

WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY
Virtual Campus
School of Languages and Literature

Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement: Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

Course Name: ENGL 3320.VC01 – Foundations of Technical Communication

Term and Year: Spring 2014

Full Name of Instructor: Dr. Laura Brandenburg

Office Phone and Email: Phone: 806-291-1113
Email: lbrandenburg@wbu.edu

Office Hours, Building, and Location: Online, various times and by appointment
Blackboard IM: lbrandenburg

Class Meeting Time and Location: WBU's Virtual Campus: <http://wbu.blackboard.com>

Catalog Description: study and practice of developing formal and informal technical and business documents, such as reports, proposals, resumes, instructions, and professional correspondence; emphasis on technical and/or professional environment.

Prerequisite: Advanced Standing

Required Textbook and Resources:

- Johnson-Sheehan, Richard. (2012). *Technical Communication Today*. 4th Edition. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Access to Blackboard and WBU email; access to computer with internet

Optional Materials: None

Course Outcome Competencies: Upon the conclusion of this course, students actively engaged in learning will be able to:

1. Analyze the audience, purpose, and context of any technical writing situation.
2. Communicate ethically, recognizing the challenges posed and the ramifications of neglecting to do so.
3. Use current technology and software to research, design, develop, and/or present information.
4. Compose and design effective and usable technical documents in various genres and edit documents for correctness, clarity, and audience appropriateness.

The more the student puts into the course, the higher his or her outcome competencies will be.

Attendance Requirements: As stated in the Wayland Catalog, students enrolled at one of the University's external campuses should make every effort to attend all class meetings. All absences must be explained to the instructor, who will then determine whether the omitted work may be made up. When a student reaches that number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will so advise the student and file an unsatisfactory progress report with the campus executive director. Any student who misses 25 percent or more of the regularly scheduled class meetings may receive a grade of F in the course. Additional attendance policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the University's attendance policy.

*** Because this is an online course and because we will not meet synchronously, your attendance for the course is largely dependent on your contribution to the discussion board's topics and other participation grades. In keeping with the on-site attendance policy, failure to provide a full response for at least 75% of the discussion topics will result in an F for the course. ***

Disability Statement: —In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291-3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

Academic Honesty: You are expected to submit original work in this class. This means the work you submit for this class cannot be from another course. Further, plagiarism in this course will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is constituted as stealing words or ideas from another source and passing them as your own. Since this class specifically focuses on research, you should be especially conscious of attributing your sources. Students who plagiarize or recycle work in this class will receive a zero for the assignment and will be subject to university policies regarding plagiarism. (See Languages and Literature Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty in Blackboard.)

Due Dates and Late Penalties: Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. (Central Time Zone) on the date posted. Be sure that your clock matches the clock in WBU's Blackboard. All assignments must be submitted to the Blackboard site to receive a grade. These deadlines, like most deadlines in life, are not negotiable. *Any late assignment will receive a 20-point deduction per day late. Late assignments are not accepted after 5 days of the assignment's due date.*

Expectations, Communication, & Other Information: While the nature of an online course allows students to work at their own pace, you are expected to keep up with the course materials weekly. *Please note, this is not a self-paced course.* This means that you should keep up with the readings and assignments posted each week, and you are responsible for turning in any assignments by the posted due date. Students who get behind in the weekly requirements will likely not do well in the course. Remember, also, that your attendance for the course is measured by your participation in the discussion board. Announcements and important information will be posted on the Blackboard site. Be sure to check the site often. Additional information may be sent to your WBU emails, so make sure you've set up a WBU email and are checking it often. Always feel free to email me or chat online anytime I'm signed on if you are concerned about the course or your progress. I am available to help you, provide resources, and give direction—but I cannot help you if I do not know you're struggling.

To accommodate the past requests and preferences of my former online students, major assignments are due on Sundays. However, although the HW assignments and major assignments are due on Sunday (with the exception of the final exam), this does not mean you should wait until the end of the week to think about them, particularly if you need help from me. I am happy to answer questions about assignments and will even give you feedback on assignments if you submit them early. However, please note that while I typically answer email within 24 hours M-F, I am not always as tied to a computer on the weekends. This means if you need help with an assignment, you'll need to get in touch with me by Thursday or Friday. I also strongly recommend you use the Writing Center. There's a link available in our Bb course. Be aware, too, that using the Writing Center resources likewise requires that you plan ahead for your assignments and your assignment questions. A successful student likely does not wait until Sunday night to begin the week's work.

If ever you have a major life event that will affect your participation in the course, it's imperative that you communicate with me as soon as possible. I try to work with students as best I can, but I can be more flexible and gracious if you tell me in advance rather than after the fact. In an online course, communication is *key*. As I mention above, I cannot help you if I do not know you're struggling. That said, like most of my students, I realize you probably work full time, have a family, and juggle other

courses and commitments. However, this is a 3000-level course, which means it ought to challenge you more than your previous courses. ENGL3320 is also a writing-intensive course, so be prepared to write weekly. If life's current restraints mean you cannot fully concentrate on the course's requirements, then you might consider taking the course at another point in your studies.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria: More specific descriptions of the course requirements are available in course modules on the WBU Blackboard site: <http://wbu.blackboard.com>. However, the assignments and weights are posted below.

- **Participation (15%).** Students will receive a participation grade throughout the term based on discussion board posts and quizzes.
- **Major Assignments (75%).** Students will design and create technical documents in a variety of genres over the course of the semester. All documents must be submitted electronically to Blackboard. See Blackboard for additional assignment information.
 - Unit 1: Correspondence items (15%)
 - Unit 2: Cover letter and resume (20%)
 - Unit 3: Instructions, procedures, or policy statement (20%)
 - Unit 4: Proposal (20%)
- **Final exam (10%).** The final exam will include material from the entire semester.

Tentative Schedule: The schedule below is a tentative outline for the semester. As such, it is subject to change, with notification of course.

Weekly Topic	Reading	Discussion Topic	Assignment
Week 1 – Introduction to Technical Communication	Chs. 1, 2 and 4	Feb 27: Introductions	March 2: Quiz 1
Week 2 – Professional Correspondence	Chs. 5 and PDF	March 6: Company and Goal	March 9: Quiz 2
Week 3 – Clear, concise prose	Ch. 17	March 20: NONE	March 23: Unit 1 Due
Week 4 – Communicating with employers	Ch. 11, Ch. 18	March 27: Position for Application	March 30: Quiz 3
Week 5 – Document Design	None	April 3: NONE	April 6: Unit 2 Due
Week 6 – Instructions/Procedures	Chs. 7, 19, 20	April 10: Instructions/Procedures Topic	April 13: Quiz 4
Week 7 – Research and Usability Testing	None	April 17: NONE	April 20: Unit 3 Due
Week 8 – Formal Proposals	Chs. 8 and 9; PDFs (Ch. 1 & 2)	April 24: Proposal Topic	April 27: Quiz 5
Week 9 – Formal Proposals	PDFs (Ch. 8 & 9)	May 1: Logistics Worksheet	May 4: Progress Report
Week 10 – Formal Proposals	Ch. 16	May 8: NONE	May 11: Unit 4 Due
Week 11 – Final Exam	None	May 15: Course Reflection	May 17: Final Exam due

****All Assignments MUST be submitted in Blackboard****

****Note: break between Week 2 and 3 for Spring Break****