English 4320.W01
Writing for Nonprofit Agencies
Spring Semester 2012

Texts

Sand, Michael. *How to Manage an Effective Nonprofit Organization: From Writing and Managing Grants to Fundraising, Board Development, and Strategic Planning*
Barbato, Joseph and Daniel Furlich. *Writing for a Good Cause: The Complete Guide to Crafting Proposals and Other Persuasive Pieces for Nonprofits*. (This book will be referred to as 'B&F' in the syllabus)

Other Course Requirements
A computer with reliable internet access
A reliable office software suite (Microsoft Office or the Equivalent)--we will be using MS Word and MS Publisher; some projects may require Excel
Access to Blackboard, TAMUCC's Course Management Software (you have this by virtue of being a TAMUCC student).

Course Description and Tentative Syllabus

Catalog description: Tailored for individual students’ writing and publishing projects in their disciplines such as article writing, instructional manuals, grant writing, and feasibility studies.

My description: Any professional who works for a nonprofit agency is doing to find her or himself required to do a great deal of writing, and to be able to complete a wide variety of writing tasks. English 4320 will teach students the basics of many kinds of writing found in the non profit world, and will give students practice at actually *doing* some of those tasks. Students will learn to
write for internal communication purposes, will learn some basic publications skills, will learn
how to do writing that helps nonprofits interact with the media (including "new" or social
media), will learn the role writing plays in the interaction between a non profit agency and its
board, and will learn the basics of using writing for development purposes (getting money). In
addition, students will complete at least one "real world" service project--designing and creating a
document that a nonprofit can use as part of its operations. At the end of this course, the student
will have a portfolio of work that she or he can show to a prospective employer to demonstrate
the ability to "step in" and handle many of the writing tasks necessary for success in the
nonprofit world.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

By engaging in the course activities, students will

(1) identify a need or problem by describing the factors involved

(2) generate a viable solution to the need or problem

(3) create a document that reflects an effective interweaving of purpose and audience.

Writing Workshop

This class is designed as a hands-on writing workshop class. You will have an active role as you
work on the phases of each project and respond to the work of your classmates. Also, from your
classmates you will receive feedback for your work. This class is designed to give you
experiences that are similar to those you will experience in a professional workplace. Involved in
a professional work setting is deciding what tasks you will do, when you will complete those
tasks, how you will gather resources, and how you will complete the tasks. This class will
require regular communication between you and me, you and your other classmates, and you and
university and community sources you will need to contact in order to gather information.
Because of this approach, you need to be in class. You will treat this class as YOUR
WORKPLACE, and you will work on your assignments each class meeting. Writing is an active
process, and the more you actively participate, the better results you will see in your writing
progress. Absences will affect your performance just as absences will affect your performance at
the workplace.

"Attendance" In an Online Course

This class is offered online to give people who, for whatever reason, find it more convenient to
work from a computer than to "come up" to campus.

Although we do not have formal class meetings, things have to be done on time, as they are
found in the class schedule. This is just the same as it would be if you are in a regular class that
meets 10 am MWF. I mention this because some students "forget" they have an online course,
and try and do the work sporadically, trying to "load up" and trying to attempt the work in a few "bursts of activity."

You will need to log into this class and complete work 3-4 times per week. And just so you know if advance, Blackboard, our course management software, monitors how many times you log in per week, how long you were on, and what you are doing.

This method does not work because an online course is just as much work as a regular class. You have to "keep up," you have to ask questions of your professor if you need a course concept clarified, and, as with any other writing course, there is peer review. Your work has to be posted on time (so people can read and respond to your work), and reading and responding to the writing of others is part of the regular business of what we do.

CLASS DISCUSSION in an online course is "posting" in discussion forums. Your work needs to appear in these discussion forums regularly, depending on what the assignment--you might be asked to post an "in class" writing, you might be asked to respond to the writing of someone else, or you might be asked to comment on a reading, video, or other piece of information about writing in the nonprofit world.

This is NOT a correspondence course, or a "Work at Your Own Pace" course. An online course gives you the freedom to work at your own convenience--you can do your work at 2 o'clock in the morning or over your lunch hour--but, like any other course, it has real deadlines, with real due dates. I mention this because, in the past, some students have confused online courses with correspondence courses or other "do it when I can courses" and have tried to pack all the assignments into a few days at the end of the course. These students were not successful; e.g., they did not pass.

You probably noted that completing work on time is actually part of the way the course is graded--a full ten percent. If you want to see that in a positive light, you will do ten percent better--you will add a full letter grade to your course score--if you do everything on time. If you want to view this in a negative light, doing things late will drop your final score by ten percent--if your written work is of "B" quality but is consistently done late, the highest you can possibly earn.

Office Hours in an Online Class

Just as you need to communicate with me regularly to succeed, I have a responsibility to keep the lines of communication open with you. This can happen in a variety of ways:

1. You can call me during my office hours if you want to insure you can speak to me directly. Or, you can leave a voice mail. I'm quite good about returning phone calls--but make sure you leave a number I can call you back it.
2. I will keep "online office hours," which means I will be in a "chat room" on Blackboard where you can speak to me "Live." I will also be on Skype and Twitter during my online office hours; you can contact me via either medium. My ID for both is TechWriteDrE
3. You can e-mail me. I'm good about returning e-mails in a REASONABLE amount of time
(no later than the next BUSINESS day), but I don't monitor my e-mail 24-7, and I spend time with my family on the weekends, so if you leave me an e-mail on Friday afternoon, you might not reasonably hear back 'til Monday morning.

4. If it's convenient, you can come see me in my office.

5. I do make appointments, even outside of regular hours, with advance notice.

Late Assignments

If you have an emergency and cannot submit a paper, write a memo to me to explain why you will not be able to meet the deadline. Keep in mind that in the workplace there would be serious consequences for turning in reports/projects late. Based on your memo, I will determine how much to deduct from your grade. BE SURE to include documentation such as doctor's office statements, court appearance papers, etc.

Grades

You will have five portfolios, each dealing with an aspect of writing for the non profit world. They are worth 20% each.

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All work will be done on Blackboard, which can be accessed at:  https://bb9.tamucc.edu/

How the class will run:

This is a projects based course. This means that, in lieu of class time, you will be doing things (reading, writing, and finding things out). Expect to spend the same amount of time you spend on a regular class (or more) on this class.

Each week you will

- Have at least one piece of writing turned in for a grade
- Read several things
- Write to learn, meaning you will do "in class" writings designed to demonstrate that you understand the material--and to ask questions that you have
- Critique the writings of others (yep, it's part of the grade)

Keep track of the schedule and deadlines careful. Generally, rough drafts of things are due Friday, your critiques of other people's drafts are due by Tuesday, and final drafts are due on
Thursday. Other things can be done when you complete them, as long as they are completed by the end of the week (Friday).

If You Encounter Blackboard or Other Technical Difficulties

If you've never used Blackboard before, or if the new version (Version 9) confuses you, you might want to look at the 'Learning Blackboard 9.1' information the university offers:

https://iol.tamucc.edu/howtostu.php

General information about Blackboard:

https://iol.tamucc.edu/

Other ways to seek help:

- By Phone:
  - 361-825-2825 (Local)
  - 1-866-353-2491 (Long Distance)
- By E-mail:
  - iol.support@tamucc.edu

More information on online courses at TAMUCC:

http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html

Success in the Course

I am very pleased to be working with you. In this class we all help each other, and we applaud each other's successes. I treat each student with respect, and I expect students to treat each other and me with courtesy and respect. Each one of us should encourage behaviors that help reach excellence. If at any time you have concerns or questions regarding anything connected to the course, your performance in the course, and grades, please come to my office to talk with me privately. In the professional world, matters of a personal nature are discussed in private, not in front of fellow employees. In my office you and I can deal with any concerns or questions. If you do not understand something, come to the office immediately or email me.

You will have a productive semester. I structure the course so that I can give you help online as questions arise, so be sure to ask. Also, you can get help from your peers. You will find that many of your peers have expertise in various areas. Your documents are public and will be read by professionals, and we will all work together to prepare documents that meet high expectations and standards. You need to understand that I cannot assign an A to a paper that does not meet the criteria for excellence. I take much time to read and respond to your papers, so please be sure to read my comments. They offer guidance.
**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

The University will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of intellectual/academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is a serious violation of departmental and University policies, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Regardless, work that is turned in for the course that is plagiarized will be failed. If you are unsure about your use of sources, please consult with me or visit the writing center (in the TLC, in the Glasscock building) for advice on source documentation BEFORE the item is due. For this course, you must use either MLA or APA citation style. Any grammar handbook and many web sites have directions on correct citation. Click here for an excellent review of the various forms of plagiarism, good for any teacher to review/use. It is long, but worthwhile.

Click here for site on MLA documentation rules and here for APA documentation rules.

**Academic Advising:** If you are majoring, or plan to major, in a field taught in the College of Liberal Arts, and if you have not yet obtained a signed degree plan, you should make an appointment to meet with your Academic Adviser. The Academic Adviser will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Corpus Christi Hall Room 116, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Electronics Policies**
Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class time. While we're on the subject of technology, note that you may not "record" any class, either in an audio or visual format, without the instructor's permission. I'll likely give it, but you do need to ask. Use of laptops and notebooks should be sparing, specifically only for the purpose of taking notes. And, although I don't like to have to say this, if you are e-mailing or on any social networking software during class, you'll be counted absent that day.

## Schedule

*NOTE: Unless specified in the syllabus, the assignment for each week is due by midnight on the Friday of that week.*

### Part One: Communicating within your organization

**Week One:** January 11-13

- Memos, Interoffice Communication, E-Mails, and Other Organizational Communication Things
  - Do "Your Job Description" unit in Blackboard. Do this the first day of class, if at all possible.
  - Read articles on Memo Writing (Blackboard)
  - Read B&F Chapters 8 and 14
  - Critique Sample Memo in the Discussions section of Blackboard (post your critique as a "reply" to the discussion.)
  - Post a Draft of your organizational memo in Blackboard Wiki (this will be referred to as 'Wiki' throughout the syllabus)

**Week Two:** January 16-20

- Respond to two classmates' organizational memos in Blackboard Wiki by Tue (Monday is a school holiday--MLK Day!). Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.
- Policies and Procedures
  - Read Sample Volunteer Manual
  - Provide a detailed critique (see Blackboard for directions)
  - Read Sand, Chapter 6
  - **Final Organizational Memo Due in the Assignments section of Blackboard.**
  - Post a Draft of your organizational policy in Wiki.

**Week 3:** January 23-27

- Respond to two classmates' organizational policies in Wiki by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or
he revises.
Read Sands Chapter 7
Find and read two job descriptions for jobs with a university or a nonprofit agency
Post a Draft of a job description you have written to Wiki
Final Organization Policy Due in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

Part Two: Media Relations and Working With Your Community

Week Four: January 30-Feb 3

Finishing Up Part One:
Respond to two of your classmates' job descriptions in Wiki by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.

Final Job Description Due Tue in the Assignments section of Blackboard.
A portfolio including your Organizational Memo, Organizational Policy, and Job Description due by Thu. It should contain a 2-3 page introductory memo summing up what you have learned about writing for internal communication within a nonprofit organization, and it should ask any questions you might have about this portion of the course. This should be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

Beginning Part Two: Writing and the Media

Read B&F Chapter 3.
Read information on media spots (Public Service Announcements, or PSAs) Link on Blackboard
Read Sample PSAs. Link on Blackboard.
Write a 30 second spot to be read on radio or TV (a PSA) announcing an event. Post it on Wiki.

Week Five: February 6-10

Respond to two of your classmates' PSAs in Wiki by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.
Read B&F Chapter 11.
Post your Critique of these annual reports in the Discussions section on Blackboard
Read Sample News Releases (Link on Blackboard.)
Post a draft of your News Release on Wiki
Final PSA due in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

Week Six: February 13-17

Respond to two of your classmates' News Releases in Wiki by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.
Read articles on promoting your nonprofit on the Internet or in the social media (links on Blackboard)
Thoroughly critique Two of the Newsletters created by Nonprofit Organizations and post your
Critique of these newsletters in the Discussions section of Blackboard.
Post a draft of five Social Media "posts" or "Updates" about a nonprofit to Wiki.

**Final News Release Due in the Assignments section of Blackboard.**

Part Three: Publications

Week Seven: February 20-24

*Finishing Up Part Two*

Respond to two of your classmates' drafts of five social media posts or updates by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.

**Final Social Media Posts Due in the Assignments section of Blackboard.**

*A portfolio including your PSA, News Release, and Social Media Posts due by Thu.* It should contain a 2-3 page introductory memo summing up what you have learned about writing for the media within a nonprofit organization, and it should ask any questions you might have about this portion of the course. **This should be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.**

*Beginning Part Three: Publications in the Nonprofits*

Read articles about newsletter basics (links in Blackboard) Post your Critique of these articles in the Discussions section on Blackboard

Carefully re-read the documents you created for Part Two. These will provide the "news" for your newsletter.

Read B &F Chapter 13.

Play around with Microsoft Publisher (or whatever format you use). Look at the many newsletter formats available. Choose one for readability and clarity.

Create a draft first two pages of a newsletter, with graphics, news, and information. Attach it to a post in the "discussions" section of Blackboard. In the text of the post, explain why you chose that particular news letter format, and why you wrote the newsletter the way you did.

Week Eight: February 27-March 2

Respond to two of your classmates' newsletter drafts by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.

Read Articles about document design and brochures.
Post your Critique of these document designs in the Discussions section on Blackboard

Play around with Microsoft Publisher (or whatever format you use). Look at the many brochure formats available. Choose one for readability and clarity.

Create a brochure for your organization, with graphics, information about your organization, and a list of what services it provides. Attach it to a post in the "discussions" section of Blackboard. In the text of the post, explain why you chose that particular brochure format, and why you designed the brochure the way you did.

**Final Newsletter Due in the Assignments Section of Blackboard by Fri.**
Week Nine: March 5-9

Respond to two of your classmates’ brochure drafts by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.

Read articles about fliers and posters.
Play around with Microsoft Publisher (or whatever format you use). Look at the many flier and poster formats available. Choose one for readability and clarity. (If you are good at document design and prefer to make your own format in MS Word or your own word processing program, you can do so in this assignment).
Create a flier for an event your organization is putting on. Make it as interesting and visually appealing as possible--you want people to SHOW UP! Attach it to a post in the "discussions" section of Blackboard. In the text of the post, explain why you chose that particular flier or poster format, and why you designed the document the way you did.

**Final Brochure due in the Assignments Section of Blackboard by Fri.**

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March 12-16 is Spring Break. Enjoy!!!

Part Four: Fund Raising

Week Ten: March 19-23

*Finishing Up Part Three*
Respond to two of your classmates’ flier/poster drafts by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.

**A portfolio including your Newsletter, Brochure, and Flier/Poster due by Thu.** It should contain a 2-3 page introductory memo summing up what you have learned about creating publications for a nonprofit organization, and it should ask any questions you might have about this portion of the course. **This should be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.**

*Beginning Part Three: Fund Raising*

Read Sanders, Chapter 2.
Read Sample Fund Raising Letters (links in Blackboard) and post your critiques of them in the discussions section of Blackboard.
Write a fund raising letter for your organization, targeted to the general public, and place it on Wiki.

Week Eleven: March 26-30

Respond to two of your classmates’ fund raising letters by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.
Read N&P Chapter 4.
Read Sand Chapter 2.
Write a "corporate ask" letter on behalf of your organization to HEB’s Community Investment Program (links on Wiki) Pay special attention to Sand pp. 71-4. Write a cover letter, fill out the form, and create a mini budget. Save each as a separate document and attach them as a post, or series of posts, to the Discussion Section of Blackboard. (Do not submit these as you do not have permission from your non profit, real or imagined, to submit. However, HEB has a well designed web page that gives you good, specific criteria to respond to, so it’s a good learning tool.)

**Fund Raising Letter Due in the Assignments section of Blackboard by Fri.**

**Week Twelve: April 2-6**

Respond to two of your classmates' "Corporate Ask" packages by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.
Read Sands Chapter 3.
Write a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Coastal Bend Community Foundation (CBCF) requesting permission to submit a grant proposal to fund a program or project by your organization (links to application criteria in Blackboard). As with "corporate ask," please do NOT submit anything to the CBCF. A LOI is a grant writ small, a chance to get a good sense of the process without writing a full blown grant. This will include a budget. Save each part of this as a separate document, and attach them as a post, or a series of posts, to the Discussions section of Blackboard.

"Corporate Ask" packages, including budgets, Due in the Assignments section of Blackboard by Fri.

**Part Five: Board Relations**

**Week Thirteen: April 9-13**

**Finishing up Part Four**

Respond to two of your classmates' LOIs by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.

A portfolio including your Fundraising Letter, "Corporate Ask", and LOI due by Thu. It should contain a 2-3 page introductory memo summing up what you have learned about using writing for fundraising purposes for a nonprofit organization, and it should ask any questions you might have about this portion of the course. This should be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

**Beginning Part Five: Board Relations**

Read Sands Chapter One pp 21-36 (up to but not including "5. Public Relations")
Read sample Reports to Boards (links in Blackboard) and post your critiques of them in the discussions section of Blackboard.
Write a monthly report to your board (as if you are the Executive Director) of the agency, outlining the last month of your organization--what had gone well, what trouble spots there were,
and what you plan on doing next month. Post this in the Discussions Section of Blackboard.

Week Fourteen: April 16-20

Respond to two your your classmates' Board Reports by Monday. Place your responses as a "reply" to their original post, so the author can find your critique and keep it in mind as she or he revises.
Read the rest of Sands Chapter One.
Read sample annual reports (Links in Blackboard)
Read information about annual report writing (Links on Blackboard)
Begin drafting an annual report of on your organization's activities for the last twelve months. You might use Word, Publisher, or some other program. You will use visuals, charts, graphs, and make it be as informative as possible. You will likely use all the information you have used, and created, this term.

Board Report Due in Assignments section of Blackboard by Friday.

Week Fifteen: April 23-7

Post a critique of the annual reports you read in the discussions section of Blackboard.
Work on your Annual Report. Make it look as informative, well written, and attractive as you can.
Post your draft of your annual report, as an attachment to a post in Discussions on Blackboard, by Friday.

Week Sixteen: April 30-May 1
Respond to two of your classmates' Annual Reports by Monday.

Final Examination

A portfolio including your Board Report and Annual Report due by Mon. It should contain a 2-3 page introductory memo summing up what you have learned about board relations in a nonprofit organization, and it should ask any questions you might have about this portion of the course. This should be posted in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

In Conclusion

I have dedicated a good portion of my working life to workplace communication in the nonprofit world, so I'm looking forward to this class. It's like "my baby." This should be a worthwhile and even enjoyable class. You can count on me to do three things. I will read everything you have to, so depending on the author, we will either enjoy or suffer together. I will endeavor to make assignments as interesting and as stimulating as possible. Finally, I am here to help you, but I cannot do so unless you let me know when you need help. Communicate.
Back to Dr. E's Home Page