
ENGL 390B: TUTORING BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

the basics

Meeting time: Mondays 11:30 am–12:20 pm
+ in-Lab hours (to be scheduled)

Meeting place: HEAV 227

Website: Blackboard

CRN: 19601

Instructor: Beth Towle

Email: towle0@purdue.edu

Office: Heavilon 307

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-11:30 am
(or by appointment)

course description

ENGL 390B prepares students to become Business Writing Consultants (BWCs) in the Purdue Writing Lab. BWCs are undergraduate peer tutors who work with students on a variety of documents and course assignments, including resumes, cover letters, memos, reports, proposals, multimedia presentations, and scholarly documents. In this class, you will enhance your knowledge of these genres, learn the fundamentals of peer tutoring, shadow graduate and undergraduate tutors, and gain first-hand experience tutoring.

ENGL 390B can be taken for 2 or 3 credit hours, either for a grade or with a pass/no pass option. The major difference is the addition of one more project: a tutoring portfolio.

Hiring decisions are made at the end of the semester based on your performance in this course, your professionalism and participation, and recommendations made by tutors with whom you have worked.

course readings and discussion posts

Required textbook:

Ryan and Zimerelli. *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. 6th Ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2016.

All other required readings will be available as PDFs on Blackboard.

You will be expected to read and discuss several book chapters or articles each week for class. For each week's readings, you will be expected to post in the Blackboard forum. These posts are due by midnight the Sunday before class and are intended as the beginning of the discussion that will carry over into class on Monday. You may discuss the readings in context of class lectures or discussions, personal and professional experiences, or as a synthesis of multiple readings. Posts should be 300+ words. You are also required to respond to at least 2 other posts with a 100+ word post by class time on Monday (11:30). Each post and response set is worth 10 points, for a total of 100 by semester's end.

in-lab assignments

Each week, you will be required to spend a scheduled 90 minutes in the Writing Lab. During this time, you will shadow undergraduate and graduate tutors and make notes of what you observe in and out of tutoring sessions. You are encouraged to work with the returning BWCs, but if none of them are available, please feel free to talk to and work with any of graduate tutors (GTAs). They are a nice bunch, so please feel free to introduce yourself and ask if you can shadow them!

A full overview of in-lab assignments you must complete are described below:

Writing Lab Scavenger Hunt

The first assignment of the semester is a scavenger hunt for various things you may need while working in the Lab. This activity is meant to help you become oriented to the Writing Lab space and some of the senior staff, graduate tutors, and undergraduate tutors. The form for the scavenger hunt will be handed out in class.

Tutor Interview

For this assignment, you will interview an experienced (i.e., returning) tutor, either a BWC or GTA. You will spend 30 minutes interviewing the tutor based on questions we established together in class. Be sure to schedule your interview in advance and work around the schedule of the tutor you are interviewing. You may choose to interview the tutor you have been shadowing or someone else entirely; let me know if you need recommendations.

Your Own Tutorial

Toward the beginning of the semester you will schedule an appointment with a Writing Lab consultant to work on your own writing. You may use a paper from any course, including this one, or another genre like a resume or cover letter. After you have had your tutorial, you will write a brief reflection that describes your experience as the tutee, any strategies or techniques you noticed your tutor employed, and general observations about the other side of a session at the Writing Lab. I want this to be as authentic of an experience as possible, so you will need to make an appointment at the front desk, sign in, and everything else a real client would have to do (but you should tell them you are a tutor-in-training).

Job Shadowing

The vast majority of your in-Lab time will be spent shadowing an experienced BWC or GTA.

The idea of job shadowing is to make this course more experiential and tailored to your strengths, interests, and development. There are three stages of shadowing that you will all reach, but you may do so at different times and to different degrees. Each week during class and in your journals, you will talk about where you are, how you feel about tutoring, and what challenges or issues you are facing. You should also keep note of any quirks you notice or questions you have, which can be used to spur your eventual research project. Again, each of you will progress at different speeds and reach these stages at your own pace, but you must complete all three stages by semester's end.

Stage 1: At the beginning of the semester shadowing will be more akin to observing: you will watch the tutor, listen to the conversation, take notes, and debrief after the session. As you gain some experience you are free to become more involved in the session: perhaps you ask the client a question, make a suggestion, or offer your take on a problem.

Stage 2: By the middle of the semester you are expected to take on a more assertive role and do what we call team tutoring: you will take the lead on the session, but the BWC or GTA will be there the whole time to jump in whenever you need assistance. During the first few weeks you might defer more to the tutor, but by the end they should let you lead.

Stage 3: Before the end of the semester you must show that you can lead a tutorial independently. During the last several weeks of the semester you will complete a few solo tutorials with real clients to give you a taste of what a session. You will not be completely alone, however; each session will be observed by either me or the BWC/GTA you've been shadowing all semester. While you can turn to them for help if necessary, they will be instructed to only intervene if you really need help. Additionally, they will observe your approach, take some notes, and offer positive and constructive feedback.

Each week that you shadow, you will complete an entry in your shadow journal where you tell me about your experiences working in the Lab. Tell me what you noticed and learned, what you still need to learn, and what questions you have. I will post prompts for journals each week on Blackboard.

research proposal + poster

One of the most important aspects of writing center work is knowing where the methods and practices of writing centers come from. Inquiry-based research helps writing center professionals and scholars better understand the best practices and most important theories for the work tutors are asked to do. For this reason, we will be doing our own inquiry-based research projects. During the semester, you will be encouraged to consider and question the things you see in the Lab. Working individually or in groups, you will begin figuring out how to find out the answer to your questions about the Lab. You will develop a research plan and write a formal proposal detailing your research questions, methods, and goals. You will then remediate your proposal into a research poster that explains your plan to the general population. This project will require engaging with writing center scholarship, understanding modes of inquiry in a community of practice such as the Lab, and learning how to think critically to solve problems. You will display your poster for a public walk-through at the end of the semester. More information about this project will be discussed later in the semester.

tutoring portfolio

Those who choose the 3-credit option for this course will be required to complete one additional project: a tutoring portfolio comprised of a cover letter, resume, and tutoring philosophy. I will discuss this project in detail with anyone who chooses the 3-credit option.

grading

Grades on all assignments and the final paper follow the +/- letter grade system. If you have questions about your grade, please talk to me. All grades will be available on Blackboard, and I will provide written feedback on major projects, as well.

Class Component	Points
Shadow journal	100
Discussion posts	100
Other In-Lab Activities	50
Research Proposal	200
Research Poster	50
Portfolio (3-credit only)	(200)
TOTAL POINTS	500 (700)

All grades are tabulated according to this scale:

A+ 98-100%	C+ 78-79%
A 93-97%	C 73-77%
A- 90-92%	C- 70-72%
B+ 88-89%	D 60-69%
B 83-87%	F <60%
B- 80-82 %	

policies and procedures

Attendance

Because this class only meets 14 times during the semester, your attendance is necessary for productive learning and discussion. *You are allowed two (2) absences total.* Any days beyond two will result in a lower final grade.

For the 90 minutes you are scheduled to shadow in the Lab each week, you are required to complete the full 90 minutes every week. If you need to reschedule your 90 minutes, please let me know so we can arrange a different time for you.

Late Work

The majority of missed class assignments cannot be made up. If a serious and unavoidable problem arises, however, you should contact me prior to the deadline to determine whether or not an extension is possible.

Campus Emergencies + Inclement Weather

In the event of a major campus emergency or official university closure due to weather, I will get in touch with you via email as soon as possible to let you know about any changes to our regular schedule. If a major campus emergency due to weather or human tragedy occurs while we are in class, I will provide immediate instruction in what to do. In general: stay inside for tornados, go outside for fires. For active shootings or similar situations, our classroom door will be locked and we will take cover in the least visible part of the room.

Grief Absence Policy

The Grief Absence Policy for Students states that Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). GAPS Policy: Students will be excused for funeral leave and given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missing assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family. For more information, contact ODOS or visit <http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/>

Violent Behavior

Purdue's policy for violent behavior is as follows: Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment for members of the educational environment for students and a work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent Behavior impedes such goals. Purdue strives to create an environment for employees

that promote educational and career goals. Violent Behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, Violent Behavior is prohibited in or on any University Facility or while participating in any university activity. Read more:

<http://www.purdue.edu/policies/index.html>

Academic Integrity

The official guidelines for academic integrity state that "Purdue University values intellectual integrity and the highest standards of academic conduct. To be prepared to meet societal needs as leaders and role models, students must be educated in an ethical learning environment that promotes a high standard of honor in scholastic work.

Academic dishonesty undermines institutional integrity and threatens the academic fabric of Purdue University. Dishonesty is not an acceptable avenue to success. It diminishes the quality of a Purdue education, which is valued because of Purdue's high academic standards."

For more information read the following brochure:

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that requires special academic accommodation, please make an appointment to speak with me anytime during the semester in order to discuss any adjustments. For more information, visit the Disability Resource Center's website: <https://www.purdue.edu/drc/>

Discrimination and Harassment

I take seriously the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment in our classroom as well as in the online space of the course website. All class-related interactions will be conducted in accordance with Purdue's nondiscrimination policy. Read it in full here: http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html/