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Overview

Course Description

General Appraiser Report Writing and Case Studies focuses on the communication of the appraisal report and meets the new AQB “report writing” content requirement for certified general appraisers. The format for the course consists of lecture, group discussion, individual writing assignments, and homework assignments.

Communicating the results of an appraisal is a critical skill. An appraisal report is an argument in support of an opinion of value that reflects the appraiser’s competence in applying the valuation process. A poorly written report can cast shadows on the most competent research and analysis.

The course begins with a review of report writing requirements and the format of a traditional narrative appraisal report. Some effective communication formats such as charts, graphs, tables, and photographs are examined. Trends in narrative appraisal communication are analyzed in light of the traditional narrative format and in light of the reporting standards set out in the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP).

Organizing, analyzing, and concluding are the steps that result in a coherent communication model, and this course covers those steps. Extended writing assignments focus on common writing challenges including summarizing data, writing a conclusion, communicating highest and best use, communicating analysis, and reviewing the components of reconciliation, and analyzing a letter of transmittal.

Several writing assignments are to be completed during class time; a few are completed as homework. Writing assignments are displayed anonymously on the overhead or LCD projector for discussion by the class. To facilitate this learning activity, participants write the assignments on laptop computers. Familiarity with word processing and spreadsheet software is required for the course.

Learning Enhancements

The course has been designed with a variety of elements to enhance your learning experience.

- **Preview.** To give you a taste of what is to come, you will find a *Preview* page that begins each Part. Included on the *Preview* page is a brief overview of the content, learning objectives to consider as you move through the content, and learning tips that will assist you in understanding the information you're about to learn.
- **Learning Objectives.** Each learning objective covers essential information you need to know to fully understand the concepts in the course. Look them over before the Part begins so that you have a frame of reference as you move through the material. At the end of each Part, reread the objectives. Are you able to do what is stated? If not, this is the time to ask your instructor for help or review the concepts that you do not understand.
- **Examples.** Supplementing the discussions, we've included examples to help you visualize and practice what you are learning.
- **Discussion Topics.** Discussion questions provide you with additional ideas to consider as you absorb what you are learning.
- **In-Class Exercises.** A number of short exercises are scattered throughout the Course Handbook to reinforce communication tips and grammatical guidelines.
- **Extended Writing Assignments.** To provide real-world writing practice, we've included nine writing assignments that will be critiqued anonymously in class. You will reference the Arbour Bridge Case Study as you complete these writing assignments which focus on common writing challenges.
- **Case Study.** A separate component called the Arbour Bridge Case Study is included in the course to help you recognize and produce effective reports. Some noted sections in the case study contain sloppy writing to serve as an example of what not to do when writing a report.
- **Review.** Each Part concludes with a review. Included in the review are the learning objectives and key terms and concepts that have been covered. Also, we've provided recommended readings from textbooks that will reinforce what you have learned in class.
- **Review Quizzes.** Short review quizzes are included at the end of some Parts. By answering the true/false questions or multiple choice questions, you will know whether or not you really know the information that was covered in that Part.
- **Practice Tests.** Practice Tests are included at the end of each Section in the "Review." The questions are similar to the types of questions you might find on the exam.

- **Suggested Solutions.** A separate component includes the Solutions. Here you will find the answers for the quizzes, practice tests, and in-class exercises.

Classroom Guidelines

To make the learning environment a positive experience for everyone attending, please follow these guidelines when class is in session.

- 100% attendance is required. No exceptions.
- Refrain from using short-range wireless technology.
- Limit use of laptops to classroom projects.
- Communicate with business associates during break time instead of class time.
- Put away reading materials such as newspapers and books that are not used in class.
- Silence cell phones.
- Use recording devices only if prior permission has been granted.
- Refrain from ongoing conversations with those seated near you and other distracting behavior

General Information

- **Calculators.** A financial calculator is required. The accepted model used in the course is the HP-12C.
- **Breaks.** There will be two 10-minute breaks during the morning session and two 10-minute breaks during the afternoon session unless noted otherwise by the course sponsor. The lunch break is one hour.
- **Attendance sheets** will be distributed during class to verify your attendance during the morning and afternoon sessions.
- **Certificates of completion** will be mailed after completion of the course, and attendance during the entire course is required.

Required Equipment

- Laptop
- HP-12C
- Optional: Flash drive

Recommended Texts

- *The Appraisal of Real Estate*, 13th ed., 2008
- *Appraisal Writing Handbook*, Alan Blankenship, PhD, 1998
- *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed., Strunk, White, and Angell, 1999
- *Style, The Basics of Clarity and Grace*, Joseph Williams, 2006.