart or the Writing Center—sometimes on a regular basis—if I believe you need the extra help. If you do access these services, please make sure the consultant notifies me by email so that I have a record of your extra effort.

academic conduct and support systems

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>.  Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable.  See additional information in *SCampus*and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/).

**Documenting Sources**

In partial fulfillment of the Academic Integrity policy, you must properly document all sources following *Modern Language Association (MLA) Guidelines.* You may download guidelines from the Web site <http://www.mla.org>, from the MyMarshall Web portal (Academic Tab; scroll down and click on Marshall Library; click on Library Resources; click on Citations & Academic Integrity) and click on or from the USC Writing Center’s Web site (listed above).

To maintain the integrity of the academic process, **only** original work created for WRIT 340 during the current semester is eligible for grade consideration. **Thus, if you have written or are writing a paper for another course, you may not use it in any fashion in WRIT 340.**

**Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

*Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website:<http://sarc.usc.edu/>

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.<https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and micro aggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response.<https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

*Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic.<https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC*

Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

Assistance with Papers

In this course we encourage peer review, since it’s almost always helpful to have another set of eyes take a look at your paper and offer comments and suggestions. But where exactly is the boundary between helpful advice and illegitimate collaboration? Where should you draw the line?

The following guidelines from the Writing Program answer this question explicitly:

The Writing Program encourages collaboration with your instructor, with Writing Center consultants, and with your classmates; such interactions constitute one of the most important and effective means by which writing is taught. In undertaking collaborative interactions, however, remember that you are finally responsible for guaranteeing that the resulting text represents your abilities and authority and not those of the persons assisting you, however well-meaning they may be. A simple guideline may help: *Never allow someone else to construct a section of your text longer than one or two sentences that you would not be able to produce on your own, and never allow anyone to copy-edit more than the first page of your paper.*

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

 Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.  *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* ([www.usc.edu/disability](http://www.usc.edu/disability))provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.  If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* (<http://emergency.usc.edu/>) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

ADD/DROP PROCESS

To comply with Marshall’s policies, WRIT 340 classes are open enrollment (R-clearance) through the first week of class. All classes are closed (switched to D-clearance) at the end of the first week. This policy is designed to minimize the complexity of the registration process for students by standardizing across classes. I can drop you from my class if you do not attend the first two sessions in classes that meet two or three times a week or if you do not attend the first session of a class that meets once a week.

***Please note:*** If you decide to drop, or if you choose not to attend the first sessions without notifying me and are dropped, you risk being unable to add another WRIT 340 course this semester. Sections are usually full and professors are often reluctant to add students after the first week.

These policies maintain professionalism and ensure a system that is fair to all students.

emergency preparedness/COURSE CONTINUITY

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC’s executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, or other technologies.

**\* \* \* \***

***This syllabus is our contract for the semester. However, because students have different learning styles, I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus to fit the needs of each section. Remember that flexibility is a virtue, especially in a professional setting. So, if I determine that the class needs more (or less) emphasis on a particular area, I will adjust the syllabus accordingly, to the extent that I am allowed to do so within the constraints of the overall requirements for Writing 340.***

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| **APPENDIX 1.****Alignment of Course Learning Objectives with Marshall’s Six Undergraduate Program Learning Goals** |
| **Goal** | **Marshall Program Learning Goal Description Covered in this Course** **(Goals 3, 5, 6 and relevant selected sub-goals)** | **Emphasis/Relation to Course Objectives** | **Relevant Course Topics** |
| **3** | Our graduates will demonstrate critical thinking skills *so as to become future-oriented decision makers, problem solvers and innovators.*Specifically, students will:3.1 Students will understand the concepts of critical thinking, entrepreneurial thinking and creative thinking as drivers of innovative ideas (not explicit for this course).3.2 Critically analyze concepts, theories and processes by stating them in their own words, understanding key components, identifying assumptions, indicating how they are similar to and different from others and translating them to the real world.3.3 Be effective at gathering, storing, and using qualitative and quantitative data and at using analytical tools and frameworks to understand and solve business problems.3.4 Demonstrate the ability to anticipate, identify and solve business problems. They will be able to identify and assess central problems, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and translate a chosen solution to an implementation plan that considers future contingencies.  | **High****(Course learning objectives 1-10)** | Trend Analysis paperCritical Thinking paperBusiness Ethics PaperWriting Labs—Peer reviews (for major papers)Group Business ProjectCase Studies to support critical thinkingBusiness document writing assignments |
| **5** | Our graduates will demonstrate ethical reasoning skills, understand social, civic, and professional responsibilities *and aspire to add value to society.*Specifically, students will:5.1 Understand professional codes of conduct.5.2 Recognize ethical challenges in business situations and assess appropriate courses of action. | **Moderate****(Course learning objectives 7, 8)** | Business Ethics PaperCSR case studiesEthics mini-case exercises Ethical decision making framework |
| **6** | Our graduates will be effective communicators *to facilitate information flow in organizational, social, and intercultural contexts.* Specifically, students will:6.1 Identify and assess diverse personal and organizational communication goals and audience information needs. 6.2 Understand individual and group communications patterns and dynamics in organizations and other professional contexts.6.3 Demonstrate an ability to gather and disseminate information and communicate it clearly, logically, and persuasively in professional contexts. | **High****(Course learning objectives 1-10)** | Trend Analysis paperEthics PaperCritical thinking paperBusiness Writing Boot campPeer ReviewsAudience analysis in business writingGroup projectCase studies |
|  |
| **Marshall Undergraduate Program Goals not Explicitly Covered by this Course (Goals 1, 2, 4)** |
| **1** | Our graduates will understand types of markets and key business areas and their interaction *to effectively manage different types of enterprises.*Specifically, students will:1.1 Demonstrate foundational knowledge of core business disciplines, including business analytics and business economics. 1.2 Understand the interrelationships between functional areas of business so as to develop a general perspective on business management. 1.3 Apply theories, models, and frameworks to analyze relevant markets (e.g. product, capital, commodity, factor and labor markets). 1.4 Show the ability to utilize technologies (e.g., spreadsheets, databases, software) relevant to contemporary business practices. |
| **2** | Our graduates will develop a global business perspective. They will understand how local, regional, and international markets, and economic, social and cultural issues impact business decisions *so as to anticipate new opportunities in any marketplace.* Specifically, students will:2.1 Understand how local, regional and global markets interact and are impacted by economic, social and cultural factors.2.2 Understand that stakeholders, stakeholder interests, business environments (legal, regulatory, competitor) and business practices vary across regions of the world. |
| **4** | Our graduates will develop people and leadership skills to promote their effectiveness as *business managers and leaders.*Specifically, students will:4.1 Recognize, understand, and analyze the motivations and behaviors of stakeholders inside and outside organizations (e.g., teams, departments, consumers, investors, auditors).4.2 Recognize, understand and analyze the roles, responsibilities and behaviors of effective managers and leaders in diverse business contexts e.g., marketing, finance, accounting.4.3 Understand factors that contribute to effective teamwork. |

Appendix 2: Paper grading guide for WRIT 340 courses

 ***Advanced Writing Courses: General Evaluation Rubric (used in all WRIT 340 classes)***

The following rubric outlines the general criteria used to assign grades in Writing 340 classes. The + and - grades allow instructors to make finer qualitative distinctions concerning their students' ability at each grade point: A +, F +, and F- are not recognized by the University.

In general, thoughtful, critical papers are most esteemed. Those that demonstrate overall organizational and argumentative/analytical skills will usually be rewarded over those that merely reveal sentence-level competence. Those that fail to respond to all aspects of the assignment will usually not receive a passing grade. Students should understand that the bar is raised for work in Writing 340 relative to that in Writing 140. The advanced student must show even greater sophistication in terms of engaging themes and arguments and adeptly employing sources.

In evaluating a paper, the Lecturer first makes a C/D decision, judging whether a paper fulfills the criteria that mark the competence expected in the "C" range, or whether the paper remains in need of the extensive revision that marks the "D" range. After having made this initial judgment, the instructor then decides whether competent papers demonstrate the strengths that mark "B" or "A" writing, and whether weaker writing should be lowered to "F."

**The C/D Distinction**

**C WRITING *will***:

***Fully address and explore the issues set forth in the assignment***. The paper fully responds to the writing task and explores the complexities of the issues raised. The author demonstrates reliable knowledge about the subject and effectively conveys this to his or her audience.

***Present a clear argument or analysis***. The writer responds to the assigned topic in a direct, usually thoughtful, and sometimes forceful manner; the paper demonstrates a consistent point of view.

***Use effective support and reasoning to bring about the overall project***. The argument or analysis receives relevant support; the author includes enough well-chosen material to sustain what he or she is trying to do. The writer incorporates references and sources appropriately, distinguishes between primary and secondary sources, and employs a recognized scholarly apparatus.

***Display strong organization, paragraph development, and logical transition***. The author demonstrates a good sense of structural control; the paper's form directly contributes to its purpose; transitions are mostly effective.

***Use a style and tone that is appropriate to the purpose***. The language used supports the author's purposes and is suited to the particular audience -- public, professional, or academic.

***Display college-level competence in syntax***. Minor surface errors don't seriously detract from the paper's purposes or interfere with the reader's comprehension of the essay.

***Conscientiously acknowledge the significance of academic, professional, and public issues attending to different majors, disciplines, and career fields.*** Upper-division writing is not composed in a vacuum but, rather, attempts to comply with the standards for discourse within specific majors, minors, and career fields as well as those for interdisciplinary audiences.

**D WRITING *will***:

***Address the issues set forth in the assignment in a limited fashion.*** While the paper attempts to explore the complexities of the issues raised in the assignment, it treats them simplistically.

***Offer a competent but severely limited argument/analysis in response to the assignment topic.*** While the argument or analysis may be plausible, fairly clear, and generally consistent, it fails to exhibit the careful thinking and overall cogency necessary for "C" writing.

***Incorporate at least minimally appropriate support and references -- properly cited -- to sustain the overall argument/analysis.*** The analysis or argument is supported by some credible evidence, but often the support is inadequate, unconvincing, or overly derivative. In addition, an appropriate scholarly apparatus is attempted.

***Display baseline competence in overall organization, paragraph development, and logical transition,*** even if it still exhibits organizational or analytic/argumentative weaknesses. The author demonstrates marginal structural control in that the reader can discern the direction that the writer is taking, and why he or she is doing so.

***Use a style and tone intended to be appropriate to the purpose***. The language used at least partially supports the author's purposes and is suited to the particular audience -- public, professional, or academic.

***Display rudimentary competence in syntax***. Existing surface errors don't seriously detract from the paper's purposes or radically interfere with the reader's comprehension of the essay.

***Indicate some cognizance of the academic, professional, and public issues attending to majors, disciplines, and professions.***

**Features of A, B, and F Writing**

**A WRITING *will***:

***Undertake a sophisticated exploration of the issues set forth in the assignment***. The author is able to negotiate the complexities of the issues raised in a provocative, controlled manner. The author fully responds to the writing task, demonstrating a mature knowledge about the subject and a judicious sense of audience.

***Present a decidedly cogent and insightful argument and analysis***. The writer responds to the assigned topic in a consistently forceful manner that is not only thoughtful but also thought-provoking and well-articulated.

***Provide compelling support for the overall argument and analysis***. The author includes a strong balance of extremely well-chosen materials to emphatically support what he or she is trying to do. The writer displays both facility and confidence in the use of primary and secondary materials, and employs them to further his or her own authority and point of view, citing them fully and in appropriate fashion.

***Develop its argument or analysis with organizational clarity and logical force***. The author directs the writer-reader transaction masterfully and convincingly.

***Employ a style that elevates the paper's effectiveness and furthers its purposes in terms of its intended context.***

***Display professional maturity in syntax***. Surface errors are virtually non-existent; the reader is left free simply to enjoy the author's style and tone as well as the intellectual force of the writing.

***Exhibit a distinct appreciation of the academic, professional, and public issues that attend to composition within disciplines, majors, and career fields.***

**B WRITING *will***:

***Demonstrate strong and purposeful engagement with the issues set forth in the assignment***. The author is able to negotiate the complexities of the issues raised with maturity and authority. The author fully responds to the writing task, demonstrating a reliable knowledge about the subject and a good sense of audience.

***Present a clear and thoughtful argument and analysis***. The writer responds to the assigned topic in a manner that is thoughtful and strongly articulated; the paper demonstrates a strong and often compelling point of view.

***Provide effective support for the overall argument and analysis***. The author includes a good balance of well-chosen materials to support what he or she is trying to do. The writer displays facility in the use of primary and secondary materials, and employs them to further his or her own authority and point of view, citing them fully and in appropriate fashion.

***Develop its argument or analysis with organizational coherence and logical force***. The author controls the writer-reader transaction purposefully and effectively.

***Employ a style that reinforces the paper's effectiveness and supports its purposes in terms of its intended context.***

***Display maturity in syntax***. Surface errors rarely appear and are inconsequential: the reader is hardly ever distracted by surface matters, and the author's meaning is always clear.

***Exhibit an appreciation of the academic, professional, and public issues that attend to composition within disciplines, majors, and career fields.***

**F WRITING *will:***

***Offer a limited argument/analysis in response to the assignment while compounding the flaws found in "D" writing. Failing writing will***:

***Not address the issues set forth in the assignment seriously or sufficiently.*** The paper treats the issues simplistically; the argument/analysis repeatedly overlooks the complexity of the issues raised. The author, in addition, may fail to respond to all aspects of the writing task.

***Exhibit an implausible, unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent analysis/argument.*** The paper lacks the cogency and purpose necessary for competent college-level writing; the essay consistently fails to exhibit careful thinking.

***Contain inadequate, unconvincing, irrelevant, or derivative support***. The essay accumulates derivative and/or anecdotal examples without integrating them into a focused analysis or argument. The writer relies on inappropriate or weak sources and reasoning to sustain the overall discussion. The author may not include enough material to support the purposes of the paper. Often, too, such writing fails adequately to acknowledge sources.

***Display flaws in organization, paragraph development, or logical transition***. The essay lacks structural fluency: organizational flaws cause a lack of overall coherence, undermining the paper's purposes. The reader is too often puzzled by the course the essay takes, or the essay relies too exclusively on formulaic organization, thereby becoming stilted and predictable.

***Use an inappropriate style or tone***. The manner of expression detracts from the purposes of the essay or is inappropriate to its intended audience.

***Contain notable flaws in syntax***. Mechanical errors detract from the paper's purposes or interfere with the reader's comprehension. Significant problems in grammar make the writing unclear and confusing.

***Fail to pay attention to the importance of the academic, professional, or public issues that apply to writing within different disciplines.***

***Analytical Terms for Use in Diagnosis, Response, & Evaluation***

In order to explain to students both the strengths of their papers as well as what they might do to improve their writing, Lecturers find it helpful to have a concise set of analytical or descriptive terms that can be used to discuss important dimensions of a text. With time, most Lecturers develop a vocabulary suited to this purpose, and the six terms described below are not offered as being unique or original -- they are often, in fact, the same terms (or close synonyms) that are used by many writers to discuss their craft. They reflect most of the qualities defined in University Writing class grading standards and can, therefore, serve both as a basis for evaluation and as a common vocabulary relating the diagnosis of texts to an explanatory response.

**ADDRESSING THE ISSUES**

This criterion covers the extent to which the paper explores the assignment’s issues in *sufficient depth, and with suitable scope and complexity*. Superior essays address all aspects of the writing task, including the professional, public, or academic implications of that task. The best papers also display a cognizance of audience and genre.

**ARGUMENTATIVE FORCE & COHERENCE**

The insight, cogency, and strength of analysis, all in service to the paper's thesis are what are measured. Good essays clearly, consistently engage an argument or theme, and not simply through repetition or stridency of tone. (Argumentative force is not tantamount to raising one's "voice" on the page.)

**ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE**

The categories measure lucid arrangement of the paper, both in terms of its overall structure and flow and of its individual paragraphs and the transitions between them. The best essays marshal their arguments in logical fashion, and the resulting sense of order is as apparent to the reader as it is to the writer.

**SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT**

These points gauge the extent to which the writer backs the paper's assertions with compelling examples, evidence, and reasoning. In addition, the writer should adjust the level of detail, explanation and development to the target audience – whether it consists of sophisticated colleagues or inexperienced laypeople. A facility for selecting and working with both primary and secondary sources is also an attribute of strong support and development.

**STYLE & TONE**

Assessing the effectiveness of the paper's sentence structure, word choice, fluency, and manner of expression in terms of its purpose and audience is the point here. Superior tone and style compel the reader's attention and assist comprehension. Still, style and tone in a business setting should never seem contrived or cute; nor do they assume a cleverness that overshadows the text itself. In fact, they work best when they are nearly invisible, except to the discerning reading eye.

**SYNTAX & FORMAT**

The quality of the paper at the sentence level: mechanics, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and effective use of an accepted scholarly apparatus (method of citation). Good syntax and format permit the reader to quickly and clearly read a text without stumbling over surface-level problems that cause ambiguity, confusion or frustration.