

**Grant Writing in the Arts 41206**  
MAM 712-X02  
Summer Session; July 28-August 6  
T, TH – 6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.  
Robinson 206A

**SYLLABUS**  
Instructor: Diane Coppage  
[dcoppage@gmu.edu](mailto:dcoppage@gmu.edu)  
Hours by appointment

**Please bring this syllabus to each class. This is your contract with me regarding policies, assignments, grades, and expectations.**

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

The techniques and skills you take away from this class will make up an integral part of your graduate education and professional training. My goal in this class is to give you the practical tools and information you will need to locate the best funding sources for your project and to write a successful funding proposal. The class will imitate professional best practices and introduce you to the perspectives of both fundraiser and funder. All lectures, resources, exercises, and assignments have been designed to reinforce the proposal writing component of successful fundraising.

## **Objectives**

- Students will develop clear, succinct, and compelling fundwriting skills, particularly as they pertain to proposals, letters of intent, and letters of inquiry [LOIs].
- Students will understand how the grant-seeking process works within the context of non-profit programs and funder guidelines.
- Students will be able to analyze information and apply it to their projects.
- Students will understand the value of the written proposal within the context of fundraising prospecting, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship practices.
- Students will learn to work with the tools of the trade: vocabulary, oral and written presentation techniques, funding resources, professional websites, etc.
- Students will become familiar with the multiple perspectives that influence grant seeking, including those of fellow applicants.
- Students will be able to apply the course information and techniques to real world situations.

## **Tools**

- Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. Print.
- MLA access: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/15/>
- Mason e-mail address—required by the university. No information will be sent to any other address. If I need to reach you, individually or as a class, I will use your Mason e-mail address.  
**For security reasons, please do not use personal e-mail accounts for Mason communications.**
- You may bring your laptop to class.

**Stuff you need to know.** Most of what follows comes from the college student handbook, catalog, or class schedule. It is meant as an overview and is not comprehensive. It is your responsibility to know the academic policies, rules, and practices of the university and the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Obviously, I will expect that**

- cell phones will be turned off;
  - no one will be browsing the web during the class, unless it is part of a class activity;
  - everyone will behave in a professional and respectful way towards each other, guests, and me; and
  - sensitive information shared in the class is not to be distributed or discussed elsewhere.
- 

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PRACTICES

### Academic Honesty

All students are expected to abide by the terms of the university's Honor Code; violations of academic integrity are treated seriously and may lead to expulsion from the MAM program and the university. Any use of plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment, a possible failing grade in the course, and/or possible expulsion from the MAM program. I will not undermine my integrity or the value of our Mason diplomas by tolerating academic dishonesty.

*George Mason University Honor Code: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. <http://www.gmu.edu/mlstudents/> [See also <http://honorcode.gmu.edu> and university catalog, pages 30-31.]*

When using any text by another author—even if it is a web source—you must cite the source. Please note the difference between a refereed journal, one that is reviewed and edited by academic or fundraising professionals, and on-line or print magazines or newspaper articles, arts organization websites, editorials, encyclopedic sites like Wikipedia, blogs and other on-line chat services that are not reviewed for accuracy and legitimacy. Use caution when reading them and using any information from them. When/if you do, they too, must be cited.

**If you are not sure about how to prevent plagiarism in your work, please visit the university Writing Center, located in Robinson A-114 and online at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>**

An important part of successful fundraising is top-notch research skills. For those having trouble keeping track of their research sources, or if you just want to hone your research skills, the Writing Center offers three research paper workshops every semester.

**Setting and maintaining high standards of ethical conduct are as essential to the nonprofit sector as they are to the academic community.**

See [http://www.afpnet.org/content\\_documents/CodeofEthics.pdf](http://www.afpnet.org/content_documents/CodeofEthics.pdf) and [http://www.afpnet.org/content\\_documents/Donor\\_Bill\\_of\\_Rights.pdf](http://www.afpnet.org/content_documents/Donor_Bill_of_Rights.pdf)

for Association of Fundraising Professionals Code of Ethics and Donor Bill of Rights.

### Attendance

This is a compressed class—we will meet only four times over the course of two weeks—sort of an academic boot camp. If you think you'll have trouble getting to every class on time and staying for the entire class period, or if you think you won't have time to do the work required, please reconsider your place in the class—now may not be the right time for you to take it on. I will call

the roll for each class promptly at 6 p.m., and I will provide a sign-in sheet for late students. **Each full class session missed will result in the loss of a full letter grade.** The university's attendance policy reads as follows:

*Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation....*  
[George Mason University catalog, page 35].

If you are unavoidably late, I expect you to enter the class and get yourself settled quietly and unobtrusively. **Students arriving 30 minutes late for a class, or who leave before the class is dismissed, will lose half a letter grade.**

### Academic Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability or special needs that require special academic accommodations, **you must let me know at the beginning of the course** and you must arrange accommodations through the Disability Resource Center [DRC]. Your confidentiality will be respected. Contact the DRC at 703-993-2474 or <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/>

### Mason Alert System

Students are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert System at <https://alert.gmu.edu>. Please note the emergency poster posted in the classroom with information and guidelines about exits and what to do in the event of an emergency. More on emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert>.

### Graduate Academic Standards, Grades\*

A+	100% +	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A	94-100%	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A-	90-93%	3.67	Satisfactory/Passing
B+	87-89%	3.33	Satisfactory/Passing
B	83-86%	3.00	Satisfactory/Passing
B-	80-82%	2.67	Satisfactory/Passing*
C	70-79%	2.00	Unsatisfactory/Passing
F	0-59%	0.00	Unsatisfactory/Failing

\*Although a B- is a satisfactory grade for a graduate course, students must maintain a 3.00 average in their program. [See university catalog, pages 44-45, for more information.]

**Grades will be posted by 10 p.m. on August 8**

**Instructors do not “give” grades. Grades are earned by students. Posting a final grade that has not been earned by the student is academic dishonesty. I will not do it.**

## Due Dates/Late Work

Public and independent institutional funders will not read late proposals, period. In keeping with professional standards, assignments must be submitted on time. I will follow this standard. Unless otherwise announced in class, all assignments are due in hard copy at the *beginning of the class* for which they are assigned. Late assignments will not be accepted and the grade for the assignment will be an F. No exceptions will be made for late work. I will not accept e-mailed work.

## Writing Quality and Attention to Detail

Good writing skills are essential for creating competitive and successful proposals. Poor grammar, misspellings, and sloppy presentation will result in an ineffective proposal and a lower grade. Just remember that *everything counts* in a written proposal. It is through your writing and presentation that the funder will decide whether or not to give your project a closer look.

I will read your assignments and look at your writing through the eyes of a prospective donor—which pretty much means that work that does not comply with the instructions of the assignment or the funder’s guidelines, is sloppy, or poorly written will not be funded, or receive a good grade.

**Writing quality will count 50% of your grade on each writing assignment, including prospect lists, outlines, and LOIs.** In other words, everything you write.

### A few tips:

1. **Care—a lot!**
2. **Proofread** your work several times, preferably out loud with a partner. If you can’t find anyone to read with, read out loud to yourself—I guarantee you’ll find mistakes you missed or points you’ll want to edit or rewrite.
3. **Get help!** Use the **Writing Center**, especially if English is not your first language and you are struggling with grammar, syntax, etc. **The Writing Center is located in Robinson A-114 and online at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>** For a wealth of online resources click on “Resource Center” or go directly to <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resource.html>
4. Top-notch research skills are part of successful fundraising. For those having trouble keeping track of their research sources, or if you just want to hone your research skills, **the Writing Center offers three research paper workshops every semester.**

---

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Successful completion in the course will include the following:

<b>Class Participation:</b> Punctual attendance to all classes, discussion, group/peer work .....	10%
<b>Project Idea</b> [due at beginning of first class on July 28] .....	10%
<b>Prospect List</b> .....	10%
<b>Letter of Inquiry/Intent [LOI]</b> .....	25%
<b>Full Proposal Package</b> with budget, exec summary and documentation .....	45%

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS [subject to change]

**Advance Assignment: Due on July 28 at beginning of class. [2 copies—one to hand in and one to use in class.]** Please develop a project idea and short descriptive outline for a project that you will use as a basis for your proposal writing during the class. Your project can be something you imagine, something you would like to see happen, either in your community or at your workplace, or a project you are already involved with. The idea is to have a tangible project to use as a working model in the class.

Some examples might be—

- a new exhibit for a museum
- a children's reading program for a library
- an interactive learning website
- program support for a summer music program
- scholarship support for a study abroad program
- support for faculty research and publication in a specific area
- support for a drama season for a small theatre, etc.

If you get stuck for ideas, take a look at some of the websites suggested on the Check it Out handout, or you can choose a project from among those posted in the Foundation's Center RFPs under Arts and Culture <http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/>

You can also go to the website of one of the top 50 funders in the US and chose a category and a project from among the types the funder supports.

[http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/statistics/subject01\\_06.html](http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/statistics/subject01_06.html)

Your project does not have to be fully developed, but you should have a strong idea about what you want funded. We will introduce and discuss projects in the first class.

---

### Class #1: July 28

- 6 -7:30**
- You must be registered for the class to attend. If your name is not on my class list, I will ask you to leave the class and check with the Registrar's Office.
  - Review syllabus and handouts
  - Introduce/Discuss Projects

**7:30 -7:45**     **BREAK**

- 7:45-9:30**
- Power Point [We'll use this presentation and the class handouts as a sort of workbook for the class.]

**Homework: Due July 30 at the beginning of the class.**

**Prospect List**—Using the resources supplied in the Check it Out handout and in this syllabus, put together a list of three prospective funders with a paragraph or two about why you chose the prospect—Use the attached prospect sheet or create your own. [2 copies, one for me to review and one to keep.]

**Class #2: July 30 WE WILL MEET IN INNOVATION HALL, ROOM 317**

- 6 -7:30**      ■ Guest: Susan Graziano  
Global Grant Coordinator, Provost's Office, George Mason University

**7:30– 7:45      BREAK**

- 7:45-9:30**      ■ Return Prospect Lists  
■ Workshop. Draft LOI & Budget. [Refer to sample budget outlines.] [I will circulate to answer questions and help with your projects.]

**Homework: Due: August 4 at the beginning of the class.**

- 1.                  Final LOI**
- 2.                  Final Budget**
- 3.                  Draft Proposal** with funder's guidelines. [2 copies; one for me, and one to use in class.]
- 4.                  Draft Executive Summary**—[2 copies; one for me, and one to use in class.] Here's where you'll summarize the most important things you want the prospect to know about the project. Consider the Exec Summary a five-minute meeting with the prospect or a one-page ad for the project.

---

**Class #3: August 4**

- 6 -7:30**      ■ Proposal Package Peer Review/Workshop  
[I will circulate to answer questions and help with your projects.]  
■ Discussion.

**7:30– 7:45      BREAK**

- 7:45-9:30      Tracking Progress & Information**
- Proposal Logs
  - Boilerplate Information
  - Organization Documents

**Homework: Due August 6 at the beginning of the class.**

- 1. Final Proposal Package**—2 copies of everything.
  - a. Executive Summary**
  - b. Final Budget**
  - c. Appropriate Attachments**
- 2.**                  If you'd like your graded proposal package returned, please bring a [large enough] stamped self-address envelope to class on Thursday.

## **Class #4: August 6**

- 6 -7:30**
- Proposal Presentations/Review [6-7 minutes each]
    - Who is your prospect?
    - How much is your ask?
    - In one or two sentences, describe your project and how you will use the grant.
    - Challenges of this proposal?
    - Lessons learned—what will you do the next time?

**7:30– 7:40 BREAK**

- 7:40-9:30**
- Presentations Continued
  - Funding is denied—what next?
  - Reporting