SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities and the Arts · English & Comparative Literature

Written Communication: Business

ENGL 100WB

Spring 2026   Section 11   In Person   3 Unit(s)   01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026   Modified 01/21/2026

👤 Contact Information

Class meets in Sweeney Hall (SH) Room 242, T/Th, 9 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Email: sian.sloan@sjsu.edu

Office: Faculty Office Building (FOB) 221

Office Hours: In my office, FOB 221, Tuesday and Thursday, 12-1 p.m.

🖥 Course Description and Requisites

Written communications for business majors; includes minimum of 8,000 words of writing spaced throughout the semester.

Satisfies Writing in the Disciplines (WID).

Prerequisite(s): 1B or equivalent second semester composition course (with a grade of C- or better); completion of core GE; and upper division standing. Or Graduate or Postbaccalaureate level. Allowed Declared Majors: All Business Administration majors, Industrial Arts, Industrial Technology, Professional & Technical Writing, Public Relations, Hospitality Management, Organizational Studies, and Information Science & Data Analytics.
Grading: Letter Graded

Note(s): Must be passed with C or better to satisfy the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR).

✳ Classroom Protocols

Course Format, Canvas, Tips for Success, Technology

Basic Course Description:

- This is a semester long in person course.
- We will meet twice a week in person at the above days and times.
- The organization of the course is module-based.
- There will be 16 modules, one for each week of the class.
- Module contents will be available at the start of each class.
- You can find due dates for major assignments in the syllabus.
- Throughout this class you will work closely with fellow business students, especially in your concentrations, as well as with your professor.

Course Reminders:

- You are responsible for checking your email and the Canvas course page regularly.
- Online readings, copies of major assignments, and important announcements will be posted on Canvas.
- If, for any reason, Canvas is not working or a link/document is not working, please contact me as soon as possible.

Email Guidelines:

- Check your SJSU email regularly.
- Use SJSU email or Canvas messaging when contacting me through email, not your personal account.
- This is a business communications class, so use proper email etiquette.
- I will try to respond to emails on the day they are received, but emails received after 7 pm may not be answered until the next day.
- Emails received on weekends may not receive replies on the same day.

Tips for Succeeding in the Course:

- Get to class on time (figure out your parking/transportation routine now!).
- Attend class regularly. This class is very attendance-based.
- Just ask me during or after class or use office hours if you want help with a draft assignment, or for clarification on an assignment.
- Complete all assignments, large and small.
- Bring a positive attitude.
- Don't define yourself as "bad at writing". All students can succeed in this course if you just put in the work!

What to Do if You Have to Miss a Class:

- Let me know, via Canvas messaging, with a simple reason. Details about your illness or specific personal challenges aren't necessary, it's ok to keep them private.
- FYI, I may not have time to respond to messages sent right before class.
- Check that week's Canvas Module for material you have missed.
- You can also ask a classmate to help you catch up on what you missed.
- Only ask me what you have missed after you check course modules.
- Note: I won't reteach missed course material so it's up to you to catch up.

- Complete late assignments within one week.

Technology Use

Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop or tablet). SJSU has a free [equipment loan program](#) available for students.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have access to reliable Wi-Fi during classes. If students are unable to have reliable Wi-Fi, they must inform the instructor, as soon as possible.

See [Learn Anywhere website](#) for current Wi-Fi options on campus.

Program Information

Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses develop students' abilities to communicate effectively in their major course of study and in their careers. With an emphasis on critical thinking, these upper-division core courses advance students' understanding of the genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing while preparing them for successful communication in their chosen professions. Completing Writing in the Disciplines with a C or better is an SJSU graduation requirement.

Writing in the Disciplines Learning Outcomes Upon successful completion of a Writing in the Disciplines course, students should be able to:

1. explain, analyze, develop, and critique ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse;
2. organize and develop complete discipline-specific texts and other documents for both professional and general audiences, using appropriate editorial and citation standards; and
3. locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing;
4. produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, and clarity of expression.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Course Goals

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Create texts and make presentations that are appropriate for a variety of business audiences and situations
- Analyze organizational and rhetorical situations in business communications and employ appropriate strategies for communicating based on audience, purpose, and context
- Identify and explain genres and written and visual conventions used in business communications
- Participate in both intra-organizational communication as well as communications with others outside of the organization

- Explain the role of ethics and AI use in business communications
- Understand the role of collaboration in business communications
- Use photos, illustrations, and other tools as appropriate in business communication.
- Communicate complex data
- Understand the basic principles for document layout and design
- Adapt a text to meet the needs of varying audiences

📊 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

- **Learning Outcome 1**: Produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, and clarity of expression
- **Learning Outcome 2**: Explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse.
- **Learning Outcome 3**: Organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences.
- **Learning Outcome 4**: Organize and develop essays and documents according to appropriate editorial and citation standards.
- **Learning Outcome 5**: Locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing.

📘 Course Materials

There is no textbook for this class.

I will provide all class readings as pdfs or links to online articles in weekly Canvas modules.

☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

5 Main Writing Assignments (65% of your grade)

Writing Assignment 1: Professional Biography 15%

- The Professional Biography will give you a chance to write about your education and experiences, previous paid work and volunteer work, and your future goals and aspirations.
- It will act as the foundation for your job search assignment, LinkedIn profile and resume.

Writing Assignment 2: Job Documents and LInkedIn 20%

- You will conduct a job search, write a job ad analysis, and create a cover letter and resume based on your analysis.
- You will also create an up to date and complete LinkedIn Profile
- We will follow best practices from the SJSU Career Center for this assignment.

Writing Assignment 3: Interviewing Skills 10%

- You will learn interviewing skills
- Your midterm will be writing practice answers to common interview questions
- You will also learn to use and record interview answers with the Big Interview app

Writing Assignment 4: Messaging Portfolio 10%

- You will learn how to write professional email messages: thank yous, recommendation requests, networking request and mentorship requests.
- You will write thank you emails to interviewers and professors/teachers
- You will write recommendation requests to employers and professors/teachers
- You will write networking messages for LinkedIn and via email
- You will write a sample mentor request

Writing Assignment 5: Proposal Presentation (Final assignment) (in concentration groups) 10%

- You will create a proposal topic in concentration groups
- You will create and present a group presentation based on your proposal
- You will present as a group in our final classes

Writing assignments will require:

- Rough Draft
- Revised Draft and Peer Review
- Final Draft

Homework and in-class assignments (35% of your grade)

Homework Assignments - approximately 20%

- These consist of things like reading notes and drafts, and other various assignments that will help you learn and practice the course material.

In-Class Assignments - approximately 15%

- These are a mixture of individual in-class writing and group work.
- These assignments are important. Missing them will affect your grade if you miss class and don't complete them.
- You can make up 2 of these assignments out of class.

✔ Grading Information

Late Policy

In-Class Assignments:

You can turn in 2 in-class assignments out of class for full credit. In class assignments are usually 5 points (.5% of your grade). So you will get 5 points for the first 2 done out of class, as long as they are done correctly. After that you will get 2.5 points (.25% of your grade). If you do not complete in-class

assignments you will get 0.

You must complete late assignments within one week. After that assignments are closed to submissions in Canvas. If you miss a deadline please let me know. I will not accept emailed assignments, they must be submitted in Canvas.

Final Drafts:

I will accept one major assignment (FINAL DRAFTS) up to one week late for full points. You must let me know in advance that you will be using your one late assignment option. Like in-class assignments, you can only turn in major assignments up to one week late.

You will only get 1/2 points for late drafts, since they are designed to happen while the material is being taught in class. That's why I won't consider a late rough or revised draft as a "real draft".

Group Assignments and Peer Review:

You can not make up group assignments or peer review. The exception, if you need to be absent, is if you arrange with classmates to review your draft for you by the day of peer review. As far as group assignments, the assignments close as soon as class ends. Double check the syllabus for group assignment days.

AI Policy

Many students equate value with *output*: "If AI can write it, what's left for me?"

What they haven't yet learned is that in professional life:
• The hardest part is not writing the email
• It's deciding **what kind of email this situation actually requires**

That decision depends on:
• Context
• Timing
• Audience psychology
• Risk tolerance
• Organizational culture

These are not disappearing skills. They're becoming *more* valuable as text becomes cheaper.

AI can generate language, but it can't yet recognize what matters in a specific human situation. That recognition—what to say, to whom, and why—is the skill we're building here. Writing is still a human act of judgment.

As AI tools become more common, the value of business writing is shifting from producing text to exercising judgment. This course emphasizes audience awareness, context, and decision-making—skills that guide how and when AI can be used effectively rather than replacing human insight.

I'll be clear about when to use AI and when not to use AI. When I want to hear about you specifically, and your individual opinions and human insights about things, I'll ask you not to use AI. That's most of the time in this class! Grammarly is always fine to use, by the way. AI in general is great for polishing writing, but don't use it to replace your own unique thoughts.

Six Major Categories for Text Assessments:

Rhetorical/Contextual Awareness:

Probably the top criteria. Students are expected to demonstrate a clear awareness of the rhetorical situation and the context into which they are writing. This includes a demonstrated awareness of purpose, audience, message, constraints (legal, ethical), power structures (hierarchy), etc. In all aspects of grading, awareness of rhetorical/contextual ideas will be most important. For example, a student may write a letter which uses several supporting sources; however, if the audience for that letter has reason to distrust those sources and thus would be not persuaded by them, then the student has not used appropriate support.

Focus:

Students are expected to maintain a clear and specific focus in their texts, and that focus should be clear to the reader (in some cases, it is stated directly). All supporting details should adhere to this focus.

Structure & Organization:

Students should structure and organize their texts appropriately. The appropriate structure and organization will depend on the type of text the student is creating and will sometimes be outlined by the assignment itself, or by the reading. This includes in-class notes, but is even more important in large assignments.

Development & Support:

Students should provide appropriate levels of development and support in their texts. Development simply means that there is an appropriate amount of detail for the rhetorical/contextual situation. For example, an average person may not need an explanation of the technical details of a new platform, but the UX designer for that new platform certainly would need those details. Support refers to backing up claims made in the text by using additional sources (i.e., not just asking someone to take your word for it).

For example, this is why I ask you to leave out a "soft skills" section on your resume. Those one word skills are an example of unsupported claims. When these skills are in bullet points with the details of how you acquired them then they are supported. Sources can be anything from personal experience, photos or illustrations, to academic articles—the type of sources you use will largely be determined by your audience and purpose.

Style:

Students should maintain an appropriate style for their texts, based on the rhetorical and contextual situation. Style refers to the way that something is written, presented, or created. Sometimes you'll change or vary your style depending on your organization's style or your relationship with the audience. Style may also refer to the *way* you present the information. If you're going for a playful, informal style, you may include a meme in your presentation, whereas if that's not appropriate for your formal presentation, you may stick with graphs and charts. You should also show an awareness of "Business Language" and the "Seven C's".

In the age of AI style also refers to whether your style is authentic and original or robotic and generic. For most assignments in this class your grade will be improved when you sound "like yourself", uniquely you, versus "sounding like AI".

Formatting & Mechanics:

Though formatting and mechanics is the last grading criterion, students are still expected to use appropriate formatting and mechanics. Readers in professional environments will expect texts to look the way they are "supposed" to. For example, when you send a memo to your co-workers, they might be confused if it doesn't *look* like the memo. They may then throw it away, thinking it is just junk mail. Similarly, if you send a correspondence that is full of mechanical errors, a reader may become frustrated. Keep in mind, distracting mechanical errors are different than just a forgotten comma—these errors are consistent and often interrupt the flow of the text or impede the readers' ability to understand the text.

More specific grading rubrics and instructions are also provided in some prompts for assignments when more detail is needed.

🏛 University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

Week 1 , Th, 1/22 - Introduction to class and each other

Th,1.22 Class Agenda

Roll, brief class overview, group activity and class discussion.

Homework due by class T, 1/27:

- Read the "SJSU Official Syllabus" in Canvas
- Complete assignment "Write an email to your Professor"
- Post and respond to Discussion "Introduce Yourself to your Fellow Students"

Week 2 – T, 1/27 and Th, 1/29 - Introduction to Business Writing

T, 1/27 Class Agenda

- Syllabus Review. Attendance/late work, etc.
- "Write an email to your Professor" discussion.
- 7 C's presentation and writing. Business Writing Goals "Plain Language".

Homework due by class Th, 1/29:

- Designing Your Life worksheet, "Accepting Where You Are" and "Building Your Compass"

Th, 1/29 Class Agenda

- Discuss Designing Your Life assignment
- Group assignment: "14 LinkedIn Profiles" Evaluate tone and style.
- Professional Biography - Introduction.

Homework due by class T, 2/3:

- Chapter 1 pdf reading (Canavor, Chapter 1, 13 pages) and homework (I and IV, Practice Opportunities)
- Professional Biography Brainstorming

Week 3 – T, 2/3 and Th, 2/5 - The Professional Biography Drafting and Editing

T, 2/3 Class Agenda

- Read Professional Biography prompt.
- Group review of student professional biography examples.
- Organize drafts to prepare for rough draft due Th, 9/4

Homework due by class Th, 2/5:

- Professional Biography Rough Draft, Version 1 (3 paragraph)

Th, 2/5 Class Agenda

- The Professional Biography - Editing and Seven C's review.
- Editing Rough Draft: Words/Sentences/Paragraphs/Tone

Homework due by class, T, 2/10:

- Revised Draft for Peer Review (including versions 1, 2 and 3 of professional biography)

Week 4 – T, 2/10 and Th, 2/12 - Professional Biography Peer Review/LinkedIn

T, 2/10 Class Agenda

- How to write peer review comments
- Peer Review of Professional Biography drafts

Homework due by class, Th, 2/12:

- **Professional Biography FINAL DRAFT**

Th, 2/12 Class Agenda

- Review final draft of professional biography
- In class LinkedIn assignment
- LinkedIn individual class assignment.

Homework due by class, T, 2/17:

- LinkedIn "About" summary

Week 5 - T, 2/17 and Th, 2/19 - LinkedIn Profile and Job Documents Assignment Introduction

T, 2/17 Class Agenda

- LinkedIn Profile About summary edits
- Job Documents assignment introduction
- Job Ad analysis draft

Homework due by class Th, 2/19

- Choose a job on Handshake
- Write a draft of the job ad analysis

Th, 2/19 Class Agenda

- Resume Presentation by Judi Garcia from the Career Center for a.m. classes
- Take notes in class
- Work on job ad analysis and resume accomplishment statements for p.m. classes

Homework due T, 2/24

- Have access to your most up to date resume

Week 6 - T, 2/24 and Th, 2/26 - Resume presentations/Job Ad analysis and resume accomplishment statements

T, 9/24 Class Agenda

- Resume Presentation by Judi Garcia from the Career Center for p.m. classes
- Take notes in class
- Work on job ad analysis and resume accomplishment statements for a.m. classes

Homework due Th, 2/26

- Draft of job ad analysis and resume

Th, 2/26 Class Agenda

- Editing Resume using Career Center resume guide

Homework due T, 3/3

- Edited resume

Week 7 - T, 3/3 and Th, 3/5 - Resumes and Cover Letters

T, 3/3 Class Agenda

- Creating Cover Letters
- Professional Letters

Homework due T, 3/5

- Draft of all Job Documents: Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume

Th, 3/5 Class Agenda

- Detailed editing of all job documents

Homework due T, 3/10

- Revised draft of all Job Documents - Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume

Week 8 - T, 3/10 and Th, 3/12 - Job Documents Editing and Peer Review

T, 3/10 Class Agenda

- Peer Review of all Job Documents - Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume

Homework due Th, 3/12

- **Job Documents FINAL DRAFT - Job Ad Analysis, Cover Letter, Resume**

Th, 3/12 Class Agenda

- Interview Questions practice in groups
- Big Interview app Getting Started

Homework due T, 3/17

- Fast Track curriculum from Big Interview - Interview Questions

Week 9 - T, 3/17 and Th, 3/19 - Interview Skills

T, 3/17 - Class Agenda

- "How to Talk So That People Want to Listen" TED Talk by Julian Treasure
- Class notes and discussion
- Introduce Big Interview

Homework due Th, 3/19

- Fast Track curriculum from Big Interview - Analyzing a Job Description

Th, 3/19 - Class Agenda

- Using the "Designing Your Life" writing to answer Interview Questions

- Using Job Documents and Job Ad to answer Interview Questions
- Preparing Notes for midterm one-sheet

Homework due T, 3/24

- Prepare one-sheet and print out to bring to midterm

Week 10 - T, 3/24 and Th, 3/26 - Interview Skills, Mid-Term Prep and Mid-Term

T, 3/24 Class Agenda

- **Interview Questions MIDTERM in class**
- Reminder of how to record and get AI feedback in Big Interview app

Homework due Th, 3/26

- Record practice interviews in Big Interview and assess AI feedback

Th, 3/27 Class Agenda

- Debrief Interview skills and answers
- Debrief AI feedback in Big Interview
- Introduction to Messaging

Homework due T, 4/7

- No homework

WEEK 11 - M, 3/30 - F, 4/3 - SPRING RECESS - NO CLASSES

WEEK 12 - T, 4/7 and Th, 4/9 - Writing Messages and Emails: Recommendation Requests; Thank You Notes; Mentorship Requests; Networking.

T, 4/7 - Class Agenda

- Midterms returned - Debrief
- Recordings in Big Interview - analyze feedback
- Presentation on strategizing your messages
- Preview prompt - Email Portfolio
- Interviewing Guide Career Center - Thank yous
- LinkedIn Guide Career Center - Recommendations and Networking

Homework due Th, 4/9

- Brainstorming and drafting thank yous and recommendation requests (2 thank yous, 2 recommendation requests)

Th, 4/9 - Class Agenda

- Writing thank yous and recommendation requests - Peer Review/editing

Homework due T, 4/14

- Email Portfolio 1 and 2: Final drafts thank yous and recommendation requests (pick your best two - 1 thank you, 1 recommendation request)

WEEK 13 - T, 4/14 and Th, 4/16 - Networking and Mentorship Messages.

T, 4/14 Class Agenda

- Research SJSU Clubs - Networking
- Research SJSU Alumni networking - LinkedIn Guide Career Center
- Research, Brainstorming and Drafting network and mentors

Homework due Th, 4/16

- Drafting Networking and Mentor messages (2 each)

Th, 4/16 Class Agenda

- Editing and Peer Review Networking Mentor Requests

Homework due T, 4/21

  - Email Portfolio 3 and 4: Final Draft Networking and Mentor Messages (1 of each)

- **Email Portfolio FINAL DRAFT with Emails 1, 2, 3 and 4.**

WEEK 14 - T, 4/21 and Th, 4/23 - Proposal Presentations

T, 4/21 - Class Agenda

- Business report and proposal presentation format and content

- Proposal Presentation prompt
- Groups meet, brainstorming possible presentation topics in your concentrations

Homework due Th, 4/23

- Finalize presentation topic

Th, 4/23 - Class Agenda

- How to Avoid Death by Powerpoint
- Work on Presentation Rough Draft

Homework due T, 4/28

- Rough draft of presentation

WEEK 15 - T, 4/28 and Th, 4/30 - Proposal Presentations Editing and Peer Review

T, 4/28 - Class Agenda

- Editing Slides
- Review Presentation Prompt and Rubric

Th, 4/30 - Class Agenda

- Peer Review for presentations
- Order of presentations and committee assignments
- Please fill out evaluations for all your classes!
- Meet with professor about reports and presentations
- Work in groups finalizing reports and presentations

Homework due T, 5/5

- **Presentation slides FINAL DRAFT**

- Prepare and practice presentations

WEEK 16 - T, 5/5 and Th, 5/7 - Final Presentations

T, 5/5 - Class Agenda

- **FINAL PRESENTATIONS:** First groups present and other groups serve as committees

Homework due Th, 5/7

- Resubmit slides if changes have been made

Th, 5/7 - Class Agenda

- **FINAL PRESENTATIONS:** Second groups present and other groups serve as committees

CLASS OVER - THERE IS NO FINAL DURING FINALS WEEK FOR THIS CLASS

Final grades due from faculty by Friday, May 22, 2026