

## **New Course: Business Writing That Builds Relationships**

[Get the 90-page curriculum from Lynn Gaertner-Johnston, [lynng@syntaxtraining.com](mailto:lynng@syntaxtraining.com).]

**Brief Course Description:** Students develop writing and thinking skills that build professional relationships. They discuss and write emails, texts, and other messages, applying relationship-building communication principles to routine situations and those that require special care and sensitivity. Prerequisite: six hours of English composition, business English, or written communication.

**Course Requirements:** The course requires a variety of written assignments. They may include introducing a classmate online, expressing thanks, communicating feedback, expressing condolences, congratulating, sharing bad news, saying no, disagreeing with discretion, reminding, responding to anger, and requesting help during a job search. Several brief analyses of writing and a final report on one's learning are also required. There is one team project.

**Detailed Course Description:** The course provides a career-skills learning experience in the sophomore, junior, or senior year. The course helps students:

- Recognize how to communicate in ways that build relationships on the job.
- Apply specific methods to compose diplomatic, respectful written messages.

Students participate in instructor-led, small-group, and paired discussions. They engage actively with the material, experiencing aha moments about communication and business relationships. They write and revise brief messages in class, and they give spoken feedback in pairs and small groups. For some homework assignments (for example, messages to express thanks, congratulate, and give feedback), students apply what they have learned to their own situations and are encouraged or required to send the messages. In other assignments, they use scenarios or evaluate examples. Their final written assignment is a report on what they have learned in the class, which they discuss in small groups during the final session.

Students take part in one team project in which they present the key content of a chapter through a panel discussion, a skit, a learning activity they design and conduct, or another approved method. In the project, students gain experience interacting effectively with team members to plan and deliver their presentation. After the project, they individually evaluate how well they communicated on the project team.

Among the specific communication skills that students learn and practice are using positive language intentionally, focusing on the true purpose of a message, providing specific feedback, revising relationship-busting statements into relationship-building ones, and using *I* statements rather than *you* statements in delicate situations.

Students will be able to rely on their relationship-focused writing and thinking skills throughout their careers. They will be able to develop and maintain business relationships in typical workday situations and will be more effective when communicating in sensitive situations. The course helps students prepare for virtually any profession.

**Text:** *Business Writing With Heart: How to Build Great Work Relationships One Message at a Time*, by Lynn Gaertner-Johnston (Syntax Training, 2013). It is available as a paperback, ISBN 978-0-9778679-0-5, for \$24.95. E-versions are available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other book retailers.