

**Okanagan College**  
**Department of Communications**  
**PCOM 152: Writing in the Helping Professions**  
(Winter 2006, A145, 12 to 1:20 p.m.)

Instructor: Ruth Klinkhammer  
Office: L318  
Phone: 762-5445 (4672)  
Hours: Mon. & Wed., 2 – 4 p.m.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course applies theoretical understanding to the practical skills needed by the successful writer working in a helping profession. Students learn when, why and how to inform, analyze and persuade. The principles of clear, persuasive writing are applied to genres common in the helping professions.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students learn to

1. apply communication theory to successful workplace writing
2. evaluate the readability, correctness and effectiveness of their documents
3. distinguish between informative, persuasive and analytical elements of documents
4. choose and design appropriate document formats
5. plan and execute successful job search communications
6. present information in oral and written formats using clear, objective language

**TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES**

1. audience/purpose analysis and an efficient writing process
2. language basics and business/professional writing style
3. document design principles and formats: letters, memos, e-mails, reports
4. informative messages – structures and approaches
5. persuasive messages – considerations, techniques and applications
6. analytical messages – methods for clearly and persuasively presenting analysis
7. applications:
  - summaries
  - job search communications
  - charting and clinical documentation
  - correspondence for requests and enquiries, proposals, referrals
  - written and oral situation reports, incident reports, inspection reports

**TEXT AND MATERIALS**

Valentino, L. (2004). *Handle with care: Communicating in the Human Services Field in Canada*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Toronto: Thompson Nelson.

Other readings may be assigned. These will be posted on Web CT.

**EVALUATION**

Short Report	10%
Oral report	10%
Memo/e-mail	10%
Job package	15%
Midterm exam	20%
Presentation (group)	15%
Formal Report (group)	15%

## **EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

Each assignment will state the instructor's expectations and will provide detailed evaluation criteria, which will vary according to each assignment's purpose, content and genre.

Grading will follow the guidelines stipulated in the *2005-2006 College Calendar*.

Please check the WebCT document "Instructor Expectations" to see what I consider to be A, B, C and D-level work.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PROFESSIONALISM**

Attendance and participation are not graded, though you will find that you'll learn more if you participate actively. For the oral part of the course, however, part of your involvement is the discussion and analysis that follow the speeches; everyone is expected to participate. You will be expected to provide a critical and supportive audience for your classmates' speeches. For the public speaking portion of the course, attendance is mandatory. Marks will be deducted from your oral presentation grade for infractions such as arriving late on speech days, missing your speech day, or missing speech-day classes.

## **LATE/EXTENSION POLICY**

Marks will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. Extensions are not normally given except in extreme circumstances, and never unless you have made arrangements with your instructor prior to the due date. If you are having a problem with your assignment, please see your instructor *before* the work is due.

## **COURSE FORMAT**

The course will combine lecture, class discussion, in-class exercises, and written and oral assignments. Because the material covered in this course is new to most of you, you will need to keep up with your reading and attend classes regularly. You are therefore advised to:

- Consult our WebCT site regularly for assignment information, course supplements and announcements;
- Attend class regularly;
- Complete the appropriate research, writing, and reading prior to class;
- Ask questions about anything you do not understand.

**WARNING:** The safest way to ensure I receive your assignment is to hand it to me in class on the date it is due. I will not be held responsible for lost assignments that have been sent via e-mail. In addition, if you choose to submit an assignment as an e-mail attachment, you are responsible for ensuring the formatting remains intact. Marks will be deducted from your assignment even if the formatting error is caused by an attachment malfunction.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Please note that in academia, plagiarism is at the top of the seven deadly sin list. If you are quoting, paraphrasing or using ideas gathered from the work of other authors it must be cited correctly. Otherwise, I will assume you are cheating by trying to claim the quote, paraphrase or idea as your own and you will be penalized. For more detail see the *2005-2006 College Calendar*.