



## English 230W-1: Professional Writing (Fall 2022)

**Instructor:** Dr. Melissa T. Yang ([melissa.yang@emory.edu](mailto:melissa.yang@emory.edu))

**Date & Time:** Aug 25 to Dec 6, 2022 | Tuesdays & Thursdays | 1PM to 2:15PM

**Course Location(s):** Woodruff Library 214\*

\*If we ever need to move to Zoom, our course link will be

<https://emory.zoom.us/j/94689103244> (Meeting ID: 946 8910 3244)

**Office Hours by Appointment:** I am available on Tuesdays, 2:30PM to 3:30PM, either in Callaway N201A or on Zoom at <https://emory.zoom.us/my/mtyang>

### Course Overview

In this writing-intensive and participation-driven course, we will collaboratively examine the contexts for and rhetorical dimensions of a range of professional documents, primarily, those you produce throughout the semester.

Major assignments include a set of career materials (resume, cover letter, and/or personal statements), a research report involving analytical writing, and a multimodal passion project profiling a profession of your choice. As we engage in this work, we will explore the nature of professionalism and strategies for producing ethical, effective, and efficient professional writing across a range of fields.

### Course Goals

- ✓ **Understand what it means to be a professional.** Students analyze the

characteristics of and barriers to professional discourse. As students work to develop a professional identity, they study ethical responsibilities and learn how to conduct sound primary and secondary research. This course also deals with collaborative writing and the role of the team in today's workplace.

- ✓ **Consider a wide range of audiences and the consequences of writing.** This class helps students create reader-centered texts for a variety of audiences. Students will engage with issues such as multiple readers, specialized and non-specialized writing, bias, diversity, jargon, and information overload. Students work to develop their voice and tone in professional documents.
- ✓ **Communicate effectively through common workplace genres.** Students produce at least 25 pages over the course of the term, with a combination of major and minor assignments. Frequently these assignments enable students to focus on their own career paths. Students learn to communicate in a variety of forms such as memos, letters, emails, career search materials, reports, proposals, instructions and procedures, press releases, website writing, multimedia texts, and oral presentation materials.
- ✓ **Engage actively in the process of revision.** In addition to receiving feedback from their teacher, students have opportunities to receive feedback on drafts from their classmates in both small and large groups. Since much of the writing in this course allows students to concentrate on their own academic and professional goals and interests, many of the substantially revised documents (often in the form of a professional portfolio) may also benefit students as they progress in their careers.
- ✓ **Write with awareness of textual conventions.** This course helps students improve their ability to compose according to conventions of Standard Written English. Students practice writing with attention to grammar, style, clarity, concision, organization, and effective sentence and paragraph structure.

### Continuing Communication Outcomes

This course fulfills a Continuing Communication credit because students will:

- ✓ **Communicate to Learn.** Students use communication as a form of inquiry, invention, and reflection.
- ✓ **Communicate Flexibly.** Students communicate effectively for specified audiences in more than one genre, medium, or mode, such as written, oral,

or visual modes.

- ✓ **Communicate to Contribute.** Students use formal communication to contribute to a conversation in a discipline, profession, or field of study.
- ✓ **Communicate Critically.** Students demonstrate critical awareness of the ethical, rhetorical, and/or ideological dimensions of communicating within and across communities.

## Course Materials

**All our course materials will be available on Canvas**, including your readings, online discussions, and agendas. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the system and customize your notification settings to suit your preferences. The best way to see what is assigned and due each week is through the “Module” view, which shows items—readings, resources, discussion prompts, and assignments—organized by date and subject.

**Note that homework assigned during a module will appear under the date it is assigned, not the day it is due.** Regular discussion board topics are due the week after they are assigned—at noon before the next class meeting—unless otherwise noted. Ongoing assignments will include deadlines in their subject headers and/or descriptions.

Specific items may be tailored to flexibly accommodate student interests as discussed in class. Deadlines and assignments may shift throughout the term—I will send out announcements about any changes well in advance, but please check Canvas regularly to stay up to date.

## Technology Recommendations

This course involves digital and multimodal assignments, so you will need access to a computer with reliable Internet access and working audio and video functions in order to participate this term. Emory’s Woodruff Library offers loaner laptops and desktop machines you can use if you do not have your own.

For assignments, I recommend composing in Google Documents or Microsoft Word (free through Emory download) and backing up documents once in Google Drive or OneDrive. Midterm and final portfolios will be submitted as links to an online folder of your work.

Please **name your folders and files clearly** and keep things organized for easy retrieval in your course portfolio. Write your full name in your folder label. In each

file name, please include your last name, assignment name, and draft number. For example: "Yang\_Resume\_2" would be the second draft of resume. **Be sure to save and label every time you make substantial revisions** (instead of making all the changes in the same document) so I can see your progress across drafts.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you experience (or anticipate experiencing) technological access issues so we can explore options to ensure your success this term.

## **Classroom Expectations**

**Since this is a class centered around professional communication, please maintain a professional presence during our class.** To ensure you are not distracted, keep your cellphone on silent and out of arm's reach. I recommend taking notes with paper/pen or having a dedicated digital notebook. Feel free to experiment with different strategies, pay attention to your habits, and figure out how you learn best.

## **Workshops & Privacy**

This writing course is built on your projects and workshop participation, so it is essential that you join our meetings on time, prepared to discuss readings and actively collaborate to build community.

During our writing workshops, all your work will be named as a way of tying your professional identity to your writing and empowering you to take ownership of your craft. Workshops will not be anonymous unless anonymity is requested for specific reasons. We are, after all, learning to write for a public, professional audience.

That said, in order to make our classroom and digital platform a safe place for learning, though, please do respect the privacy of your classmates—do not record, photograph, reproduce, circulate, etc. any work shared in the course without explicit permission from the author(s) and instructor. I will occasionally take pictures during meetings for attendance and educational purposes. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please reach out.

## **Contact & Communication**

Maintaining strong communication is essential to making this work. Email is the best way to contact me. Generally, I will respond to all student emails within 48 hours except on weekends and holidays. (If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, don't hesitate to email me a reminder). Likewise, there may be instances

when I will need to contact you by email. Please try to check your Emory-based email account at least once every 24 hours on weekdays.

If your situation changes regarding health, housing, or in any other regard with respect to your ability to participate in the class, please contact the appropriate Emory student support organization first and then me as soon as feasible.

### **Office Hours**

My office hours will be held Tuesdays after class, 2:30PM to 3:30PM, in my office, Callaway N201A, or over Zoom at <https://emory.zoom.us/my/mtyang>. Please email me at least three days in advance of a requested office hour meeting so I can reserve and confirm our time together. You are encouraged to meet with me to explore course materials, brainstorm ideas, clarify feedback, and/or discuss other topics related to your college career and academic interests.

In addition to individual meetings, I plan to host several open office hours for drop-in group discussion and work time (to be announced). Email all requests to [melissa.yang@emory.edu](mailto:melissa.yang@emory.edu).

### **Discussion Expectations & Netiquette**

This course may involve participation in online discussion modules. Please review these "Ground Rules for Online Discussions" (adapted from Peter Connor), since many of these guidelines also apply to in-person discussions.

**Participate:** This is a shared learning environment. It is not enough to lurk and read the discussion threads of others. For the maximum benefit to all, everyone must contribute.

**Report Glitches:** Discussion forums are electronic. They break. If for any reason you experience difficulty participating, please inform me of the issue immediately. Chances are others are having the same problem.

**Help Others:** We all arrive to online forums from different backgrounds. If you are new, jump right in and feel free to ask questions. If you are well-versed, please support encourage others.

**Be Patient:** Read everything in the discussion thread before replying. This will help you avoid repeating something someone else has already contributed. Acknowledge the points made with which you agree and suggest alternatives for those with which you don't.

**Be Brief:** You want to be clear—and to articulate your point—without being preachy or pompous. Be direct. Stay on point. Don't lose yourself, or your readers, in overly wordy sentences or paragraphs.

**Write Well:** Whether you are writing a term paper or discussion post, please be attentive to strong word choice, error-free spelling, grammatical construction, sentence structure, etc.

**Cite Your Sources:** A must! If your contribution to the conversation includes the intellectual property (authored material) of others, e.g., books, newspaper, magazine, or journal articles—online or in print—they must be given proper attribution. Links are helpful.

**Emoticons and Abbreviations:** In creative and colloquial work, emote all you'd like. In professional writing, best to refrain from excessive faces and c u l8r's.

**Respect Diversity:** We live in a diverse and multicultural world. Use no language that is—or that could be construed to be—offensive toward others is allowed. Discriminatory language (racist, sexist, ableist, classist, etc.) is prohibited. This is an inclusive classroom space dedicated to promoting equity and inclusivity.

**No YELLING!** Step carefully. Beware the electronic footprint you leave behind. Using bold upper-case letters is bad form, like stomping around and yelling at somebody (NOT TO MENTION BEING HARD ON THE EYE).

**No Flaming!** Criticism must be constructive, well-meaning, and well-articulated. Tantrums or rants directed at any other contributor will not be tolerated.

**Lastly, Remember: You Can't Un-Ring the Bell.** Language is your primary tool in an online environment. Be mindful. How others perceive you will be largely—as always—up to you. Once you've hit the send button, you've rung the bell.

**Review** your written posts and responses to ensure that you've conveyed exactly what you intended. This is an excellent opportunity to practice your proofreading, revision, and rewriting skills—valuable assets in the professional world for which you are now preparing.

**Hint:** Read your post out loud before hitting the send button. This will tell you a lot about whether your grammar and sentence structure are correct, your tone is appropriate, and your contribution clear or not.

## Major Assignments

Beyond Canvas discussions, most of your major assignments will be submitted through an ongoing virtual portfolio. These are the sorts of items you may expect to be evaluated on (based on past semesters), but note that specific assignments may change at the instructor's discretion (and based on student interests):

## Midterm Portfolio

- ✓ 2 Drafts of Resume and Cover Letter
- ✓ 1 Blog Proposal with a link to 3 Blog Entries
- ✓ 1 Proposal/Progress Report/Notes for "Writing on the Job" Research Report
- ✓ 1 Midterm Reflection, with 1 to 3 Proposal(s) for "Wildcard" Passion Project

### Final Portfolio

- ✓ Final Resume and Cover Letter (Draft 3, with any additional drafts)
- ✓ 1 "Writing on the Job" Final Research Report (with any notes)
- ✓ 1 to 3 Wildcard Final Project(s), ideally multimodal design project(s) with a statement of purpose
- ✓ 1 Final Reflection with links to LinkedIn profile and Blog (with 3-5 entries)

For the **"Writing on the Job" Research Report**, I will ask you to connect with an Emory alum (or other professional) who is working in your aspirational field and/or dream job. You will be asked to first research them (and/or their company) online, and rhetorically analyze their professional profile. Then, you will connect with this professional to conduct an interview with them about research writing and communication practices in your workplace of choice. Finally, you should ask them to share a writing sample with you, if they are comfortable sharing. This can be the resume and cover letter they used to apply for the job, or something shareable of at least one page that they have written as part of their job (such as website content, emails, memos, bio blurbs, etc.). In your report, you will bring together all this research to make a clear argument about the role writing plays in this particular field or job.

For the **"Wildcard" Passion Project(s)**, you will present some element of your professional passion to a broad audience. You are encouraged to take risks and explore multimodal options for this project, from making a video resume to an instruction manual, infographics, event flyers, social media page, crowdsource campaign, solving a design problem, writing a speech, or more. We will discuss these assignments with more details in class and during meetings.

### Explanation of Grades

I tend to grade holistically across your drafts in your portfolios and based on your active engagement, oral participation, asynchronous discussions, and major assignments. Roughly 25% of your grade is determined by active participation, so try to speak up at least once every class session. 25% is based on your midterm portfolio progress, and you can continue to revise your work through your final portfolio compilation which accounts for about 50% of your grade.

Throughout the course, you will only receive letter grades on your midterm and final portfolios, but your class performance will be evaluated throughout the term by attendance and active participation. If you are ever concerned about your grade or want to know how you are doing, or how you did on an assignment, please do not hesitate to reach out and make an office hour appointment. Due to the timeline of this course and the ongoing revisions of the projects, it is often easier to chat than provide lengthy written feedback.

### **Grading Scale**

A: An excellent response to the assignment that exceeds expectations, often in surprising ways. Demonstrates a sophisticated use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, and/or design techniques.

B: A strong response to the assignment that follows all guidelines and demonstrates an effective use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, and/or design techniques. May have minor but distracting problems.

C: An average response to the assignment. Demonstrates acceptable use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, and design technique. May have problems that distract reader.

D: A poor response to the assignment. Demonstrates a lack of rhetorical knowledge and writing and design technique. May have significant problems that distract reader; see me.

F: A failure to respond to the assignment appropriately. May involve lack of effort, plagiarism, or otherwise; see me. All work should be polished to the best of your ability at each draft. Any writing assignment submitted with excessive errors will not receive a passing grade or comments, and must be resubmitted after revision.

### **Attendance Policy**

To get the most out of this class, I highly recommend attending every synchronous class, and missing no more than two sessions if you must. Due to the pandemic, I understand external circumstances may impact your ability to participate, so my attendance and deadline extension policies are flexible. I also share class recaps in an ongoing document each week to ensure everyone is up to date.

If you are ill or must miss class for any reason, please check in with a classmate for notes and email me so that we can discuss your individual circumstances as soon as it is feasible for you to do so.

### **Extensions & Revisions Policy**

Please do your best to complete all assignments on time and to the best of your

ability. Since this is a workshop-based writing course with a lot of time spent on small group collaborations and peer review, turning your work in on time allows class to run smoothly—and allows all of us to get more out of each class. If you need an extension on a deadline, I will generally grant one if you ask in advance—just let me know as early as you can.

If you are ever uncertain about turning in a work-in-progress, don't worry and just do it. Keep in mind that I always allow for further revisions until the end of the term. Grades for major assignments are malleable until your final portfolio is due, so you can make improvements on any major assignment all term based on feedback received in the course.

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

The Honor Code

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty seriously. Should I suspect that you engage in academic dishonesty in this course, I will refer the case to Emory's Honor Council. You may also receive an F on the assignment(s) in question.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement**

I am firmly committed to diversity and equity in all areas of campus life. In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone feels safe and welcome. I recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. I believe that such discrimination is unacceptable, and I am committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by eliminating any and all discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization. The success of this policy relies on the support and understanding of everyone in this class. We all have a responsibility not to participate in or condone harassment or discrimination of any kind.

Class rosters are provided to me with students' legal names; please update me

early in the semester if there are changes to make, and I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name and pronoun(s) of your choosing.

### **Land Acknowledgment**

Emory University is located on stolen Muscogee (Creek) land. Our institution was founded in 1836, during a period of sustained oppression, land dispossession, and forced removals of Muscogee (Creek) and Ani'yunwi'ya (Cherokee) peoples from Georgia and the Southeast.

Please review this land acknowledgment and history statement developed by Emory faculty: <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/nae/land-acknowledgement/>

### **Accessibility and Accommodations**

I strive to create an inclusive learning environment for all. I am invested in your success in this class and at Emory, so please let me know if anything is standing in the way of your doing your best work. This can include your own learning strengths, any classroom dynamics that you find uncomfortable, ESOL issues, disability or chronic illness, and/or personal issues that impact your work. I will hold such conversations in strict confidence.

The Department of Accessibility Services (DAS) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, [you must register with DAS at this link](#). More information about DAS during remote learning [can be found here](#). Accommodations cannot be retroactively applied so you need to contact DAS and contact me as early as possible in the semester to discuss the plan for implementation of your accommodations. Contact the Department of Accessibility Services for more information at (404) 727-9877 or [accessibility@emory.edu](mailto:accessibility@emory.edu). Additional information is available [at the DAS website](#).

### **Writing Center Tutoring**

Tutors in the Emory Writing Center are available to support Emory College students as they work on papers, discussion posts, websites, and other projects. Writing Center tutors work on idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to fine-tuning. Tutors also support the literacy needs of English Language Learners; several tutors are ELL Specialists, who have received additional training. The Writing Center will be

available for appointments over Zoom and on campus in Callaway N111. [Learn more about the Emory Writing Center](#) and [create an account on WC Online](#) to begin.

## Careers, Scholarships, & Fellowships Resources

Emory's [National Scholarships and Fellowships Office](#) is a terrific place to seek award opportunities and advising for the Fulbright, Marshall, Rhodes, and more.

The [Emory Career Center](#) is an innovative and engaging resource that drives student professional development and success. They envision a center where:

- ✓ All students will explore, identify and actively pursue a career path consistent with their values, interests, talents, and skills – and by commencement will have acquired ethically-grounded professional competency, life-ready resilience, and resolution in obtaining intentional post-graduate employment or continuing education opportunities. Ultimately, students transition from Emory work-ready, life-ready, relationship-ready, citizenship-ready...ready to achieve professional success and personal fulfillment.
- ✓ Faculty, alumni, parents, and friends place greatest value in partnering with the Career Center in advancing the professional development of students.
- ✓ Employers and professional/graduate schools consider Emory the primary destination for recruiting talent.
- ✓ Center staff value and engage in individual and collective professional development to maintain the highest standards of competency and field expertise – moreover contributing to the integrity and leadership on the career services arena.

## Emory Counseling Services

Free and confidential counseling services and support are available from the Emory Counseling Center (404) 727-7450. This can be an invaluable resource when stress makes your work more challenging than it ought to be.

<http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/>

## Syllabus Notes

*This syllabus is a living document and may be updated throughout the course. Feel free to email me with any ideas, edits, etc. I will notify the class of any syllabus changes promptly. This syllabus was last revised in 2022.*

*These course materials are adapted from several versions of the "Written Professional Communication (WPC)" course taught in the Public and Professional Writing Program (PPW) at the University of Pittsburgh, as well as the "Writing for Professions" course I have previously taught at Emory University.*

*Image credit and description: Cover image is a free banner template from [Canva](#).*

*Teal text and highlights appear on a black-and-white photograph showing a corner of an open laptop, notebook, and pen.*