WRTG 4001: Business Plan and Proposal Writing (3 Credits)
Course Syllabus Fall 2014

Instructor: Heather Stone

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Welcome to our online Business Plan and Proposal Writing class. I assume you are here because you either have an interest in writing, a need to produce a funding document, or both. Whether you intend to write plans and proposals as a career, or you just want to become familiar with this specialized (and in demand) form of writing, you can benefit from this class.

OFFICE HOURS

I am available to meet with you by appointment via telephone, Skype, Canvas chat room, or in-person. I am also pretty quick to answer email, at least during the hours a normal person would be awake. I recommend telephone conferences for longer or complicated questions, while Canvas chat and email often suffice for simple questions. Of course, I won't answer Canvas chat unless I am online.

When you take an online class, it is common to feel isolated or to be unclear on course requirements. I encourage you to speak up to me or your classmates any time you have questions or need to connect with an actual human being.

To schedule a meeting with me, email your request.

PREREQUISITES

- Successful completion of *Writing 2010: Intermediate Writing* or equivalent
- Basic computer proficiency
- Internet access with a speedy connection
- Audio and video playback capability

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is about creating funding documents: business plans, grant requests, and sales proposals. Funding documents generate money in the form of investments, donations, and revenue, and the people who can create effective funding documents have many opportunities in profit and non-profit organizations. In this course, you will learn how to produce a document from beginning to end. You will also practice evaluating other people's documents.

NOTE: Perhaps you want to write a business plan for operational purposes, rather than funding ones. That's ok. You still belong in this class. Some people even argue that an operational plan and a funding plan are essentially the same. We will address the various purposes of business plans and proposals in the first module.

SELECTING A TRACK

During the first two weeks of this class, you will select the "track" that best suits you:

- Business Plans
- Grant Requests
- Sales Proposals

The materials in the first module will help you select a track, though for some of you the choice may be obvious.

Many topics apply to all tracks. However, some topics are necessarily more specific. For example, all students will practice catering to audience when writing a funding document, but only grant track students will research the specific requirements of grant-funders.

Your choice of track determines which textbook you will purchase and which student group you will join. You will work with others in the same track—in a guided process I provide that is designed to keep you from becoming too annoyed with each other—to create a business plan, grant request, or sales proposal for a real-life organization.

Grouping you into tracks allows me to better tailor course content to your interests. If you have questions about tracks after we cover them in more detail in module one, please speak up.

COURSE MATERIALS

Each of the three tracks has its own books (one required, some optional). We will read selections rather than entire books. I will provide your book options in the first module, giving you plenty of time to procure them before you need them in module three. Most of the books will be available new or used, hardback or softback, from the Internet or the Marriott Library. Many are also available to buy or rent in eBook format. Select the format that suits your preferences and budget, but *be sure to purchase the edition I have listed* (check publishing date before you order).

I frequently get asked what books I recommend for business plan and proposal writing. Though there are many other good specialized books, the ones I will recommend are the best general reference materials I have found. New books emerge every year, however, so if you have a favorite, feel free to recommend it to the class in a discussion posting.

Other materials will be provided to you in Canvas.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will learn to analyze and synthesize large quantities of information, distill important points, and present those points powerfully and persuasively in writing. Specifically, I expect you will be able to:

1. List the most common types of readers for business plans and proposals and explain the priorities and concerns of each reader-type.

2. Gather the information necessary to produce a business plan or proposal from people at all levels of an organization.

3. Discriminate between important and unimportant information.

4. Craft compelling single-sentence summaries of what an organization is selling.

5. Organize a business plan or proposal into a structure appropriate for the audience.

6. Write and revise a full-length business plan or proposal.

7. Evaluate business plan and proposal documents created by others; and

8. Utilize telephone, video, and computer-based technologies to collaborate with others and distribute multimedia documents.

ASSIGNMENTS

This class is worth 1,000 points.

See Canvas for more information about each assignment.

CATEGORY	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP GRADE	TOTAL POINTS	PERCENTAGE
Instructor Conferences	Individual	100	10%
Discussion Posts	Individual	100	10%
Mini Writing Assignments	Individual	200	20%
Other Assignments	Individual	200	20%
Final Project	Individual	150	15%
Final Project	Group	250	25%

As you can see, 75% of your grade is based on your individual performance, while 25% is based on the performance of your team. Before you panic, let me offer a little reassurance. The group project has small deliverables along the way to help ensure everybody is doing his or her part, and you will have the opportunity to review each other's work before submitting to me. The process is designed to help the whole group be successful. In the future, you will probably never write a funding document all by yourself, and collaboration is one of the learning objectives for this class. So, yes, you are stuck with doing some group work. If you do your part, it will probably turn out alright.

GRADING

Grades for all assignments will be posted to each student's private record in Canvas. Students will receive a letter grade according to the following scale:

GRADES	PERCENTAGE	DEFINITION
A	94-100	Excellent performance, superior achievement
A-	90-93	
B+	87-89	Good performance, substantial achievement
B+	84-86	
B-	80-83	
C+	77-79	Standard performance and achievement
C+	74-76	
C-	70-73	
D+	67-69	Substandard performance, marginal achievement
D	64-66	
D-	60-63	
E	0-59	Unsatisfactory performance and achievement

MY POLICIES

Assignment Submission: All assignments must be submitted through Canvas by the date and time shown. Do not send assignments via email.

Late Work: Except for assignments related to the final project, late assignments will be accepted with a 10% deduction per day. Late assignments related to the final project will be accepted with a 50% deduction per day. The stiffer penalty is to minimize inconvenience to the group.

Professionalism: Be courteous, polite, and respectful, remembering that it is easy to be misunderstood in an online format where expressions and intonation are not present. Please do not use "ALL CAPS" as this is considered shouting in most online environments. Do not post racist, sexist, vulgar, or rude comments, including obscenities. Do not call other people names, even as a joke. Keep other students' contact information private and do not telephone or text another student or instructor during hours when a reasonable person would expect to be sleeping.

Plagiarism: Do not copy the work of others. Do not submit writing purchased or found on the Internet. Do not cite the work of others without correct notation. Plagiarists automatically fail.

Attendance: I expect you to log on multiple times during each two-week module to read or view the materials, participate in discussions, review other students' work, and submit assignments. You can do this from any location and there is no physical classroom for you to attend. Failure to login during a two-week module will result in loss of points because you will be unable to submit work and participate. In accordance with the official University policy (http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/attend.php), students who will be absent from a specific class to participate in a University-sanctioned activity (intercollegiate athletics, band, student government, etc.), religious observances, or other pre-approved obligations will be permitted to make up work. For an online class, this is interpreted as being unable to login and complete that module's work before the deadlines. Please inform me of the need for scheduling accommodation before the end of the second week of classes.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ADA Accommodation: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodation in this class, reasonable prior notice must be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Bldg, 801-581-5020 (V/TDD), http://disability.utah.edu/. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Content Accommodation: The University recognizes that students' sincerely-held core beliefs might make it difficult for students to fulfill some requirements of some courses or majors. It is the student's obligation to determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with the student's sincerely-held core beliefs. http://admin.utah.edu/facdev/pdf/accommodations-policy-background.pdf

Academic Integrity: http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html

Withdrawals: If you have questions about withdrawal, see your academic advisor or review the official withdrawal policy: http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/withdrawal.php. Please note the deadlines for dropping a course: http://registrar.utah.edu/academic-calendars/fall2014.php.

SCHEDULE

MODULE	DATES	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS (600 PTS)	FINAL PROJECT (400 PTS)
1	8/27-9/2	Purposes of Funding Documents	Discussions: Introductions & Why Bother (50 pts) Mini Writing: Who Am I? (50 pts)	
	9/3-9/9			
2	9/10-9/16	Who Cares	Audiences (50 pts) Instructor Teleconference (50 pts)	Decide Groups
	9/17-9/23			Organization Selection (50 pts)
3	9/24-9/30	Spot the Looney	Discussions: Good, Bad, & Ugly (50 pts)	Make Appointment with Organization (10 pts)
	10/1-10/7			
4	10/8-10/14	Structure	Matchup Games (50 pts) Mini Writing: Who, What, How (100 pts) (10/12-10/19 is Fall Break)	Meet with Organization (10 pts)
	10/22-10/28			
5	10/29-11/4	The Sentence	Super Sentence Activities (100 pts)	Submit List of Sections and Team Assignments (30 pts)
	11/5-11/11			
6	11/12-11/18	Data, Data, Data	Mini Writing: Writing About Numbers and Stats (50 pts) Instructor Conference (50 pts)	Submit the "Sentence" (50 pts)
	11/19-11/25			
7	11/26-12/2	Draft		Submit Individual Sections (100 pts)
	12/3-12/9			Review Another's Section (40 pts)*
8	12/10-12/16	Polish		Submit Full Plan to Instructor (60 pts)*
	12/17-12/19			Submit Full Plan to Client (50 pts)*

* These points may be split into smaller assignments, such as serving as the group leader for the module, in order to facilitate completion of the final document.

Modules are two weeks in length, and they run from Wednesdays 10am to Tuesdays midnight, except the final module which ends on a Friday at midnight because that is the end of the semester. **Assignments will be due on Tuesdays and Saturdays before midnight, unless otherwise specified in Canvas**. If there is any inconsistency between this syllabus and Canvas, Canvas wins.

The first instructor conference needs to be completed during module 2 or 3. The second instructor conference needs to be completed during module 5 or 6. You can do the second teleconference as a group if you prefer. September 1, November 27, and November 28 are official school holidays. No assignments will be due on those days, and you will not be required to login. However, Canvas will remain accessible. Canvas will also be accessible during Fall Break (Oct 12-19), although no participation will be required from you during that week. Please assume I am not available on school holidays and during Fall Break.