Note: This syllabus outlines requirements for a UNF Composition course, ENC 3250. Please read this document carefully, since your continued enrollment in this (or any) course constitutes your binding agreement to the terms of its syllabus.

ENC 3250 (Professional Communication)  
University of North Florida – Fall 2009

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION  
Brenda Maxey-Billings (Writing Program Faculty, English Dept.)  
EMAIL: brenda.maxey-billings@unf.edu  
WEBPAGE: http://www.unf.edu/~brenda.maxey-billings

OFFICE HOURS AND LOCATION  
T/Th 10:50-12:00 noon (drop-in); F 9:30-12:00 noon (drop-in); T/Th 8:30-9-15 a.m. and other times (by appt.)  
Building 8, Room 2606 (Inside the English Department Offices at the back of the second floor)  
I check my email frequently during the term, and you may email me with any questions that require brief responses. For more in-depth conferences, I'm happy to meet with you in my office.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES  
UNF’s catalog describes ENC 3250 this way: “The primary emphasis of technical writing is on the basics of professional communication—research, organization, grammar/mechanics/style. We will also cover the forms of professional communication—letters, memos, and formal and informal reports.”

For the purposes of this course, Professional Communication means the kinds of communications within a variety of professional contexts: business correspondence, technical writing, case studies, managerial/administrative communication, etc. As the catalog description suggests, we’ll work toward two main goals: (1) Improving the quality and content of our professional writing and (2) familiarizing ourselves with various document formats.

To achieve these goals, students will practice researching and formulating strong documents, mastering “Plain English” stylistic skills, improving their writing’s grammatical, mechanical, and syntactical correctness, and gaining practice in the conventions of professional writing. During the term, each student produces several professionally formatted documents/texts and at least one formal presentation.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- Full-function word-processing software, such as that available in Microsoft Office. (You may download a free but otherwise comparable office suite at OpenOffice.org.)
- Regular Internet Access for the mandatory Blackboard (Bb) component of this course. If you don’t have regular internet access, you may use a computer in the library or computer lab, but plan to do so often. Once online, use your UNF n-number to access Blackboard from the UNF website. IMPORTANT: The first time you access Blackboard this term, go to “personal information” and update your email address to one that you check regularly.

Optional/supplemental text:  
ASSIGNMENTS

In general, the course assignments mimic the kinds of writing students might expect in professional environments. In addition to in-class practice work, peer review, and quizzes, assignments consist of letters, memos, employment documents, a technical definition and instructions (including presentation to class), a collaborative project (possibly a Wiki), and an instructional manual.

The following list provides a summary of assignments and probable point-values—exact point-values may differ from the ones shown below, however.

1. Miscellaneous – In-class activities, quizzes, exercises, peer review, etc. 200 points
2. Business Documents (Email, Memo, Letter, Employment Docs & Interview) 300 points
3. Graphic/Text Writing (Technical Definition/Technical Instructions Wiki) 100 points
4. TBA Writing Assignment(s) 100 points
5. Expanded Writing Project 300 points

GRADING SCALE and GRADING REQUIREMENTS

Keep in mind that effort alone doesn’t determine your grade in this class. Making consistent effort should help you do well on assignments, but only the strength of your work determines your grade. Work earning the highest grades will demonstrate superior quality of analytical thought as well as superior writing craft.

Your final course grade adheres to the following scale and derives from a simple percentage: points earned divided by possible points. I don’t add “extra” points or fractions of points to “bump up” your numerical score at the end of the term—no, please don’t ask—so make sure you take advantage of opportunities to raise your grade throughout the term.

A = 91.5% or better  A- = 89.5%-91.4  B+ = 86.5-89.4%  B = 81.5-86.4%  B- = 79.5-81.4%
C+ = 76.5-79.4  C = 69.5-76.4%  D = 59.5-69.4%  F = 59.4% or lower

To earn a C or better in this course, you must turn in all major writing assignments, in the minimum length or greater, and you must earn a “C” average on all your work. An individual assignment earns a C only if it meets the acceptable standards for the assignment.

SCHEDULE

Our Blackboard course site provides essential and current information. Establish the habit of checking the site often for scheduling details, assignment descriptions, and due dates. Remember, you’re responsible for all assignments on the Bb schedule even if I fail to remind you of them in class. Whenever you have questions, check Blackboard first!

ATTENDANCE POLICY

My absence policy is simple: Come to class. Please don’t provide me with excuses, doctor’s notes, documentation of religious observances, etc. THEY DON’T AFFECT THE POLICY!

Put bluntly, you get ONE absence to use however you need it, PERIOD. (Keep in mind, though, that I don’t provide make-ups for quizzes or other in-class activities, so you WON’T get credit for any in-class work that you miss.) If you miss MORE than ONE class during the term (i.e., more than a full week’s worth of classes), you’ll lose the equivalent of half a letter grade for EACH of the second and third absences. If you acquire more than three absences (i.e., more than three weeks of classes missed), you’ll fail the course.

ASSIGNED WORK DEADLINES

Late work earns you an F on the assignment. Thus, make sure you submit assigned work on the specified due date even if you feel your work is substandard or incomplete, or even if you are taking one of your “allowed” absences. If you miss the deadline, at the instructor’s discretion, you may receive up to half credit (i.e., up to 50%) for late work submitted within one week after the original due date.
If you completely fail to submit an assignment, you earn a zero averaged into your overall grade. Note that FAILING to submit an assignment earns a more serious grade deduction than does submitting a poor or incomplete assignment—a zero (0%) compared to as much as half-credit (50%). Make sure you get credit for your work (even if incomplete)—Turn in each assignment by its due date!

CLASSROOM AND ONLINE COURTESY

Members of the class at times may express differing opinions; sometimes students disagree with the opinions expressed in a text or by the instructor. We are working toward using language in persuasive ways, and to do so, we must learn to effectively counter opposing viewpoints. We are aiming always, however, toward CIVIL discourse. That is, both the classroom and the Blackboard site should provide a venue in which students (and instructors) may discuss volatile issues openly, while demonstrating respect for ideas that differ from their own.

In general, my expectations for courtesy follow expected social and professional standards. Thus, as you would in any professional environment, please address others respectfully and avoid offensive language, tone, or content. I reserve the right to penalize (by a grade reduction of ½ of a letter grade) instances of “significant disruption,” or other substantive discourtesy. (Note that my judgment determines these offenses.)

SPECIAL DISPENSATIONS

Students with disabilities who seek reasonable accommodations in the classroom or other aspects of performing their coursework must first register with the UNF Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in Building 10, Room 1201. DRC staff members work with students to obtain required documentation of disability and to identify appropriate accommodations as required by applicable disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). After receiving all necessary documentation, the DRC staff determines whether a student qualifies for services with the DRC and if so, the accommodations the student will be provided. DRC staff then prepares a letter for the student to provide faculty advising them of approved accommodations. For further information, contact the DRC by phone (904) 620-2769, email (kwebb@unf.edu), or visit the DRC website at http://www.unf.edu/dept/disabled-services.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES ON PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

As a University of North Florida student, you commit to UNF’s standards of student conduct, detailed in the Academic Integrity Code. Briefly, the Code requires UNF students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. The Academic Code is available in its full form at http://www.unf.edu/registrar/forms/misconduct_policy.pdf.

The University of North Florida considers any form of “academic dishonesty” a serious violation of University standards. You should know that violations might result in your expulsion from the University. FOR YOUR PROTECTION, review the UNF Academic Integrity Code and understand University standards. Remember, you must take responsibility for understanding the University’s definitions of plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Examples of violations of the Academic Code include the following:

- Submitting all or part of someone else’s work as if it is your own.
- “Borrowing,” without crediting the source, any of the following:
  * Any part of song lyrics, poetry, or movie script
  * Any part of another person’s essay, speech, or ideas
  * Any part of an article in a magazine, journal, newspaper
  * Any part of a book, encyclopedia, CD-ROM, online WWW page, etc.
  * Any IDEA from another person or writer, even if you express that idea in your own words.
- “Borrowing” verbatim text without enclosing in quotation marks and citing the source.
- Making “duplicate submissions” of assignments - that is, submitting work in one class that you also submit (or have previously submitted) in another class.
• “Collaborating” or receiving substantive help in writing your assignment unless such collaboration is part of the given assignment. (You may receive general advice from tutors or writing lab instructors.)
• Failing to cite sources, citing them improperly, or making up false sources.

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

Plagiarism substantially violates the student academic integrity code. You commit plagiarism when you present INFORMATION, IDEAS, or WORDS “borrowed” from someone else as if they are your own. If a student “plagiarizes” all or any part of any assignment, he/she will earn a failing grade on the assignment and could fail the entire course. University policy also requires that instructors report imposed penalties to the Registrar’s Office, which will maintain a permanent record of the incident in the student’s file. Other forms of academic dishonesty (examples include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations) will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty.

Protect yourself! Make sure the assignments you submit for grading reflect your own work. Be careful to properly cite any sources from which you obtained ideas, quotations, or information.

USEFUL STUDENT RESOURCES

Many students experience stress while adjusting to college. Although I certainly sympathize if you are experiencing non-course-related problems, you’ll find better and more helpful resources elsewhere on campus. The services below are available free to students, so if you feel you need help, please don’t wait. Contact the appropriate office below—each of their staffs include trained, caring professionals who have experience helping students deal with specific academic, security, psychological, and emotional issues.

ACE (Academic Center for Excellence) – Academic Advising and Tutoring
Founder’s Hall, 2/2120, (904) 620-1012, http://www.unf.edu/es/ace

The UNF Counseling Center
Founder’s Hall, 2/2068, (904) 620-2602, http://www.unf.edu/dept/counseling_center

UNF Campus Police, http://www.unf.edu/dept/upd/index.htm
Building 41, on UNF Drive across the street from the on Information Booth
Emergency Number: (904) 620-2801
Note: Police officers are available 24 hours a day to provide safety escorts to any member of the University Community. To request an escort you may contact the UPD at 620-2800.

The Women’s Center (and Victim Advocacy Program)
Student Life Center Building, 14/2623, (904) 620-2528, Email: womenctr@unf.edu
24-hour Crisis Helpline: (904) 620-1010