### Upper-division Writing Requirement Review Form (12/1/08)

#### I. General Education Review – Upper-division Writing Requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept/Program Subject</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course(s) Title</td>
<td>Strategic Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the requirement if it is not a single course</td>
<td>This is a single course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course # (i.e. ANTH 455) or sequence</td>
<td>MGMT 446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Braun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>243–6459, <a href="mailto:michael.braun@business.umt.edu">michael.braun@business.umt.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>Jeff Shay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### III. Overview of the Course Purpose/Description

This course is designed to provide students with some of the basic tools for better understanding the processes involved in the development and implementation of strategy within the organizational context. Theories are basic tools that instructors, students, trainers, managers and many others can use to make their endeavors more productive. Accordingly, the course will introduce, illustrate and require the application of many theories.

Throughout the course students maintain an emphasis on applying their knowledge to realistic and relevant problems faced by business professionals. It is only when they have experienced applying their knowledge to actual problems that they can readily see their strengths and weaknesses, and perhaps more importantly recognize that no single theory is appropriate for all situations.

#### IV. Learning Outcomes:

Explain how each of the following learning outcomes will be achieved.
| **Student learning outcomes:** Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry | This is achieved through assigning a real world project to the students in which they must do the following:  
- Communicate an organizational analysis and strategic plan to a professional audience, presenting a logical flow and ability to handle critical review of their recommendations in both written and oral form.  
- Write a comprehensive, yet concise analysis of issues facing businesses as well as indicate how businesses can move forward most effectively.  
- Communicate their ideas and recommendation to businesses demonstrating sound and consistent logic, which is supported by evidence and/or theory.  
- Write a report that is appropriate to a professional audience, a report that demonstrates clarity, and is free of errors of punctuation, grammar or spelling.  

The questions that students must address in their projects involve complex organizations with complex problems that must be analyzed. This requires students to take an integrative approach, utilizing knowledge and skills learned across the SoBA curriculum. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources (see <a href="http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/">http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/</a>)</strong></td>
<td>Students are required to utilize a variety of sources for information on their company and the appropriate solutions for the challenges that the company faces. Data sources include textbooks, trade book, academic journals, and information found on the internet. Students must demonstrate their ability to synthesize this material using various theoretical models and analytical tools in order to support the strategic analysis and solutions they present in their final project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate</td>
<td>As indicated above, solving the real world problems faced by an organization requires the application of multiple perspectives from across our business curriculum. Students must demonstrate the ability to examine the organization’s challenges from accounting, finance, marketing, management, information systems, and other business areas in order to develop their analysis and feasible strategic alternatives. In addition, they must demonstrate an understanding of organizational phenomena at the organization, group, and individual level of analysis as well as the meso-level interactions of phenomena across levels of analysis. For example, students must not only research and develop a strategy at the organization level but must also research and develop the process by which teams and individuals will implement that strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline</td>
<td>Students must demonstrate the ability to write in a business professional style that would be appropriate for presentation to executives in their focal company or organization. Students are exposed to this writing style throughout their undergraduate curriculum as well as through researching company annual reports and various academic and technical papers on their focal industry. Students receive critiques of their work throughout the five presentations that they do as they develop their final consulting project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work</td>
<td>Students receive feedback from several assignments during the semester such as case studies and the consulting project. The consulting project, for example, involves five stages of development. At each stage the students receive critiques from the professor on both written work and oral presentations. Students use this feedback to revise their consulting projects throughout the semester. In addition, students are encouraged to work with the professor’s TA assigned to the course and to use UM’s Writing Center services. The SoBA is piloting a program with its IS270 course that will be rolled out in Fall 2009 for all capstone courses. This program entails students submitting their work to graders who will focus on providing rich feedback on writing (i.e., grammar, spelling, style, format, syntax, etc.). Students then have the opportunity to revise their paper before submitting it to the professor who will grade papers based on content. In addition, students will be required to submit the original work submitted to the “writing graders” so that the professor can check to make sure that appropriate revisions were made. SoBA is excited about this program and confident that it will significantly improve student writing skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline</td>
<td>All papers are presented using a business professional format and style. Citations for research to add credibility to their analysis. All students are provided the writing guidelines found in the Appendix of this document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy</td>
<td>Student projects rely heavily on information technology to acquire relevant supporting research and statistical data for their work. In addition, the professional standards for the projects require students to rigorously utilize a variety of information technology sources and applications that demonstrate their digital literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V. Writing Course Requirements Check list</strong></td>
<td><strong>☐ Yes X No</strong> The course is not capped at 25 students. Enrollment in the course runs from 30-35 students per section. Although this is above the 25 student recommendation, faculty teaching this capstone have teaching assistants who help with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
grading written work. In addition, SoBA is currently implementing a pilot program that will bring additional grading resources to faculty teaching in writing courses such as this. This program is described in Section IV above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are outcomes listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations?</th>
<th>X Yes ☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, the outcomes are listed in the syllabus. In addition, the professor provides samples of consulting projects from previous years so that students are better able to understand the target for the end product. Professors also provide writing guidelines (see Appendix).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are detailed requirements for all written assignments including criteria for evaluation in the course syllabus? If not how and when will students be informed of written assignments?</th>
<th>X Yes ☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are detailed required described in the syllabus for written work and this is supplemented by additional handouts regarding writing expectations (see Appendix).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Briefly explain how students are provided with tools and strategies for effective writing and editing in the major. | In addition to Gen Ed requirements, students in each of our majors are required to write papers during each year of our program. We also encourage students to utilize UM’s Writing Center and offer courses such as MGMT444 Management Communication that are focused specifically on developing writing skills. We have recently hired graders for our IS270 course to provide multiple iterations of feedback on student writing and SoBA is rolling out a pilot writing program this spring. As described in Section IV, this program is being rolled out for all SoBA capstones this fall. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will written assignments include an opportunity for revision? If not, then explain how students will receive and use feedback to improve their writing ability.</th>
<th>X Yes ☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student assignments do include an opportunity for revision. In addition, students acquire additional writing skills through being assigned to write two separate case analyses (i.e., what they learn on the first case analysis is applied to the second case analysis). The consulting project for this course provides four opportunities for students to revise both written work and oral presentation work. There are four submissions of their consulting project throughout the semester in which students receive feedback and then are required to make revisions that are applied to the final consulting project that is submitted at the end of the semester.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are expectations for Information Literacy listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations?</th>
<th>X Yes ☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is accomplished in several ways:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Syllabus and handouts (see appendix) provide expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sample projects from previous years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. Writing Assignments: Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 20 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments. Clear expression, quality, and accuracy of content are considered an integral part of the grade on any writing assignment.

Formal Graded Assignments
- Two written case analyses = 30%
- Final written Consulting Project = 20%
- Total = 50%
- Each student in the course writes and submits more than 20 pages of written work for evaluation.

Informal Ungraded Assignments
- There are no informal ungraded assignments. However, students are expected to communicate with the professor on several occasions via formal memos and emails regarding consulting project progress.

VII. Syllabus: Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form. The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html

MGMT 446: Business Policy and Strategy
- Spring 2009 Syllabus -

Instructor:

Instructor: Michael R. Braun
Office Hours: Room 357, Gallagher Business Building
Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30 – 4:30 PM.

Contact Information: e-mail – Michael.braun@business.umt.edu

About this Course:
Welcome! This course is about business strategy, which concerns the following questions: *Why does one company outperform its competitors? What makes one company fail while others succeed?*

Over the course of the semester, we will rely on case studies, theory, real world examples, and classroom discussion to answer these questions. The purpose of the course is to give you an introductory overview of business strategy to understand the WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, HOW and TO WHAT EXTENT of strategic thinking. We will kick off the semester with what is meant by STRATEGY. Subsequently, we will discuss existing frameworks that can help make sense of the vast amount of information needed to identify, formulate, develop and implement strategy. Case studies of real companies will help us apply these frameworks and get a clearer understanding of strategic situations and outcomes. Also, you will be asked to refine your strategic thinking by adopting the role of strategy consultant in a real-world project. Working in teams, you will put together a strategic analysis of an assigned company. This analysis will prompt you to apply the frameworks and models to develop a top-down and bottom-up report of a company’s industry location, core competencies, challenges and opportunities, and competitive environment. This project will tie together the diverse parts of the course. In addition, it will provide you with a ‘product’ to take with you in your job market.

**Expectations for this Course:**

I expect you **SHOW UP & TO PARTICIPATE** (15% of your grade) since the class is much better served through an interchange. Your contributions should be thoughtful and inclusive of the frameworks and themes we have covered. As the course progresses, I expect your written assignments and thinking to reflect the various articles, case studies, frameworks and class discussions.

**BE ON TIME!** Treat this class like you would work. By being on time, you are being respectful to your colleagues.

**COME PREPARED!** That means **do the reading!** This class is based on an ongoing, interactive discussion. At a minimum, you need to thoroughly read ALL assigned readings. Try to think through the main points and issues and how they play out in real-world scenarios.

*It is critical that you get familiar with the course syllabus* – it will help set your expectations of the workload for the class. Keep in mind that this syllabus is a rough guide, and that changes may occur during the semester.

**Class Materials**

Course Packets – a collection of case studies and articles is available at the UM Bookstore, the cost of which is approximately **$68.00**.

**Grading & Assignments:**
Quizzes 25%
Two Case Study Analyses 30%
Consulting Project Presentations 15%
Class Participation 15%
Final Consulting Project 20%

Portfolio Extra Credit: 1st Place - ½ Grade Upgrade on Final Consulting Project

SoBA Career Development Assignments Extra Credit: 1 Extra Point on each Quiz.

Each of the preceding components will be discussed in greater detail as the semester progresses.

Additional comments on Grading & Assignments:

- PLEASE DO NOT USE YOUR NOTEBOOK COMPUTER DURING OUR SESSION. If you need to take notes, rely on paper and pen. The use of notebooks is distracting to your fellow students and me.
- For every day a paper is late, the grade of the paper drops FULL LETTER GRADE, e.g. an “A” paper turned in a day late will become a “B” papers, etc.
- NO E-MAILED PAPERS. I expect hard copies to be handed in on the day the paper is due. If you cannot attend class, have someone else hand it in for you.
- TRY NOT TO MISS THE QUIZZES – Make-up quizzes are in essay form.
- Except for the Investment Portfolio - NO EXTRA CREDIT. Do the work that is assigned.
- WEEKLY ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN. If you miss MORE THAN 4 CLASSES, it negatively impacts your final grade (up to a full-letter grade).
- RESPECT THE HONOR CODE. Cheating of any form will not be tolerated in this class. All work handed in is to be yours. All work handed in is to be yours. If you don’t know what “cheating” means, please refer to the University Conduct Code at: www.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf

Team Work:

The semester-long project will be team-based…just like the real-world. You will need to work together, discover each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and manage the process of putting together and presenting the weekly assignments. I understand the potential difficulties in team-based projects: some people do more work than others, some teams have better dynamics than others, etc. I recognize that at times it can be challenging and even frustrating, but in my opinion team projects capture the complexity of getting business done. If you find that some team members simply do not contribute, PLEASE APPROACH ME AS A GROUP. I will deal with your collective complaints accordingly.
About your Instructor:

My industry background is in strategic business development and mergers and acquisitions. I’ve worked with publishers, direct marketing companies, e-commerce companies, and investment banks in New York, Los Angeles, and Europe. While I started out in a large corporation, most of my business career was in small, entrepreneurial companies. I’ve been a member of start-ups that have succeeded and also some that have failed. I’ve bought and sold businesses for publicly traded companies as well as investment groups. My current research interests are family firms, strategic mergers and acquisitions and corporate governance.

I am Swiss by birth and lived throughout Europe, moving to the United States in the mid-1980s. I received a B.A. degree from Cornell University, a Master’s Degree in Publishing from New York University, an MBA from the University of Southern California, and a Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts - Amherst. When I’m not in the classroom, I’m brewing, cooking, or spending time with my family.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MISSION STATEMENT
The University of Montana’s School of Business Administration is a collegial learning community dedicated to the teaching, exploration, and application of the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a competitive marketplace.

As part of our assessment process and assurance-of-learning standards, the School of Business Administration has adopted five learning goals for our undergraduate students:

Learning Goal 1 – SoBA graduates will possess fundamental business knowledge and integrated business knowledge.
Learning Goal 2 – SoBA graduates will be effective communicators.
Learning Goal 3 – SoBA graduates will possess problem solving skills.
Learning Goal 4 – SoBA graduates will have an ethical awareness.
Learning Goal 5 – SoBA graduates will be proficient users of technological skills.

Week 1:

Class Introduction

January 27: Introductory Session

January 29: Team Assignment; Investment Project Handout; Basic Strategy Concepts
Week 2: Strategy definition and conceptualization

Why do we need a strategy? What makes up a strategy?

February 3: “What Is Strategy?”
Michael E. Porter

February 5: Presentations of Individual Stock Picks (Begin Portfolio Tracking!);
Hand out Performance Metrics

Week 3:

February 10: Case: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
Stephen P. Bradley, Pankaj Ghemawat, Sharon Foley


Week 4: External competitive dynamics

What does the competitive landscape look like out there?
What are the opportunities and obstacles?

February 17: “How Competitive Forces Shape Strategy”
Michael E. Porter

February 19: QUIZ #1;
Hand out Assignment No. 1, due beginning of Week 7
Consulting Project Discussion + Company Assignment

Week 5:

February 24: Case: Robert Mondavi Wines

February 26: Consulting Project Presentations # 1
Week 6: Intra-industry competition and cooperation

*Within our industry, where are we protected? Where are we vulnerable?  
Within our company, how do we go about our business?*

March 3: “How Information Gives You Competitive Advantage”  
*Value Chain & Value System*  
Michael Porter; Victor Millar

March 5: Case: *Shrimp Farming in Ecuador*

---

Week 7: Internal capabilities and resources

*What makes us different from our competitors? What makes us unique?  
Once we set off, how will we keep going? How will we get to our goal successfully?*

March 10: **Hand in Assignment No. 1:**  
Class discussions: *Personal Strategy I*

March 12: “The Core Competence of the Corporation”  
C.K. Prahalad; Gary Hamel

---

Week 8:

March 17: Case: **Apple 2008**  
David B. Yoffie, Michael Slind

March 19: **Consulting Project Presentations #2**  
(hand out *Assignment No. 2*, due end of **Week 11**)
Week 9: Diversification and International Expansion

How do we grow? Where to we expand? When do we expand?

March 24: Quiz # 2

“Desperately Seeking Synergy”
Michael Goold, Andrew Campbell

March 26: Case: Starbucks
Mary M. Crossan; Ariff Kachra

Spring Beak!

Week 10:

April 7: “The Competitive Advantage of Nations”
Michael E. Porter

April 9: Case: Ice-Fili
Michael Rukstad, Sasha Mattu, Asya Petinova

Week 11:

April 14: Hand in Individual Assignment No. 2; Personal Strategy II.

April 16: Consulting Project Presentations #3

Week 12: Web-based Strategy
Strategy and the Internet

April 21: Documentary: *Startup.com* (the rise and fall of govWorks.com)
April 23: Consulting Project Presentations #4

Consulting Project Presentation Weeks (13 & 14)

**Week 13:**

April 28: **Consulting Project Presentation Support Session**
April 30: Final Consulting Project Presentations!

**Week 14:**

May 5: Final Consulting Project Presentations!
May 7: *Wrap-Up Session.*
The following guidelines are distributed to all students enrolled in SoBA’s capstone courses. The development of these guidelines was led by MaryEllen Campbell and Caroline Simms, faculty members who have both earned master’s degrees in English and Communications.

**TEMPLATE FOR BUSINESS SCHOOL REPORTS**
(UM Mgmt&Mktg Dept.)

Formal Reports: (If assignment is more than 5 pages single/ 10 pages double spaced). Usually bound to protect pages and give the report a professional appearance. The title may appear through a cut-out window or may be applied with an adhesive label, or created with “flair” deemed appropriate to the audience, purpose and occasion.

1. Title Page
   1.1 The title should be in all caps, no underscoring and no quotation marks
   1.2 Put *Presented to* or *Submitted to* along with the name, title and organization of recipient.
   1.3 The author’s name(s)
   1.4 The date of submission
   1.5 Items 2-4 are typed in the usual combination of caps and small letters
   1.6 Do not number the title page

2. Table of Contents
   2.1 List headings of the report with page numbers
   2.2 Connect the list item to its page number with a line or a series of dots
   2.3 Type flush left margin
   2.4 Use Roman Numerals to number the pages prior to the introduction (i, ii, etc.)

3. List of Figures (if applicable)
   3.1 If there is room, these can be placed on the table of contents page
   3.2 For each figure or illustration, include a title and page number

4. Writing Conventions
   4.1 Use Chicago Style Sheet
   4.2 Use single space sentence; leave at least one inch margin on all sides
   4.3 Type flush left; leave white space between paragraphs
   4.4 Use descriptive headings and subheadings throughout. Enumerate headings. All headings and subheadings are listed in the Table of Contents.

5. Executive Summary (for longer reports)
   5.1 Summarize main points
5.2 Prepare an outline with headings (including purpose, findings, and conclusions/recommendations)
5.3 Follow the report sequence exactly
5.4 Note: The summary should be no longer than 10% of the length of the main body of the report. A one half-page summary is preferable for a five page paper.

6. Format (select appropriate titles for headlines)
   6.1 Introduction (where appropriate)
       6.1.1 Thesis
       6.1.2 Explanation of terms (if needed)
   6.2 Body (see writing conventions above)
   6.3 Conclusion and recommendations
       6.3.1 Conclusion is a summation of findings
       6.3.2 Recommendation is the next step that a person/organization should take.
   6.4 Appendix (optional)
       6.4.1 For supporting material, such as survey forms, copies of other reports, data tables, and related correspondence
       6.4.2 Pages are numbered Appendix 1 or A1, A2 …
       6.4.3 Cross-reference all appendices in the text
   6.5 Bibliography page
       6.5.1 List all sources cited in the work
       6.5.2 When all sources are consulted and are requested by your professor, list all sources alphabetically
       6.5.3 Use Chicago style (see below)

1. Short Report Format (fewer than 10 pages double spaced)
   1.1 Title page (see 1. above)
   1.2 Introduction (see 4. Writing Conventions above)
   1.3 Body
   1.4 Conclusion
   1.5 Sources cited
1. Chicago-Style Citations

The following paragraphs serve only as a basic guide to understanding the Chicago style. It is each student’s responsibility to use a complete guide to the Chicago style in order to note and cite all sources correctly. You can either buy one of these guides in the Bookstore or borrow one from the library.

Your research will lead you to various types of sources, and a style manual will spell out how to cite each specific type. The most important point here is that you do cite all borrowed information and cite it correctly, according to the Chicago style.

1.1 Footnotes and Endnotes

Chicago style of citation calls for either footnotes in the text of your paper or endnotes at the end, and a bibliography at the very end of the whole paper.

Both foot and endnotes “consist of numbered notes in the text of the paper that refer readers to notes with corresponding numbers either at the foot of the page (footnotes) or at the end of the paper (endnotes).”¹ For example, the source for the information on this page is cited in the footnotes below. To insert a footnote in Microsoft Word, go to Insert, and then select Footnote. Endnotes are identical to footnotes, except they are listed all together on their own page at the end of the paper, right before the bibliography. Each of your foot or endnotes will refer to a source that is listed in your bibliography. For that reason, your notes are abbreviations of the complete source information. Every note needs to include at least the author’s last name and the page number(s) from which you gathered your information.

When you cite the same source twice or more consecutively, you can abbreviate by using the term Ibid, which means ‘in the same place’ and the page number (see example below).

1.2 Bibliography

A bibliography should be included at the end of your report or paper and list every source that from which you gathered information, whether or not you actually cite all of those sources in your paper.

The bibliography should list each source in alphabetical order by the author’s last name or name of the sponsor. Each entry begins on the left margin, and if the entry is more than one line long, each additional line is indented one tab.

Below are only a few examples of bibliographical entries. There are many other kinds of sources of information, so it is necessary to refer to a style manual to help you cite them all correctly.

¹ Hacker, A Pocket Style Manual, 186.
Basic format for a book should include author, title, publisher and date of publication.

**Basic format for a book:**

Basic format for an article in a magazine should include author, title, publication name, date of publication, and page numbers.

**Basic format for an article in a magazine:**

Basic format for a website should include *at minimum* the author or sponsor, title of the site, and the URL. If you cannot find either an author or sponsor of a site, reevaluate that site’s authority and trustworthiness.

**Basic format for a website:**

2. **Avoiding Plagiarism**
All students and business people are responsible for understanding the definition and consequences of plagiarism. In her *Pocket Style Manual, 4th Edition*, Diana Hacker defines plagiarism this way:

> Three different acts are considered plagiarism: 1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, 2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and 3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words.²

In order to avoid plagiarizing and to be fair and honest in your writing, you need to cite every instance you borrow language and/or ideas from someone else’s work. There are several styles for doing this. For papers submitted to the University of Montana’s School of Business Administration, use the Chicago style.

3. **Bibliography**

---

² Ibid, 186.
Hints for Effective Writing, Grammar, and Usage

These suggestions arose out of my grading written assignments and research papers in various classes. They include common errors and suggestions for improving your writing. Remember that you must practice professional business writing skills to be able to use them.

I estimate that 75% of the points lost for inappropriate grammar, usage, and style could have been avoided if the student had carefully proofed his or her paper. Do not rely solely on spell-check and grammar-check functions of Word.

Proof your paper “cold” or after not having read it in 24 hours.

Grammar and Usage

1. Do not use contractions in business writing (can't, don't).
2. Where possible, use third person. Avoid using first person unless the assignment has you writing about a personal experience or opinion.
3. Commas and periods are always placed inside closing quotations. Even if you are only quoting one "word," place the comma or period inside the closing quotation.
4. In a list of phrases, make sure the form of the phrase is consistent. Instead of, "One would prefer living in Montana, to buy groceries at Albertson's, and a nice apartment," write, "One would prefer living in Montana, buying groceries at Albertson's, and renting a nice apartment."
5. Make sure your verbs match the plurality of the subject.
6. Always use complete sentences. This sounds so obvious, but I frequently see phrases that students intend to be sentences but lack the properties of a sentence (both a subject and predicate).
7. It is very common for students to be prolific with commas. Comma rules can be confusing. You are more likely to get into trouble with commas if you are writing conversationally or using sentences that are long and unorganized. Do not use commas to set off phrases unless (1) it is a phrase that could be eliminated from the sentence, or (2) the phrase contains a subject and predicate (is a full sentence on its own). An example of proper comma usage for (1) is "The students liked the class, especially the experience with computers." An example of proper comma usage for (2) is "The students liked the class, and they enjoyed their experience with computers." Note that in this second example, you are required to use a comma because it is a compound sentence. See #10 below. An example of improper comma usage is: "The students like the class, that included experience with computers."
8. Properly denote possessive nouns and pronouns. Often students leave apostrophes out or put them in the wrong place. The most common error: "The company announced who would be it's new CEO". "It's" always stands for "it is."
9. Use pronouns that are of the correct plurality. The most common error is "Microsoft released their earnings." (company=singular, their=plural pronoun) The correct way is "Microsoft released its earnings."
10. This is a very common improper usage of a comma: "We went out to eat at the Montana Club on Wednesday night, and watched the boxing matches at the Wilma." The comma is not necessary because the two phrases that it separates are NOT complete sentences. To correct this, either remove the comma or insert a subject in the second phrase ("We went.... night, and we watched ....").
**Effective Writing**

1. Use headings and subheadings. Not only will this force you to organize your thoughts, but it will also provide the reader information about where you are going in your paper.

2. Provide transitional paragraphs when switching between two marginally related topics. When switching between two closely related topics, transition in the first sentence of the new topic or the last sentence of the old topic.

3. Watch paragraph length. Often a long paragraph really contains discussion of several main ideas, so it could be broken into several shorter paragraphs.

4. Do not be too casual in your writing. Students tend to write like they speak, which can be very informal and "chatty." Professional business writing should not sound like a casual conversation when it is read. Casual writing carries an unintended aura of not being serious about your subject or assignment.

5. If the paper has been composed by more than one person, be sure the different writing styles are not blatant. If a paper is divided up in a group, designate one person to integrate the parts. This person will need to make changes to the other members' parts to make the paper more like his/her writing style throughout the paper.

6. Use charts, illustrations, tables, and figures as appropriate. Place them in the body of the paper at the appropriate point.

7. Properly introduce and summarize your topic with opening and closing paragraphs.

8. Designate your sources in some format preferred by your instructor. Some assignments and papers will have formal guidelines on footnoting, while others will not. Even if there is no formal requirement for footnotes, you should list your sources in a reference or bibliography list.

9. Do not plagiarize. When you are answering questions about a reading or summarizing a reading, it is tempting to copy and paste the words from the reading. If you do this without placing the words in quotations and footnoting the source, this is plagiarism. This is illegal and constitutes a violations of the Student Conduct Code. Reword the content in your own words. This shows thought and understanding of the topic.