EMGT 510/610 Technology Management Writing and Presentations
Instructor: Susan de la Vergne (susan@AlderBusiness.com)

Description: Business leaders are called on to be especially effective communicators—i.e., insightful, accurate and truthful, considerate of audience, concise, logical, attentive to structure and sequence, and (above all!) clear. In this course Engineering Management students will develop (create, revise) the kinds of real-world communications professionals and leaders are called on to produce—reports, analyses, articles, announcements, presentations, proposals and website content. Students will examine and critique examples of professional communications, as well as edit the works of others in the class. They’ll pay particular attention to creativity, organization, voice, audience and objectives for the communications. Discussion topics will also include professional writing standards (ethics, research and references, style considerations and requirements, as well as how to structure, organize and present academic writing).

Textbooks
Required:

One good novel, to be discussed in class. (See “Readings” below.)

Optional:

Course Purpose and Objectives: The purpose of communication in the technology leadership is to resolve issues, inform, rally enthusiasm, persuade others—in short, to make progress. This class will scrutinize various forms of written and live presentation deliverables with the goal of creating, improving and delivering effective presentations and written deliverables. Students will learn how to:

- assess their audiences (not only how to but also why it matters)
- organize materials (bottom-up and top-down approaches)
- enliven drab business writing so it gets action
- write and/or prepare presentations with others, in teams
- adjust “on the fly” to an audience during a presentation
- handle difficult communication situations

Requirements: Students will write one long paper and complete numerous short writing assignments, some of them in-class. In addition, since business writing is often collaborative, students will edit the works of other students. Each student will also prepare and deliver formal presentations—one “solo,” and another, as a midterm project, to be done with others in a small team. Students will also give impromptu presentations on topics to be announced in class.
**Readings:** The best way to learn to write well is to read works by great writers (not great engineers or even great business leaders). For this class, students read one work of exceptionally written fiction, both to understand the minds and motives of the characters and to explore what makes great writing better than ho-hum writing.

We’ll also read some articles by business leaders to examine how they’re well written and how we as writers can emulate some of their “best practices.”

All reading assignments should be completed prior to class.

**Class Participation:** This class is part interactive workshop, part lecture. Students may be called on to read aloud works in progress and to critique the works of others during class. Participation will be especially important as we work on creating and delivering presentations, when students will be asked not only to present but also to evaluate presentations and presenters.

**Attendance:** Is expected. Your grade will be adversely affected if you have more than two absences (excused or unexcused). If something monumental comes up during the term that affects your attendance, please talk with me. But short of something significant and unexpected interfering with your ability to be in class, your attendance and active participation are expected.

**Grades:** 50% writing; 50% presentations. Presentations will be also be evaluated by others in class, and their assessments will contribute to the final grade.
EMGT 510/610:

Weeks 1-5 Presentations
Midterm Project: 30 October and November
Weeks 6-11 Writing (Note: No class on 11/27 – Thanksgiving Holiday)
Final Project Due: 11 December

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Week 1 (2 Oct)

Communication – overview
Audience
Objectives
Elevator Speech
“Stage Fright”

Assignment:
Read chapters 1 and 3 of manuscript “Engineers on Stage!”
Chapter 1: “Smile! You’re a Presenter”
Chapter 3: “What’s In It for Them?” (handed out in class);
Prep for opening remarks (handed out in class).

Week 2 (9 Oct)

Listening
Practicing
Organizing and sequencing
Research
Handling Q&A

Assignment:
Read Chapters, 4 and 5 of “Engineers on Stage!”
Chapter 4 “Preparing Content: Start Your Engines (Not Your PowerPoint Slides)”
Chapter 5 “Preparing Materials: Now Start Your PowerPoint Slides”
Begin research on Presentations topics.

Week 3 (16 Oct)

Delivery
Overcoming passivity
Slides and handouts
Assignment:
Read chapters 7, 10 “Engineers on Stage”
   Chapter 7 “Using Humor in Technical Presentations”
   Chapter 10 “Delivery”
Form midterm presentations teams. Begin work on presentations.

Choose one of these classic, beautifully written works of fiction and read it prior to 20 November 2008. Why? Because if you want to learn to write well, you read the works of great writers. As you read whichever book you’ve chosen, have a highlighter in hand or a pen and make note of unusually written phrases. Enjoy not only the story but, more importantly, the language. How do great writers express ideas, impressions, information? Be prepared to share your discoveries in class.

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (about 195 pp.)
*A Room with a View* by E. M. Forster (about 165 pp.)
*The Love of the Last Tycoon* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (about 190 pp.)
*The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway (about 130 pp.)

*The Financier* by Theodore Dreiser (about 450 pp.)
*Oil* by Upton Sinclair (about 500 pp.)

(Note: It’s okay to also read the novel your native language, as well as in English. So read it in English AND read it in whatever language you’re most comfortable with (notice that’s AND not INSTEAD OF).

Week 4 (23 Oct)


Listening

Assignment:
Work on midterm presentations.

Weeks 5 (30 Oct)

Midterm Presentations

Leading Meetings
Non-verbal communication

Writing: Overview
   Purposes/Objectives for various forms of writing (e.g., narrative, expository, how-to, persuasive)
   Writing for Audience
   Business writing v. academic writing (including: Why is business writing boring?)
Mastering writing practices  - Craswell

Assignment:
Read chapters 2 and 3 Craswell, *Writing for Academic Success*;

Continue reading whatever novel you’ve chosen (due 11/20). Highlight (or keep a separate running list of) passages, phrases, words that really jump out at you.

Week 6 (6 Nov)

Midterm Presentations - continued

Read “Managing Interpersonal Conflict” (article, hand out in class) and “What’s a Business For?” by Charles Handy. Write a few paragraphs that paraphrase these articles. Due 13 November.

Week 7 (13 Nov)

Writing Topics continued

Assignments:

Read Chapters 3 and 4 of Craswell’s *Writing for Academic Success*. These chapters will help you as you prepare your final project, both in supporting your research and your organization of the material.

Write an elevator speech about yourself that you would deliver to a prospective employer. Then write your resume, using your elevator speech as the basis for your “Summary of Qualifications.” Due 20 November.

Week 8 (20 Nov)

Novel discussion in class. Bring with you the list of remarkable, noteworthy phrases you’ve been making a list of as you read. Be prepared to share these with the class and why you think they’re exceptional. We’ll also discuss objective and audience for each of these novels, so think about the one you’ve read and *why do you think the author wrote it?* Note: We’ll begin with a summary of each novel (provided by instructor) so everyone is current and informed about the story line.

In class:

Formatting: APA standards. (To be applied to your final projects.)
Craswell chapter 3 & 4 reading discussion.
Paragraphing exercise.
Active and passive voice exercise.

Book review discussion.

Business Vocabulary.

Assignment:
Write a book review of the novel you read, following the guidelines we discussed in class.
Write your resume. The only portion of this that will be graded is your “Summary” at the beginning. It should be based on your elevator speech about yourself.
Read from Craswell’s *Writing for Academic Success* chapter 5, pp. 93-117; chapter 6, pp. 140-160.

**Week 9** (27 Nov = Thanksgiving, no class)

**Week 10** (4 Dec)

Quiz (topics and questions from *Language Tune-Up Center*)

Marketing writing

Cover letters.

Editing. And proofreading
   Being concise (not dense)

Exercise: Editing the work of others.

More about formatting.

Assignment: Work on (and complete) your final projects.

**Week 11** Final Project Due