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## ENG 3005-600: Technical Communication

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**ENG 3005-600 Course Policy**  
**Technical Communication**  
Summer 2017, Six-Week Session

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“Great writing is created in revision—rethinking, rewriting, adding, subtracting, repositioning, editing. In effect, fine writing is born in change.”

~Ralph Wahlstrom, *The Tao of*

*Writing*

“Whoever does not study rhetoric will be a victim of it.”

~Ancient Greek wall inscription

“Having to say something is a very different matter from having something to say.”

~John Dewey, *How We Think*

**Texts**

- Markel, Mike. *Technical Communication*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Materials**

Writing instruments, paper, paper clips, a good college dictionary, a typewriter or computer, and other appropriate supplies

**Course Description**

Instruction and practice in technical communication and creating documents used in professional settings. Focus on communicating complex information to specialized and non-specialized audiences. Students will complete case-based and/or client-based projects in multiple genres and media. Course will also address online communication, ethical communication, document design, intercultural/global communication, collaboration, accessibility issues, and oral presentation.

**Student Learning Objectives for this Course**

Students will...

- Explain the value of technical communication in organizational settings and the responsibilities of professional communicators to communicate clearly and concisely to satisfy an audience’s need for information (WR)
- Adapt common genres of technical communication (proposals, progress reports, reports, instructions, presentations, etc) to specific audiences, purposes, media, and contexts—including global contexts (CT/WR/SL/RC)
- Critically read and analyze information addressed to readers of differing technical levels (CT/WR 5–7/QR 3–4)

- Implement principles of effective document design (using basic and advanced features of computer software) to create professional, easy-to-use projects, including quantitative displays of information (QR 5–6)
- Use effective collaborative strategies to create a positive work environment and high-quality projects (CT 1 / SL 2–3, 7 / RC 1–2)
- Demonstrate college- and professional-level writing produced through the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading (WR)
- Demonstrate metacognitive awareness of strategies used to successfully approach, adapt to, and complete new (previously untried) communication situations (RC-4)

### **Expected Performance Outcomes**

Students will exhibit the ability to:

- Analyze the need for a document in terms of a rhetorical situation to be addressed, the context of the writing project, the purpose of the document, and the audience’s needs
- Select an appropriate document format and writing style for a given writing situation
- Select and design simple graphics and integrate them logically into written text
- Revise and edit for clarity and correctness, and produce professional-looking final documents
- Distinguish between objective and subjective language
- Conduct library, electronic, and field research effectively
- Document sources appropriately within reports
- Work effectively and ethically in a group writing project and group presentation
- Write clear, concise prose in Edited American English

Success in this course includes (1) finding your own creative ways to make topics and assignments personally interesting--especially if your first instinct is to label them “boring” or “too hard,” (2) believing that you have something worthwhile to say, and (3) expressing it after you’ve debated/ pondered/ listened/ read/ explored beyond the surface.

### **Course Requirements**

Class consists of assigned readings, online discussions of assigned reading and/or videos, and small and large writing assignments. You can count on pop quizzes. Active and constructive class participation will make a positive impact on your overall grade. In fact, in an online class, keeping up with the work and making deadlines is crucial.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

### **Your Instructor**

If you are having any trouble with the material covered in this course, or if you simply want reassurance that you are on the right track, please do not hesitate to contact me. Many times a short discussion to go over a paper or to clarify a concept can save you

time in the long run and improve your chances of success in this course. In addition to being in my office during posted hours, we can also make arrangements to meet at other times to better accommodate your schedule.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

### **Instructor Response Time**

I will routinely check discussion posts and email during weekdays. I do not check my email on Saturday, but I plan to check my email by 8pm on Sundays if not sooner.

### **Learner Interaction**

This online classroom community demands good manners, careful listening, respect for diverse backgrounds and opinions, and equal time for everyone who wants to share his or her perspective.

I expect students to act in a mature and collegial manner. You should have read the material, should be eager to participate, and should be ready to write.

### *Guidelines to Abide by in Any College Course and Life in General:*

1. Have opinions and ideas and support your opinions and ideas with details and examples.
2. Play well with others by respecting others' opinions and being open to them.
3. General rudeness and disrespect is not tolerated.

### **Discussion Board Participation Guidelines**

Since we cannot talk in a face-to-face classroom setting, discussion forums serve as our way to interact with each and learn from each other.

There are seven modules for the course, and each module requires at least one discussion forum but oftentimes more than one. For each discussion forum, you need to post one substantive, quality reply (a paragraph of at least five sentences that clearly answers the prompt) to the discussion post question/s and then later reply to one of your peer's posts with depth and attention. You are more than welcome to respond to more than one peer. While I have minimum requirement of sentences for posts, the most important criterion is the **quality of the post**—whether the response exemplifies critical thinking and has details to support one's points, observations, assertions, or arguments.

Deadlines for the posts will be indicated on the syllabus. If a student provides a quality response to the questions in the discussion forum and also provides a substantive reply to a peer's response (Pass), the student earns 10 out of 10 for that discussion forum. If a student does not provide substantial comments or only one of the two types of comments (Fail), they earn 0 out of 10.

## Late Work Policy

Because this is a compressed class, a six-week session, I do not accept late work.

## Email Policy

I welcome emails if you have questions or concerns about your work in this class. However, I expect you to write emails in a professional manner—not like you are texting a close friend. Emailing in a professional manner will help you with other professors and also give you practice in effective communication.

If you want to send me an email, follow the guidelines below. Emails should:

- Have a clear and concise subject line that provides gist of the email, such “Absent This Friday” or “Question about Revision” or “Availability for a Meeting?”
- Begin with a formal address, such as “Dr. Taylor:” or “Dear Dr. Taylor:”
- Use a respectful tone
- Provide questions or information in an succinct manner
- Use paragraph breaks for reading ease and strong organization
- Be edited and proofread effectively so as not to cause confusion
- Refrain from using abbreviations or “text-prose”
- Close with a short statement followed by a comma and your name, such as “Thanks for your time,” or “Sincerely,” or “Have a good weekend,”

If an email does not follow these guidelines, I will simply reply to the email with this message: “Please resend this email once it’s been revised to fit the standards of a professional email. See page 4 of my course policy.”

## Opportunities for Revision & Reflective Memos

Students have the opportunity to revise these major documents: Article Analysis Memo, Interpretive Graphic, Informational Report, and Proposal. Time allotted for revision is usually a few days after the paper has been graded. If you choose to revise, it should help your overall grade. However, I expect **deep revision**, not just surface editing. A reflective memo must be submitted with the revision. In reflective memos, writers need to talk about the **changes they made** to the document and **why** they made those changes. Tell me about your thought process behind the changes you made.

## Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Here is the official statement on plagiarism by the EIU English Department: “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.”

In this class, if a student is found to have plagiarized in a paper, the paper will earn a zero for the assignment, and I will report the occurrence to the EIU Judicial Affairs Office.

Generally, if you have to have a source before your eyes as you write, you need to copy it accurately, put quotation marks around it, and acknowledge your source. If you are paraphrasing information from a source, you need to use an introductory phrase and properly cite what page or paragraph (if it's online) the information is located.

For further clarification, here is an explanation of plagiarism from my previous English department that explains this important concept:

### *Plagiarism*

To present someone else's work or ideas as one's own is plagiarism. A student can commit in these ways:

- Copying, word for word, someone else's writing without putting that passage in quotation marks and identifying the source.
- Taking someone else's writing, changing some of the words, and not identifying the source;
- Taking someone else's ideas or organization of ideas, putting them into his/her own words and not identifying the source;
- Having someone else change the student's writing—a tutor, friend, or relative, for instance—and creating the impression that this is the student's own work; or
- Purchasing or downloading papers or passages from the Web.

### **A Social Contract of Honesty**

In this class, there is a social contract between the instructors and students that the work submitted will be the students' own documents, not someone else's work. To put it simply, do your own writing.

**Composition of the Overall Grade**  
(all assignments and point totals are tentative)

**Online Discussion Forums** **190** points  
 Discussion posts and follow-up posts related to each module  
 (One substantive post and a substantive follow-up post to a peer required:  
 Pass = 10 points, Fail = 0 points)

**Draft Due Dates** **60**  
 Three assignments require drafts for my commentary before they're submitted  
 (Full draft due: Pass = 20 points, Fail = 0 points)

**Quizzes** **tbd**

**Shorter Writing Assignments** **90**

Memo of Introduction	10	
Interpretive Graphic		50
Cover Letter of Proposal	20	
Feedback Memorandum	10	

**Formal Business/Technical Documents** **500**

Article Analysis Memo	100	
Informational Report		100
Client Project		100
Proposal	150	
Resume	50	

840 points + tbd

Grading Scale for Formal Documents:

100-92% = A	89-88 = B+	79-78 = C+	69-60 = D
91-90 = A-	87-82 = B	77-72 = C	59 and below = F
	81-80 = B-	71-70 = C-	

Overall Grading Scale:

100-90% = A	69-60 = D
89-80 = B	59 and below = F
79-70 = C	

## ENG 3005 Syllabus Summer 2017

All assignments and due dates are tentative  
All chapters refer to *Markel's Technical Communication* 9<sup>th</sup> ed.  
CT = Central Standard Time  
Pp = Powerpoint

### Week 1

M 6/12

Read Ch. 1 & 2  
Discussion forum posts "Ch. 1 & 2" due 11 pm CT  
Memo of Introduction due 8pm CT

Tu 6/13

Read Ch. 3 & 5  
Module 1: View Classical Rhetoric Powerpoint (Pp) & "Using the  
Rhetorical Triangle & Rhetorical Appeals"

Rhetorical

Discussion forum posts "Rhetorical Appeals" due 11 pm CT

W 6/14

Read Ch. 7 & 8  
Discussion forum posts "Ch. 7 & 8" due 11 pm CT  
Module 2: Read Article Analysis Memo assignment  
View "Working with Sources"

Th 6/15

Read handouts related to working with sources in APA Style  
Module 2: View "Discourse Community Introduction"  
Discussion forum posts "Discourse Communities" due 11 pm CT

F 6/16

Article selected for the Article Analysis Memo  
Discussion forum posts "Article Analysis Brainstorming" due 11 pm CT

### Week 2

M 6/19

**Article Analysis Memo due Noon CT**

Read Ch. 12  
Module 3: Read Interpretive Graphic assignment  
View "Charts and Graphs: Choosing the Right Format"  
Discussion forum post "Graphical Elements" due 11 pm CT

Tu 6/20

Module 4: Informative Report assignment  
View "Document Design & Consistency" Pp  
Read and view "Bottom-Line Placement"  
Read and view "Think Long-term and Be Kind to Readers..."  
Read and view "Manage What Your Reader Think You Mean..."

W 6/21

Read Ch. 11 (253-83) & 17  
Discussion forum posts "Informational Reports" due 11pm CT

**Interpretive Graphic due Noon CT**

Th 6/22  
CT

Discussion forum posts "Your Topic and Research-Info Report" due 11 pm

F 6/23

Module 5: Client Project  
Read pdf excerpt from Rude's Technical Editing  
Discussion forum posts "Working with a Client" due 11 pm CT

*Week 3*

M 6/26

Read Ch. 22 (609-610)

Email sent to client by Noon CT (cc me)

**Draft of Informational Report due Noon CT**

Tu 6/27

**Design and Copy Plans due Noon CT**

W 6/28

Discussion forum posts “Effective Flyers & Brochures” due 11 pm CT

**Informational Report due Noon CT**

Th 6/29

Discussion forum posts “Revision Plans for Project” due 11 pm CT

F 6/30

Draft of Flyer/Brochure sent to Client for feedback due Noon CT

*Week 4*

M 7/3

Discussion forum posts “Revision Plans for Project II” due 11 pm CT

Tu 7/4

Independence Day—No class activities

W 7/5

Module 6: Proposal

Read Ch. 16

Discussion forum posts “Ch. 16” due 11 pm CT

Th 7/6

Module 6: View “The Craft of Proposals” Pp

Discussion forum posts “What Problem/s?” due 11 pm CT

F 7/7

**Final Client Project due to Taylor and Ms. Bays Noon CT**

*Week 5*

M 7/10

Discussion forum posts “What Solution/s?” due 11 pm CT

Tu 7/11

Module 6: View “The Importance of *Phronesis*” Pp

Discussion forum posts “Creating a Proposal That Has Practical Wisdom”

due 11

pm CT

W 7/12

Module 6: View “Considering Counterarguments” Pp

Discussion forum posts “Considering Counterarguments” due 11 pm CT

Last day for course withdrawal for 6-week session

Th 7/13

**Draft of Proposal due Noon CT**

F 7/14

Module 6: View “Crafting a Cover Letter for the Proposal” Pp

*Week 6*

M 7/17

Discussion forum posts “Considering the Audience of the Proposal” due 11

pm

CT

Tu 7/18

**Cover Letter & Proposal due Noon CT**

W 7/19

Module 7: Read Ch. 15

Discussion Forum posts “Presenting Yourself as a Professional” due 11 pm

CT

Th 7/20

**Draft of Resume due Noon CT**

F 7/21

**Resume due Noon CT**

**Feedback Memo due Noon CT**