

Sample Course Outline

English 225

Course Description:

This course is a study of how to write clearly and effectively, particularly within the business environment. Writing formats and grammatical skills will be main subjects of class discussion. We will also discuss the nature of the business environment itself and the relationship of language to truth within that environment. Participation is an important part of the course (worth 15% of the final grade); in order to participate fully, students will need to come to each class having read the required section of text listed in the course schedule. There will be a range of assignments, including a memo, a business letter, a mid-term exam, an original invention with written instructions, a formal report, and a presentation.

Required Course Text:

Northey, Margot, and Joan McKibbin. *Impact*. 8th ed. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2012.

Course Schedule:

Week One: Jan. 3 (T): Introduction to Course

Jan. 5 (Th): *Impact*, Chapters 1 and 2 and Appendix, Rule 1 (pp. 213-214)

Week Two: Jan. 10 (T): *Impact*, Chapter 3; also Chapter 4, p. 66 only

Jan. 12 (Th): *Impact*, Appendix, pp.221-224 and 227 (Colons, Commas, and Semicolons)

Week Three: Jan. 17 (T): *Impact*, Chapters 4 and 5

Jan. 19 (Th) *Impact*, Appendix, Rules 2 and 3 (pp.214-215); **ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE** (Memo)

Week Four: Jan. 24 (T): *Impact*, Chapter 6

Jan. 26 (Th): *Impact*, Appendix, pp.220-221 (Apostrophes)

Week Five: Jan. 31 (T): *Impact*, Chapters 7 and 8

Feb. 2 (Th): *Impact*, Appendix, Rules 7 and 8 (p. 219) **ASSIGNMENT TWO DUE** (Business Letter)

Week Six: Feb. 7 (T): Grammar Review

Feb. 9 (Th): **MID-TERM EXAM** (Business Letter)

Week Seven: Feb. 14 (T): Viewing of film *Glengarry Glen Ross*

Feb. 16 (Th): Discussion of *Glengarry Glen Ross*

READING BREAK (Feb. 20-24)

Week Eight: Feb. 28 (T): *Impact*, Appendix, Rule 6 (pp.218-219); **ASSIGNMENT THREE DUE** (Invention and Instructions)

Mar. 1 (Th): *Impact*, Appendix, Rule 5 (pp. 217-218)

Week Nine: Mar. 6 (T): Review of required elements of Formal Report (re-read Chapter 8)

Mar. 8 (Th): *Impact*, Appendix, pp. 225-227 (Hyphens, Periods, Question Marks, and Quotation Marks)

Week Ten: Mar. 13 (T): *Impact*, Chapter 9

Mar. 15 (Th): *Impact*, Appendix, pp. 224-226 (Dashes, Ellipses, Exclamation Points, and Parentheses)

Week Eleven: Mar. 20 (T): *Impact*, Chapter 10

Mar. 22 (Th): shortened class (8:30-8:55): no reading, but come prepared with any last-minute questions about oral presentations beginning next week;
ASSIGNMENT FOUR DUE (Formal Report)

Week Twelve: Mar. 27 (T): Oral Presentations (on either Formal Report or Invention/Instructions)

Mar. 29 (Th): Oral Presentations (cont'd)

Week Thirteen: April 3 (T): Oral Presentations (cont'd)

April 5 (Th): Oral Presentations (cont'd)

Assignments and Grading:

Assignment One (Memo)	10%
Assignment Two (Letter)	15%
Mid-Term Exam	15%
Assignment Three (Invention/Instructions)	15%
Assignment Four (Formal Report)	20%
Oral Presentation	10%
Participation	15%

A Note on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Please review the description of and penalties for plagiarism in the VIU Calendar.

Assignment One

Description: Imagine that you are the manager of a small company (25 employees) that gives guided nature walks in a large provincial park. Through the grapevine you have heard that a few of your employees have been, while guiding tours, mistakenly referring to a particular owl as a “Bard” owl, when in fact the actual name of the owl is “Barred” owl. (These employees have been spelling the word to the people on tour, who have been writing it in their bird-watching notebooks.) Write a paper memo of one page to all your employees, in which you point out the mistake and remind them of the importance, for the company’s reputation, of attention to accurate detail during guided walks.

Assignment Two

Description: You are the owner of a prosperous grocery store, and you want to show your appreciation for the public’s support of your business. You therefore sponsor and organize a “Family Day” on which families, including children of all ages, will be invited to the store to sample foods, enjoy entertainment provided by local musicians, and participate in craft-making lessons given by local artists. A member of the public, Mr. Pink, himself a businessman who has supported the store for over two decades by having had all of his business functions catered by the store’s deli section, sends you a letter in which he explains his idea for a unique addition to the festivities of Family Day. Wanting to add a dimension of cultural sophistication to the event, he proposes a “literature corner”, in which famous literature on the theme of family is displayed on large poster boards. One of the poems is Philip Larkin’s “This Be the Verse”, which goes like this:

This Be the Verse

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.
They may not mean to, but they do.
They fill you with the faults they had
And add some extra, just for you.

But they were fucked up in their turn
By fools in old-style hats and coats,
Who half the time were sappy-stern
And half at one another's throats.

Man hands on misery to man.
It deepens like a coastal shelf.
Get out as early as you can,
And don't have any kids yourself.

(1971)

Your task is to write Mr. Pink a polite letter of about one page in which you explain why you will or will not be using his suggestion. Be sure that the letter is concise, well written, and appropriate in tone.

Assignment Three

Description: Make a small, useful invention. Write a set of user instructions of about one and a half pages, in which you briefly extol the virtues of the invention and carefully explain its use. Use precise, clear language.

Assignment Four

You will choose ONE of the following options:

Description of Option One: You will write a formal report arising from an exploration of the quality of student services (or a specific student service) here at Vancouver Island University. Your report may include recommendations for a service not yet offered or for changes to a service or services already offered. The report may be addressed either to the Board of the University or to the Student Union, whichever seems most appropriate. You must use two to three research sources and properly cite these sources within your report. The total length of the report should be about six pages (1,500 words).

Description of Option Two: You will write a formal report arising from research about **either** The Museum of Natural History **or** the The Nanaimo Art Gallery. (Each of these is located here at the Nanaimo campus of Vancouver Island University.) This will be an informational report (without recommendations) about the history, purpose, funding, and current activities of one of these organizations. You must use two to three research sources and properly cite these sources within your report. The total length of the report should be about six pages (1,500 words).