



BCMU 301/2

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SYLLABUS Fall 2010

READINGS

- Coursepak
- *Woe Is I*, Patricia T. O'Conner. (PTO)
- *Thank You for Arguing*, Jay Heinrichs, (JH)
- *Presentation Zen*, Garr Reynolds, (GR)
- Recommended: *The Gregg Reference Manual*, 11th ed., William A. Sabin

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To provide diagnosis for bad writing habits and prescriptions for a cure
2. To encourage a methodical, strategic-thinking approach in solving communication problems
3. To teach fundamental rhetorical techniques to enable students to develop professional practical, real-world writing and oral communication skills
4. To provide opportunities to develop group communication skills
5. To teach communications tools necessary for finding a job

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Since an important dimension to this class is using and practicing with the tools you will be taught, I will be calling on each of you randomly to give you the opportunity to think on your feet--or in your seat, as the case may be. In order to participate effectively, you will have to

integrate the information presented to you in the lectures, the packet, and the text as we go along. You will not do well in this class if you wait until the midterm to learn this material.

GRADING

There will be two individual assignments and one group assignment that will be graded acceptable or unacceptable. They are due by the end of your class or you lose 5 points, by 5 pm in my office or you lose ten points for every day thereafter it's late. They will be graded credit/no-credit. An unacceptable assignment must be redone or lose 50 points off a base grade of 500 points. Failure to submit an ungraded assignment will result in a loss of 75 points.

Positive grades will be given for two quizzes (25 points each), on the course readings; for the third letter/memo assignment (50 points), the midterm (150 points), the press kit (125 points), and the group oral report (125 points). My evaluation of your effort, class participation, and improvement could possibly bounce your final grade up or down a point.

Calculating Your Grade: At the end of the quarter, when you know all your scores, add them up and divide by 5 to render a number on a 100-point scale. That number translates into your grade according to the following table:

Grade Scale

98.5	4.0
97	3.9
95.5	3.8
94	3.7
92.5	3.6
91	3.5
89.5	3.4
88	3.3
86.5	3.2
85	3.1
83.5	3.0
82	2.9
80.5	2.8
79	2.7
77.5	2.6
76	2.5
74.5	2.4
73	2.3
71.5	2.2
70	2.1

COURSE SCHEDULE

1	9/30	Course Overview, Problem Solving and Rhetorical Technique	
Introduction/Problem Solving			
JH 1—Open Your Eyes—What is rhetorical technique? Concession, amplification, and commonplace			
This class will focus on the course objectives and the approach that I take toward teaching practical communications skills appropriate for the workplace. We'll introduce the four problem solving steps appropriate for any problem solving challenge, adapted here for CMU challenges, and start discussion of Heinrich's book on rhetorical technique.			
2	10/5	Problems with Pronouns, Plurals—and Intro to Analysis	
PTO 1: Woe Is I—problems with pronouns 2: Plurals before Swine—common mistakes with pluralizing			
JH 2: Set Your Goals—Do you want to win or win over, fight or argue? 4: Soften Them Up—Logos, Pathos, Ethos			
Coursepak: Analysis: pp. 1-7.			
This class will take a look at O'Connor's discussion of common problems writers have with pronouns and pluralizing. It will examine Heinrich's distinction between fighting vs. arguing or the goal to win over than simply to win. We'll then work with material in the coursepak to understand better what we mean by Situation Analysis process: defining the problem, defining the goals, and defining the audience.			
3	10/7	Finding a Job	First Assigmnt distributed today
PTO 3: Your Truly			
JH 3: Control the Tense 5: Get Them to Like You 6: Make Them Listen			
Coursepak: Job Finding Skills, pp. 8-25			
After looking at usage issues with regard to possession and punctuation, we'll quickly define what we mean by forensic, demonstrative, and deliberative rhetorical forms. We'll be looking at how to get ready for the job..			

4	10/12	More on Jobs & Analysis; Basics of Strategy	Analysis & outline due
PTO		4: They Beg to Disagree 6: Comma Sutra	
JH		7: Show Leadership 8: Win Their Trust	
Coursepak: Strategy, pp. 26-31.			
In this class we 'll focus on agreement and punctuation issues, discuss what we mean by leadership and credibility--and how to communicate that you have both. We'll continue where we left of in our discussion of job-finding skills and start discussing the basic elements that compose the Strategy step: Composition and Organization.			
5	10/14	Execution/Evaluation	1st assignment final draft due
PTO		9: The Living Dead 10: Saying Is Believing	
JH		9: Control the Mood 10: Turn the Volume Down	
Coursepak: Execution/Evaluation, pp. 32-48.			
We'll look briefly at some of the most common but obsolete grammar rules you might have been taught, and then focus on O'Connor's Fifteen Rules to "say what you mean." We'll get a little deeper into the role of pathos in rhetoric, and then to the last two of the problem-solving steps. If the strategy stage is about the raw meat and the skeleton of your message, Execution is about dressing it up so it can go out in public. We'll focus on effective paragraphs and formats, vigorous sentence style, and working quickly and efficiently.			
6	10/19	Evaluation	2nd assignment distributed
PTO :		7: The Compleat Dangler 8: Death Sentence,	
JH		11: Gain the High Ground 12: Persuade on Your Terms	
Coursepak: Execution Evaluation, pp. 39-41.			

(Class 6 continued)

This stage is about straightening the tie, polishing the shoes, and making sure everything is perfect. We'll finish up our discussion of PTO and common usage mistakes and work over the assignments you hand in to see what you missed..

7 10/21 Informative Messages 2nd Assignment Rough Due

JH 13: Control the Argument
14: Spot Fallacies
15: Call Foul

Coursepak: Bad News, pp. 42-48.

We'll start looking at how "logos" plays a role in argumentation, and learn how to say "No".

8 10/26 Request Messages, Sales 2nd Assignment final due

JH 16: Know Whom to Trust
17: Find the Sweet Spot
18: Speak your Audience's Language
19: Make Them Identify with Your Choice

Coursepak: Request Messages, Sales Letters — pp. 55-61.

We shift in this class from informational to request messages. We'll spend a little time talking about the direct request and move to Sales letters and the problem/solution strategy.

**9 10/28 Persuasive Requests;
Business Plans 3rd Assignment distributed**

JH 20: Get Instant Cleverness
21: Seize the Occasion
22: Use the Right Medium

Coursepak: Persuasive Requests, pp. 62-67; Business Plans, 68.

In this class we build upon what we learned from junk mail letter strategy to a broader category of persuasive messages in which your goal is to motivate a resistant audience to action. We'll extend this discussion to a consideration of the Business Plan group project. Your job will be to persuade investors to give you the capital you'll need to begin a new business.

10	11/2	More Business Plans; Work Plans	3rd assignment due
JH:	23: Give a Persuasive Talk		
GR	1: Presenting in Today's World		
Coursepak: More Business Plans, pp. 69-75; Work Plans, pp. 76-78.			
We'll go into more detail about the strategies and objectives of a business plan. We'll talk about various investor types and how you have to shape your presentation to meet the investment objectives of each. We'll watch and critique the oral presentation of a group presentation from a previous class.			
11	11/4	Oral Presentations: Developing Content; The Press Kit	
JH:	24: Use the Right Tools 25: Run an Agreeable Country		
GR	2: Creativity, Limitations, and Constraints		
Coursepak: Oral Presentations Content, pp. 88-90.			
We'll talk more about getting organized for the business plan presentation and about how the work plan can help you in that. We'll also introduce the Press Kits project today. I'll give an overview and talk in some detail about how to write a Press Release.			
12	11/9	Press Kit Secondary Pieces	Work plan due
GR	3: Planning Analog 4: Crafting the Story		
Coursepak: Press Kits, pp. 86-87.			
We'll discuss strategies for brochures, backgrounders, websites, videos, and other secondary pieces designed to supplement the cover letter and release.			
13	11/16	Mid-Term	
Test will have two parts. Part I, worth 75 points will be short answer questions testing your knowledge and skills regarding material presented in class so far. Part II will be a 75-point writing exercise similar to the homework assignments you've done. You will have the full two			

hours to complete the test.		
14	11/18	Oral Presentations: VAs & Charts
GR	5: Simplicity—Why It Matters 6: Presentation Design—Principles and Techniques 7: Sample Slides—Images & Text	
Coursepak: Preparing Visual Aids, pp. 91-93.		
We'll talk in this class about the question and answer strategy for developing content for an oral presentation. We'll also be talking about the use PowerPoint and other visual aid possibilities. There are so many ways to go wrong here. You need to learn what they are and avoid them		
15	11/23	Oral Presentations: Delivery
GR	8: The Art of Being Completely Present	
Coursepak: Delivery, p. 94.		
This class will focus on delivery skills and rehearsal strategies. We'll watch a video of a student group and critique the delivery of its presentation, and then outline what goals you should be setting for yourself to achieve as a group when you get in front of the class.		
16	11/30	Oral Reports –Group 1
It's all you now. This will be your opportunity to show me that you've learned what persuasion really means so that by the end of your presentation I'll be salivating to invest with your new startup.		
17	12/2	Oral Reports—Groups 2 & 3
18	12/7	Oral Reports—Groups 4 & 5
19	12/9	Oral Reports—Group 6; Wrap up
In the last class we'll do peer and course evaluations. I'll also be returning your graded Option 1/2 assignments and the evaluations and grades for those groups who have made their presentations in the days preceding.		