

**Traditional MBA ♦♦♦ Mod 1**  
**GEB 5212 - Professional Writing**  
**Yellowlees Douglas, Associate Professor**  
**Thursdays 11:45am-1:40pm**  
**Hough 340**

E-mail	Office	Hours	Phone
yellowleesdouglas@gmail.com	Bryan 233N	Thursdays 2-4pm; email for appointment	273-3215

**REQUIRED TEXT**

✍ Yellowlees Douglas, *The Reader's Brain: How Neuroscience Can Make You a Better Writer* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Available as hardcover, paperback, and e-book.

**DESCRIPTION**

Presidents of Fortune 500 companies and top CEOs consistently place good written and oral communication among the top five must-have skills for employees. This course will improve your writing skills as you prepare to advance your careers.

In this course, you will learn strategies that will enable you to write memos, emails, reports, and other documents that will sell your ideas, clinch that promotion, or nail down that ideal job.

**ASSURANCE OF LEARNING**

Each program at the Warrington College of Business Administration has developed goals and objectives that express the most valued skills and knowledge that students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the total learning experiences in that program. The following goals and objectives are specifically mapped to **GEB5212**.

The **MBA** program goals and objectives that apply to this course are:

**Learning Goal 1:** Program graduates will be effective communicators.

**1A.** Our students will produce professional quality business documents.

**OBJECTIVES**

You will learn the basic principles that make writing work and how to read an audience so that you can persuade and influence them consistently and powerfully. You will learn how to replace some bad writing habits with good ones.

By the end of this course, you should be able to

- Write better documents in less time
- Write more clearly and concisely
- Arrange your ideas logically and persuasively
- Understand approaches for handling different forms of communication
- Use psychology to ensure readers act on the documents you send them

## REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATIONS

To pass this class, you must complete all required coursework. Individual assignments and other components of the course will be evaluated using the following point system:

Proposal ..... 100	Cover letter ..... 100
	Final team in-class writing ..... 100
Total Points ..... 300	

You must do in-class work in class on the assigned day and may not make it up another time. You must create all out-of-class work in the appropriate format and submit it on E-Learning by the specified deadline.

Assignments are due as specified on the schedule. Late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade for each day late. Once the assignment has been submitted, no re-writes are permitted. You may request an appointment with your instructor to review assignments before their due date, though. Such reviews will be no guarantee of a specific grade, but may prove helpful in honing your writing skills.

## GRADING SCALE

A	285-300	B-	230-239
A-	270-284	C+	220-229
B+	255-269	C	210-219
B	240-254	C-	195-209

## REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

This course requires you to do more than listen to lectures. You'll lose the true value of the course—your classmates—if you do not attend class. You are responsible for submitting assignments on their due dates. If you are absent, you must still turn in assignments on time. Unlike classes where you receive information, this course trains skills and you have to practice. You can't learn to dance by listening to a dancer talk. The more you write, the better you get. Miss practice and you'll get rusty and start to lose your confidence.

You may miss one class for any reason. For every additional absence, you'll lose 20 points from your total in the course. To receive credit for full attendance you must attend at least 90 minutes of a class meeting. (In the real world, you just get disrespected and gossiped about.)

If you miss more than one class, meet with me, and, if possible, make plans to make up your work or retake the course. We will work with you fairly and kindly. If you miss three classes, you will automatically fail this course.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

University policy requires that we remind you of the common sense values embodied in the University Honor Code. We assume that you are all familiar with the policy on academic honesty as stated at [http://www.reg.ufl.edu/01-02-catalog/student\\_life/](http://www.reg.ufl.edu/01-02-catalog/student_life/). This pledge pertains to all work you submit in this and all courses at UF: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." Needless to say, plagiarizing the work of others or of online documents is not only a sign of inadequate character, but unnecessary insecurity about one's writing or speaking ability.

## STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The classrooms used for your class should prove effectively accessible, but please let me know if you require any special accommodations. The official statement on ADA issues states: "Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office

will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.” Moreover, I will do everything I can to support your individual needs and concerns.

†Schedule subject to change

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**GEB 5212 Course Schedule†**

Week 1

24 August

*5Cs: Clarity, Continuity  
Persuasion and proposals*

**Reading:**

Douglas, Chapters 2-3

**Assignment:**

Write a proposal to change a process, implement a new procedure, shift business focus, or address a problem at your current or former workplace. (See assignment options below). Come to class next week prepared to trade your proposal draft for your classmates’ drafts via your laptop or tablet.

Week 2

31 August

*Persuasion and proposals*  
“Speed-workshopping” proposals

**Reading:**

Douglas, Chapter 4

**Assignment:**

Revise your proposal according to either class feedback or feedback from me you received during office hours (non-compulsory). Submit final drafts on Canvas by 10 September at 5pm.

Week 3

7 September

*5Cs: Coherence  
Power resumes and cover letters  
5Cs: Concision*

**Reading:**

Douglas, Chapter 5 (pp. 85-117)

**Assignment:**

Write a cover letter, applying for a position for which you’re likely to apply later on during the year. Include the job description and your resume with your draft for “Speed-workshopping” next week.

Weeks 4-5

14 and 21 September

*Cover Letters*  
“Speed-workshopping cover letters”

**Assignment:**

Final versions of cover letters, with resumes and job posting, due on Canvas by 24 September by 5pm.

Week 6

28 September

*Email, front-loading, bad news, and crisis communication  
5Cs: Cadence*

**Reading:**

Douglas, Chapter 6 (pp. 118-141)

Week 7  
5 October

In-class team final: crisis communication. Submit on Canvas by 5pm.

### **Assignment 1: Write a Persuasive Proposal**

**Final version due via Canvas on 10 September, 5pm**

<b>Save the document as lastname1.doc</b>
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- ✍ **Length:** 350-400 words or roughly 1-2 pages, single-spaced, double spaced-between paragraphs. Follow correct memo format. Address memo to your “boss.”
  
- ✍ Write a memo that proposes a new procedure, purchase of new equipment, or organizational restructuring at your workplace.
  
- ✍ If you have no workplace,
  - write a fictional proposal for a professor for a study or assignment or
  - propose to your “employer” that you attend the University of Florida’s MBA program.

Note that the page length serves merely as a ballpark figure to guide you on the extent of detail you need to provide, not as a strict length requirement.

Value: 100 points

**Assignment 2: Write a Resume and Cover Letter**  
**Final version due via Canvas on 24 September**

**Save the document as lastname2.doc**

**Assignment 2:**

For this assignment, using your resume and a job for which you are likely to apply during the coming year, write persuasive cover letter, targeting one of the two options below:

**Option 1:**

Write a detailed cover letter in response to an actual job advertisement. Attach a copy of the advertisement—or a text version of it—to your submission.

**Option 2:**

Identify a job that seems suited to your interests and experience and write an appropriate cover letter.

Value: 100 points

**Note:** Be sure to attach your resume and the job description (for Option 1), and your resume (Option 2) with your cover letter. If you wish me to provide feedback on your resume, please request it in a note on Canvas or via email. Otherwise, I'll provide feedback exclusively on your cover letters.

**Assignment 3:**

**Final:** In-class, team-based assignment, involving crisis communication. Due by 5pm on 5 October.