

**English 695:
Professional Writing Internship
Spring 2016
Writing Center: 235-4694
Office Hours: MWF 12 – 2, TR 2 – 4, or
by appointment**

**Dr. Jamie McDaniel
449 Grubbs, 235-4744
jmcdanie@gus.pittstate.edu or
through Canvas
Home: 620-308-5341
Text: 256-310-2100**

ENGL 695 Professional Writing Internship provides a professional writing experience in a business or organization. It is designed to provide not only professional experience in the field of Professional Writing but also the ability to look at that experience from a critical perspective.

Required Texts

All required texts are available through your Canvas site.

Course Requirements

Your internship requires the following activities:

- 40 hours per credit hour for an employer with a work schedule arranged between you and your employer
- A weekly report to the Director of Professional Writing with the number of hours you worked in the previous week and a brief narrative of your work experience during that period – posted to Canvas discussion forum
- Four contributions to the Pitt State Professional Writing Internship site (pittstateprofwritinginterns.blogspot.com) using the Blogger online publishing tool.

Internship Contract

If you have not returned your internship contract to Jamie McDaniel, please do so as soon as possible. A copy of the contract is available on your Canvas site. Please print it off, have your supervisor sign it, and return it to me.

Weekly Reports

The weekly reports (due each week on Sunday by 11:59 p.m. to the appropriate discussion board on Canvas) will serve as a record of your work and will enable you to look at your internship experience from a critical perspective. By “critical,” I don’t mean negative. I want you to look at the good and the bad in a thoughtful way. You will record not only what you do but also how you feel about it and why you feel that way. You will also record what you learn about the workplace in addition to the work that you actually do. For example, in your weekly reports, you could provide answers to the following kinds of questions:

- What is your business or organization’s place in the world, and how do you feel about working for a business or organization that holds that place? Does your opinion change during your internship?
- If the business or organization is large enough to have departments, what is your department’s place in the business or organization?
- What is the organizational hierarchy in your department, and where do you fit in that hierarchy?
- What is the “atmosphere” in the department? Formal, casual, cold, warm? Does the atmosphere change during your internship?
- Do you have any problems in dealing with any of your co-workers? If so, why? Were the problems there from the beginning or did they develop along the way? How have you tried to improve the relationship?
- What is the actual work that you do? Do you produce documents? If so, what kind? What kind of knowledge do these documents help to maintain or to create?
- How much of what you do is actually created by you, and how much is created by someone else and massaged by you?

- What technology do you use—hardware, software, etc.? How much did you already know about the technology, and how much did you have to learn? Is there anything new or innovative about the technology?
- Do you have any autonomy or power? Did your autonomy or power increase or decrease during the internship?

Though you can answer these questions, I also want you to include anything that matters to you that is not covered by these questions. The weekly narratives do not have to be polished. You can write them as you would a diary, with fragments, errors, etc., as long as they are readable. My purpose in requiring you to submit them weekly is twofold: you are forced to write things down before you forget them, and I can make sure that you are paying attention to the kinds of things I want you to notice and to think about.

Make sure to include the number of hours you worked for each week on your submission.

Contributions to Internship Website

Over the course of the semester, you will submit 400 – 500 word contributions to the Pitt State Professional Writing Internship site (pittstateprofwritinginterns.blogspot.com) using the Blogger online publishing tool. The site will serve as a resource for future interns, other professional writers at large, and students contemplating professional writing as a major as well as as preparation for you as you enter the job market. **Keep these audiences in mind as you complete your contributions.** Each contribution focuses on one of four goals: defining professional writing for yourself and for others outside the field (future coworkers in other departments, for example); exploring how genre works in professional contexts; understanding the workplace; and preparing for the job market. **If you have questions about these assignments, contact me, Jamie McDaniel, not your internship supervisor.**

I have also created a discussion forum on our Canvas site for talking about the readings and asking any questions you might have. Make sure to check it on the regular basis so that you can help answer your colleagues' questions.

1) Defining Professional Writing **(Due September 19)**

Readings

Jo Allen, "The Case against Defining Technical Writing"

David Dobrin, "What's Technical about Technical Writing?"

Carolyn Miller, "A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing" and "What's Practical about Technical Writing?"

Elizabeth Tebeaux, "Let's Not Ruin Technical Writing, Too"

Carolyn Miller, "Carolyn Miller Responds"

Assignment

Your internship supervisor has decided to request funding to begin a search for a new professional writing position. However, she worries that the hiring manager may not understand the purpose and value of a professional writer for your particular work context, especially given current economic and budget constraints. The internship supervisor wants to cast the widest net possible when she looks to fill the position, but she worries that the hiring manager may overlook candidates with degrees from humanities departments. Therefore, she has asked you to write part of her request report. In order to increase the persuasiveness of your contribution, your internship supervisor has asked you to include appropriate research from specialists in the field.

Your contribution should

- Define professional writing both in general as a field and in your specific internship context,
- Describe the potential value added through the hire of a professional writer, and

- Outline the value added to a professional writing degree awarded from a humanities department.

2) Genres in Professional Writing (**Due October 17**)

Readings

Carolyn Miller, “Genre as Social Action”

Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff, “Rhetorical Genre Studies” and “Genre Research in Workplace and Professional Contexts”

Assignment

Your internship supervisor has asked you to contribute one entry to a guidebook for a kind of writing (or *genre* of writing) that you have encountered during your internship. This guidebook is not simply a style manual (with information such as margin width and typeface, for example). Instead, the internship supervisor wants to help future interns and other workers understand a genre of professional writing by describing the primary elements of that piece of writing (what Miller calls “typified rhetorical actions”) and the ways in which this genre works within your specific professional context (“recurrent situations,” to use Miller’s language).

Additionally, in order to better understand the genre, the internship supervisor has asked you to research other jobs and types of professional situations in which you might use this genre and describe how it is used within that context.

Finally, in order to increase the persuasiveness of your contribution, your internship supervisor has asked you to include appropriate research from specialists in the field.

Your contribution should

- Describe the primary elements of a professional writing genre used during your internship
- Outline the ways in which this genre works within your specific professional context at your internship site, and
- Describe other professional contexts in which this genre might be used and the ways it might change in those other situations

3) From Schoolroom to Workroom (**November 14**)

Readings

Linda Driskill, “Understanding the Writing Contexts in Organizations”

Chris Anson and Lee Forsberg, “Moving Beyond the Academic Community: Transitional Stages in Professional Writing”

Susan Katz, “A Newcomer Gains Power: An Analysis of the Role of Rhetorical Expertise”

Assignment

Authors Linda Driskill, Chris Anson, Lee Forsberg, and Susan Katz have approached you to contribute to an anthology that offers descriptions of internship experiences in various areas. The audiences for the anthology are students who are considering a career in professional writing or students who are already professional writing majors but need to decide on a specific area in which to do an internship. At the very least, your contribution to the anthology should include

- your job title,
- a description of your responsibilities,
- a list of what you would say are required qualifications and preferred qualifications for this position,
- the abilities and skills you have learned / practiced during your internship,
- the abilities and skills you thought you would learn / practice but have not,

- a description of the ways that writing and working with your internship differs from writing and working at school, and
- an analysis of the writing context, work atmosphere, and organizational hierarchy (use the readings to help you accomplish this task).

You can also include any other information that you deem important. Think of your contribution in this way: If you knew who was taking over your position after you leave, what would you tell them about the job and about your internship location and why?

In order to increase the persuasiveness of your contribution, the book editor has asked you to include appropriate research from specialists in the field.

4) Training for the Future **(Due December 16)**

Readings

Johndan Johnson-Eilola, “Relocating the Value of Work: Technical Communication in a Post-Industrial Age”

Sherry G. Southard, “Interacting Successfully in Corporate Culture”

Emily Soplinsky, “Survival Skills for Communicators within Organizations”

Assignment

Now that you are close to completing your internship experience, the Director of Professional Writing has asked you to explore how it has contributed to your qualifications as a professional writer and what skills and abilities you may still need to develop.

To that end, find at least three job advertisements / descriptions for professional writing positions (widely defined) for which you would apply. Research these positions and companies. Given your research, you will create a “training unit” for the positions you have found. This training unit should consist of resources that will increase the likelihood of your employment in the kind of position you have researched as well as a rationale for the resources you include. What resources and experiences from your internship will help you get the kind of job that you want, and what resources and experiences do you still need to gain?

This training unit might include additional readings, websites, videos, suggested coursework, online courses (such as those offered through Lynda.com or through Adobe), or any other resources that will help prepare you. For example, if the job advertisements request experience with Adobe Production Premium, then you might include links to YouTube videos that discuss the ways to use Adobe Production Premium or links to the appropriate AdobeTV videos. Additionally, if the job advertisements request experience with social media, you might include links to resources on blogging. You could also include other suggestions about gaining this kind of experience, such as managing a website or Facebook page for a local non-profit organization. These suggestions are only a few ways in which you can increase your marketability.

In order to increase the persuasiveness of your contribution, the Director of Professional Writing has asked you to include appropriate research from specialists in the field. You will also want to include any resources you find, whether a PDF, a web link, a video, or another kind of resource.

Using Blogger

For using Blogger, you will also need a regular Gmail account (not a gus.pittstate.edu Gmail account). You can get a free Gmail account here: mail.google.com

Send me your Gmail address. After you send the address, I will send you an invitation to become an author

Blogger, I have posted a short tutorial to your Canvas site. The tutorial includes details on processes that you will not need to worry with (such as making pages).

Three things you should remember as you create your posts in Blogger:

1. Make sure to save often. The save feature appears at the top right hand corner of the post composition screen.
2. Make sure to use the styles (Normal, Heading, Subheading, etc.) located in the bar to manipulate text. Your contribution should at least have a title using the Heading style, though you may include Subheadings and Minor Headings as well. You should also feel free to include links and videos, which I can help you include in your post.
3. **Most Important:** Make sure to include the appropriate label for the contribution you are posting. You can apply labels on the right hand side of the post composition screen.

Finally, I have included a discussion forum on our Blogger site. This discussion forum will allow you to ask questions of other students taking internships and ask questions about the contributions and their readings. Please make use of it!

If you have any problems with Blogger, please contact me as soon as possible.

Grading Policy

Your grade will be determined by your supervisor's evaluation of your internship (60%), by the promptness with which you file your weekly internship reports (10%), and by my evaluation of your site contributions (30%), the quality of which will depend on 1) the degree of critical analysis and thoughtfulness with which you respond to the prompts, 2) the use of readings to explain or support your points, and 3) Keep in mind that these contributions are public documents; proofread closely. A poor contribution will reflect poorly upon you and upon our program.

Other Matters

If you encounter any kind of problem with the internship, let me know immediately so that it can be fixed before it's too late. You cannot drop an internship as you can other kinds of courses. If you drop it at any point, your grade will be an automatic F. Also, feel free to ask me for any kind of help or feedback. My job is to help you complete your internship successfully.