RHET 4270: Research and Writing Internship (3 credit hours)

The American University in Cairo
The Department of Rhetoric and Composition

Course information
- RHET 4270, section 1 (Capstone ‘outside the major’)
- Sundays and Wednesdays, 11:30 – 12:50
- C207 HATEM
- Prerequisite: RHET 1020, or equivalent

Instructor information
- Name: Amani Elshimi
- Email: ashimi@aucegypt.edu
- Office telephone: 2065
- Office location: RHET Department, P077
- Office hours: UW 2:00 – 3:00 pm by appointment request via email

Course Description
This capstone course provides students with an applied, real-world writing experience that helps them transition smoothly from academic writing to work-place writing, and prepares them for the job market.

The course instructor will select one of three tracks of internship experience – professional business writing, literary writing and publishing, or technical writing for non-profits. The course instructor, then, facilitates a partnership between the student and a corporate business, a non-profit agency, a cultural organization, a literary agency, magazine or publishing house, a university office, or a student organization.

During a typical semester week, the student attends one class session and spends 8-12 hours on the job. The support class sessions bring together the students for a periodic discussion of professional writing theory, reflection on job-related experiences, challenges, problem-solving strategies, and peer feedback.

The students may produce a variety of writing and editing work - manuals and tutorials, news articles, grant applications, reports, letters, policy documents, promotional brochures, creative works, book reviews or other materials as required by the internship. They should be prepared to accept directions from the host organization, and to maintain professional standards of performance. Work that does not produce finished text, such as administrative assistance, observation, supervision, or preliminary research, is not acceptable for RHET 4270.

For optimum class management, coordination between the host office/organization and students, and maximized peer and instructor feedback, class size will be limited to 10 students.

Offered in Fall and/or Spring; unpaid job experience

Objectives
This course aims to equip students with
- knowledge of the writing processes required on-the-job
- the skills of writing on demand and constructing professional documents of various genres
- the values of commitment, professional integrity, personal initiative and human service

Key Reading:

Learning outcomes
To fulfill requirements of RHET 4270, students should demonstrate ability to
• customize writing to address a job-specific rhetorical situation and organization textual conventions
• generate writing upon demand
• provide well-developed and accurate written work of various genres
• demonstrate professional skills of research and documentation
• provide critical evaluation of writing and presentation
• commit to all aspects of the job requirements
• engage in the activities of the internship
• establish rapport with co-workers, supervisors and class peers
• understand professional ethics/integrity and their application in practice

Pedagogy
Students in this course learn through an experiential module. They acquire and reinforce the skills of business, technical or literary writing through immersion in an authentic experience – working directly with, and providing a service to, a community entity. They will have successfully completed the prerequisite courses, and will have acquired experience in writing various documents based on the prevailing view that professional communication should link the forms or templates for such documents to an awareness of the rhetorical situation and a reader-centered design. They may have studied and written job search documents (resumes, cover letters), memos (positive, negative, persuasive, evaluative), reports, grant proposals, research papers, as well as the text for PowerPoint presentations. They will also have done the research required to write all of these documents. The internship provides a pilot transitional experience that allows the students to apply their skills in a real-world context, with the available guidance of the course instructor and peers.

Representatives from the different organizations will be invited to class for discussions and experience-sharing, and at the end of the semester the host organization will provide an evaluation of the student’s work, using an instructor-prepared evaluation form (appended).

Students complete the experiential cycle, reflecting on the experience, conducting a rigorous self-evaluation and setting goals for skills transfer across genres.

Course Material
The class materials and content can be accessed through Blackboard or Google Sites at: https://sites.google.com/a/aucegypt.edu/rhet-4270-research-and-writing-internship/

Assignments have to be uploaded to your e-portfolio at http://www.turnitin.com. To join the Turnitin class, use the following information: Class ID: 17365313; Enrollment password: Internship

General Evaluation
Generally courses in the Upper Division of the Rhetoric and Composition Department need to demonstrate the following:

• Content
  ○ Development – employs critical and creative thinking skills for content definition, analysis and problem-solving
  ○ Coherence – demonstrates effective organization and sequencing of ideas to address a clear rhetorical situation

• Presentation
  ○ Conventions – applies genre-appropriate document layout, citation style, and discourse
  ○ Language Accuracy – observes grammar, mechanics, voice and tone as appropriate to the genre

Major Assignments

Job Application Letter
Objectives:
- document knowledge, skills, service, and experiences
- develop a professional document, customized to a target organization
- employ strategies for conciseness and precision
- demonstrate accuracy of grammatical structures and word choice
- employ white space for visual communication

Description:
This is an exercise that prepares the students for the job market and demonstrates how skills need to be adapted to a defined rhetorical situation. The task provides an opportunity for practicing the writing of job cover letters, integrating all the skills and services of the student, and for emphasizing the significance and transferability of the learning experience.

Internship Job Portfolio and reflection

Objectives:
- select and compile the best samples of written work
- provide evidence of experience
- integrate cover letter and resume

Description:
Students consciously select samples of their work and create a portfolio of diverse assignments to demonstrate professional writing ability. These may include instructional material for undergraduate research, Newsletter articles, proposals, critiques, and reports.

Fundraising Letter

Objectives:
- distinguish between a fundraising letter and a grant proposal
- use appropriate appeals for the intended audience
- build credibility
- employ conventions of business communication

Description:
As an exercise to help students understand the difference between fund-raising letters and grant proposals, students will compose a 2-3 page fundraising letter that is focused, persuasive and audience-centered.

UR Program Proposal

Objectives:
- address an authentic gap/need
- employ creative problem-solving to outline proposed program/service
- use appropriate appeals to address the audience
- demonstrate competence in the process and organization of proposal development

Description:
Students will create a complete, accurate and well-conceived proposal. The UR proposal is an individual project that covers the sections outlined in the rubrics below.

Participation

All students are expected to participate in conferences for assignment assessment and grading. Absence and tardiness policies apply to conference appointments as well. During group work, group members may rotate conference responsibility, each attending a minimum of 2 conferences.

Students are expected to participate actively in both class periods and conferences, demonstrating engagement with course content, critical thinking, creative problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

Student-Teacher Conferences

Students sign up for a conference at least a day in advance, using the Online Time Manager system at http://pacs.aucegypt.edu/otm and selecting the teacher's name. Evaluation and grading of papers is conducted on a participatory basis during the conferences. Students should come with a hard copy of their written work to the conference, and should be prepared to discuss, evaluate, argue for, and
revise their work during the conference session. The student is trained to use the evaluation rubrics and is welcome to discuss/negotiate both rubrics and grade.

Grades and Grading in this Course
A. Available Grades in the Course (Note: D- and IP grades are not available in this course)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>90-94</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>76-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>66-60</td>
<td>69-67</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66-60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

B. Grade Breakdown

- Resume Update: 02 points
- Job Application Letter: 12 points
- UR Website Critique: 12 points
- Contribution to Newsletter on Undergrad Research: 12 points
- Situation Analysis: 08 points
- Group UR Multimedia Promo: 16 points
- Contribution to Research/Creativity Convention: 06 points
- Review of Research Convention Presentation: 12 points
- NIH Certification: 12 points
- UR Research/Proposal: 60 points
- UR Proposal Presentation/Pitch: 12 points
- Internship Job Portfolio: 16 points
- Class participation: 20 points

Your grade will be calculated using this formula: [number of points/total] x 100.

- Bonus Assignment: Publication of a Paper: 12 points

C. Explanation of Grades
The course is graded on a regular A-F scale. In order to receive a grade for the course, students must:
- Complete all assignments and submit to instructor by due date
- Complete 50 hours (8-12 a week) within the organization
- Submit a portfolio of written work, completed on the job
- Attend class sessions regularly, with a maximum of 2 absences
- Receive at least an average performance appraisal from the host organization.
- Attend a minimum of 3 conferences with the course instructor.

For additional information about grading and to get answers to questions like
- How will I know at what level (or grade) I am performing during the semester?
- I'm having trouble completing all the work by the end of the semester. What options do I have?
- Can I appeal a specific assignment grade?
- Can I appeal the final course grade given to me by the faculty?

Visit this link or scan this QR code.

http://schools.aucegypt.edu/academics/rhet/FAQ/Pages/Grading.aspx

Attendance, Absences, and Tardiness
Students are highly encouraged to attend all classes, as regular class attendance can significantly help a student do better in the class. A student is not allowed to miss more than six classes without
severe consequences, up to and including, failing the course. Also, missing more than 10 minutes of a class counts as half of an absence and missing more than 30 minutes of a class counts as a full absence.

There are many important additional guidelines related to this area. To read complete details and to get answers to questions like

- Who is responsible for keeping attendance?
- What happens if I miss a class? What happens if I exceed six absences?
- What is the policy on tardiness or missing part, but not all, of a class session?
- What happens if I have a medical excuse, family crisis, or extracurricular activity?

Visit this link or scan this QR code.

http://schools.aucegypt.edu/academics/rhet/FAQ/Pages/Attendance.aspx/FAQ

Academic Integrity
In accordance with the AUC’s efforts to promote a culture of academic integrity on campus, the Rhetoric and Composition Department strictly enforces the academic integrity principles found in AUC’s Code of Academic Integrity. Instructors are trained to ensure students are doing their own work; additionally, students must also use Turnitin.com for all drafts of major assignments. Violations of academic integrity can lead to serious consequences, including failing the course and having notes about violations committed added to your permanent transcript.

For further details about academic integrity and to get answers to questions such as

- How do I know what is legitimate borrowing from a source and what is plagiarism?
- How will the instructor know if I have copied my paper from the Internet, had the paper written by a professional writing service, or tried some other tricky thing?
- What are the consequences of violations of academic integrity?
- What are the procedures for using Turnitin.com?

Visit this link or scan this QR code.

http://schools.aucegypt.edu/academics/rhet/FAQ/Pages/Academic_Integrity.aspx

Dropping, Failing and Repeating Courses
While we hope that you complete and pass your RHET course, sometimes disruptions do happen, and students, at times, drop or fail RHET courses. There are a number of important policies that affect these situations.

For further details about dropping, failing, and repeating and to get answers to questions such as

- I’m thinking about dropping my course. What should I do?
- What happens if I miss the drop deadline?

Visit this link or scan this QR code.

http://schools.aucegypt.edu/academics/rhet/FAQ/Pages/Dropping.aspx

Special Needs, Concerns, or Additional Support
The Department of Rhetoric and Composition provides practical support to all students in a fair and equitable manner. Students who have special needs or concerns about the class should talk to their instructors the first week of classes or as soon as possible. AUC complies with the American Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

For further details about special needs, concerns or additional support and to get answers to questions such as:
- I have a documented special need. What should I do?
- I feel that I will need some additional support. What should I do?
- I have a concern about the instructor or the course. What should I do?
- What does the writing center offer? How can the writing center help me?

Visit this link or scan this QR code.

http://schools.aucegypt.edu/academics/rhet/FAQ/Pages/Special_Needs.aspx

Research in RHET
Research is highly valued at AUC, and students are encouraged to participate in research during their time at AUC, however, research, both on-campus and off-campus, MUST comply with a number of important policies and regulations for security, legal, and ethical reasons. Students who plan to do ANY on-campus research involving people (surveys, interviews, etc) or ANY off-campus research of any nature MUST receive approval PRIOR to starting their research. To begin this process a student should discuss their plans with their instructor as as well as be familiar with the policies found at the link below.

For important information about the research process, ethical research, extracurricular research opportunities, and to get answers to questions like
- When I conduct a survey or an interview, can I collect data from subjects off-campus?
- Do I need any approvals if I collect data from subjects on-campus?
- What is the IRB and what is CAPMAS?
- What presentation or publication opportunities do I have?

Visit the following link or scan this QR code.

http://schools.aucegypt.edu/academics/rhet/FAQ/Pages/Research.aspx

Scope of this Syllabus and Contingency Plans
This syllabus includes all written content, graphic displays, as well as the content referenced in the links/QR codes included in this document. Any student who continues in the course is expected to understand and abide by all policies, guidelines and schedules mentioned therein. However, in the event of the suspension of normal university classes, the initial plan is to continue with the course as long as there is internet accessibility in Egypt, but this may require adjustment to policies, guidelines, and schedules. Thus, in the case of the suspension of classes, please check your email and course website for details about how the course will continue.

RESOURCE LIST
With Abstracts from Sage Publications

The article addresses the socialization issues faced by companies and writing and editing interns. The article discusses orientation programs for interns, and addresses the stages of experience for interns and socialization issues confronted by interns in the English Department at the North Carolina State University. Suggestions on improving the process are also provided. The article describes the program, the issues confronted by the interns, such as the need for mentoring and difficulty asking questions, solutions, and encouraging independence and being an active participant. The author highlights the experience interns gain from confronting transitions.

Theories of organizational power explain how an entry-level employee in a hierarchically structured organization was able to have a significant impact on her workplace. These theories tell us that one way to gain power is by demonstrating some type of expertise that is valued within the organization. This case study of an auditor who was an expert writer will demonstrate how her expertise led to changes within the organization. As a young woman at the lowest professional level in a male-dominated bureaucratic organization, she would not have been expected to gain power. However, her rhetorical expertise - her awareness of the importance of audience and purpose, and her knowledge of what to say and how to say it - gave her the power to revise the processes by which her organization did its work, to rewrite the job descriptions of the managers within the organization, and to create a unique role for herself within the workgroup.

The article discusses research pertaining to the personal characteristics of communicators and innovators in research and development (R&D) organizations. Preliminary results suggested an overlap between the roles of communicator and innovator in the organizations studied. The results indicated that innovators/communicators had a low need for clarity, a high level of education, and high self-esteem. In addition the study found that physical propinquity was associated with the strong formation of components among innovators, communicators, and other professional employees.

The article focuses on the hypotheses that there is a tendency for students to improve academically and to realize more fully the value of communication skills following their participation in an internship program. Participants in The Pennsylvania State University's 23-year-old program were used to test these hypotheses. Penn State has a large program with a wide geographical representation. Last winter 78 interns were placed among 16 firms in 19 locations. Altogether 45 offices were represented. Internship programs are part of the academic curriculum at an increasing number of schools. They provide an efficient way to involve students in real live situations. Students can apply and reinforce their classroom knowledge. Their periodic reviews help them to better understand their strengths and weaknesses. They can evaluate competing employment opportunities before making a permanent commitment. They show that there is a tendency for both accounting and general
grades to improve following an internship.

The article addresses effective methods of professional writing instruction. Because classroom instruction many times fails to simulate writing processes in the working world, the teacher changed the way he teaches business writing to address audience analysis, collaborative writing, and model documents. The author presents his techniques and provides ideas that expose students to writing in the real world, such as developing a writing profile of one or two professionals in their field of interest.

Despite the growing popularity of internships, surprisingly little research has investigated causes of their effectiveness. We combine the findings from these studies with insights from the personnel and knowledge transfer literatures to identify the different roles of three actors—students, university, and business—and to propose a multistage model of determinants of effectiveness. Exploratory analysis of a portion of the model on Portuguese internships data reveals the importance of considering the respective roles of the multiple actors and of the internship process in explaining student satisfaction, but not project implementation. Using our conceptual model and these initial empirical findings, we offer recommendations for actions each actor can take to enhance internship effectiveness and lead to suggestions for researchers interested in identifying determinants of internship effectiveness.

The article discusses the value of non-profit internships to business and professional writing students. The article discusses internships that qualify for community service requirements, presents the range of writing needs that present themselves at non-profit organizations, including the political and cultural context of that effort, the value added for students, the non-profit organizations, and the program or college. Suggestions for implementing a non-profit writing internship program are provided.

This article introduces an assignment that uses key messages to introduce students to the different ways that rhetoric is used in professional writing. In particular, this article discusses how analyzing and writing reports about organizational web sites can help students perceive the rhetorical nature of professional communication, gain familiarity with several professional writing genres and writing conventions, become more critical readers, and recognize the relationship between an initial study and a report that communicates the findings from that study.

NOTE:
The content of this syllabus, including class schedule, is subject to change at the instructor’s
Appendix

Final Internship Evaluation

Instructions: Please complete the following evaluation of your intern. If you feel comfortable, you may share your evaluation with the student. If not, please return the evaluation directly to the class instructor by ____________________________.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Intern:</th>
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<td>Placement Site:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Areas of Assessment</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Substandard</th>
<th>Comments/Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showed visible improvement in skills over time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worked effectively with supervisor and other team members</td>
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<td>Produced quality written documents</td>
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<td>Managed time efficiently</td>
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<td>Displayed initiative</td>
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<td>Communicated effectively</td>
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1. Was the intern prepared for this internship?

2. What aspects of the intern’s performance were most positive?

3. What aspects of the intern’s performance needed improvement?

4. Were there major changes in the project from what was originally agreed upon in the internship work agreement? (If yes, please explain)

5. Has the intern successfully completed the objectives outlined in the work agreement?
6. Would you be interested in sponsoring interns again? If yes, what period of time?

| θ Fall | θ Spring | θ Summer |

7. Would you recommend internship sponsorship to other companies/agencies?

| θ Yes | θ No |

8. Any additional comments?

Please return this evaluation through your intern, fax, email, or mail by ____________ to ________________, email ________________, telephone ________________ American University in Cairo, Rhetoric and Composition Department.

Thank you for completing this evaluation!

___________________________________________________________
Supervisor's Signature                                      Date

Adapted from Purdue