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## ENG 3005-001: Technical Communication

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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**English 3005-001—Technical Communication  
Spring 2020**

Dr. Campbell  
CH 3572  
Office hours TTH 9-9:30am; 12:30-1:30pm;  
W 11am-noon; and by appointment.

TTH 2pm-3:15pm  
CH 3120/3130  
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**Texts**

Markel, *Technical Communication*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed.  
Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Course Objectives**

This course is designed to help you develop professional communication skills. No matter whether you are writing a memorandum or an email, creating a manual, or designing a web site, the same critical thinking and communication skills are needed to help you do the job effectively. The main goals of our course will be as follows:

- To help you learn to analyze audiences and to design communications for both specialists and non-specialists.
- To give you practice creating a variety of documents that are commonly used in professional writing.
- To give you opportunities to design and give oral presentations.

To succeed in this course, you must be willing to work independently on individual and group projects. Some important skills that you will develop include working individually and in groups to meet deadlines; critiquing and editing your own writing and that of others; and using research methods and materials effectively.

**Note: All assignments to be turned in must be prepared to look professionally completed.** Printed documents should be printed on laser printers or very high quality ink jet printers. Electronic documents should be well-designed and executed, and that includes memos, web pages, emails, PowerPoint slides, etc. Messy printing, errors in proofreading, incorrect formats, and poor page design will substantially reduce grades.

**Policies**

--The English Department statement on plagiarism stipulates that 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 original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

--Assignments are due in Dropbox on the dates and at the times noted. **See Dropbox in D2L.** If you are having problems, let me know. Late assignments will be reduced a letter grade for each class day that they are late without a university approved excuse (properly verified absences due to illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity). If you miss an exam, you will have no more than one week to make up an exam, and the make-up exam will be different from the one given during class. In-class assignments may not be made up.

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

--If you require general help with your studies, please make an appointment with The Student Success Center. Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (<http://www.eiu.edu/~success>) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

--Please make use of EIU's Writing Center, located at 3110 Coleman Hall, this semester. The consultants there can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support for, and documenting your papers. One caveat: the Writing Center is not a proofreading or editing service. It is a place where you can learn how to become a more thoughtful, independent, and rhetorically effective writer. To schedule an appointment, drop by (3110 Coleman Hall) or call 581-5929.

--If you begin missing multiple classes or assignments without communicating with me, I will make use of the EIU Early Alert System to help you get back on track. Your RA (if you live on campus) or someone from the Academic Success Center will try to contact you to offer help. Use of this system does not mean that you are "in trouble"; it is a means to help you avoid trouble.

--Conferences: You may make an appointment to meet with me to discuss assignments during my office hours or at other times as may be arranged.

--Be prepared for class. You'll get more out of class discussions if you are participating in them, and I'll notice if you do not seem prepared to participate.

### **Grading**

Some assignments may be graded with a **check mark system**, which will be weighted as follows:  $\checkmark+$  = A,  $\checkmark$  = B,  $\checkmark-$  = C. Anything lower will be an F.

Any **letter grades** will be assessed numerically as follows: A+ = 98, A = 95, A- = 92, B+ = 88, B = 85, B- = 82, C+ = 78, C = 75, C- = 72, and so on.

## Requirements

General Assignments	20%
Exams 1 & 2	20% (10% each of final grade)
Formal Proposal/Report	20%
Instructions	20%
Individual Oral Reports	20% (10% each of final grade)
	=100%

## Tentative Schedule

**T. Jan. 14**—Look over your syllabus. Pay attention to the way that large assignments are scheduled this semester, and begin to consider how you will manage your time accordingly. Discussion: Consider differences between academic and technical/professional writing.

**Homework:** Read **Markel, Part One: Chs. 1, 2, 3, and 4** carefully to get an overview of technical communication. Be prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

**Th. Jan. 16**—Discussion: what are the four basic communication modes? Consider ethical obligations, as well as the five basic steps in the writing process, and working collaboratively. Consider internal vs. external documents. **In Markel, p. 40, do exercise 4.** Begin your group research in class, then complete the memo outside of class (see p. 376-377 on **memo format**). Print a **hard copy** of the memo and **turn it in next class, T. Jan. 21.**

**Homework:** Read **Markel, Chs. 16, 17, & 18** on writing proposals and reports. Think about potential topics that could be developed into formal proposals or reports. Bring to class next time a list of **three possible topics** for proposals or reports.

**T. Jan. 21**—**Hard copy of group memo is due.** Introduction to first major assignment, the formal proposal or report. Be prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Brainstorm further on your topics. **For two of them, describe 1)** the idea and kind of document it would best fit, **2)** your familiarity with the topic, **3)** the professional scenario, including your position as the writer, your business or organization, and the potential audience(s) for this document. You are now building two potential cases, of which you will eventually select one for your first major project.

**Homework:** A memo containing your revised list with the expanded brainstormed information for the two topics (2-3 pages) is due in **Dropbox Th. Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>, by 1:30pm** (see p. 376-377 on **memo format**). Read **Markel, Part Two: Chs. 5, 6, and 7** on document planning. Prepare to present your two developed topic ideas for general discussion.

**Th. Jan. 23**—In class, each student will present the two developed topic ideas. Discuss audience analysis, as well as primary and secondary research, and patterns of organization. **In Markel, p. 115, do exercise 1.**

**Homework:** Exercise 1 will be due in a memo in **Dropbox T. Jan. 28 by 1:30pm.** Read **Markel, Part Three: Chs. 8, 9, 10, 11** on persuasion, emphasizing important information, writing correct and effective sentences, and document design.

**Note:** at this point, you should have decided on the topic and scenario for your first major assignment—the proposal or report. Begin research and drafting for this document, referring to Ch. 16 for proposals and Ch. 17 for reports.

**T. Jan. 28**—Go over 3005 Checklist handout. Discuss elements of homework reading. Regarding Ch. 8, what are the four goals that most people share? (See p. 173.) What are the three key elements of an argument? (See p. 177.) What are the four kinds of evidence to which people react most favorably? (See p. 179.) Regarding Ch. 9, discuss writing clear, informative paragraphs. (See pp. 202-206.) How should this information be implemented in your first project?

**Exercise/Homework:** Blog writers notoriously do not do a great job of proofreading or copy-editing before hitting “publish.” Find a short blog post and critique it regarding your choice of the information in Ch. 9. Also, select one paragraph and rewrite it. Be sure to identify the author, the audience for the post, and the argument. Turn in your critique with all of these elements complete in a memo (3-5 pages), due in **Dropbox Th. Jan. 30 by 1:30pm**.

**Th. Jan. 30**—Discuss basic writing issues based on the recent writing exercises. Refer to Ch. 10 for review. Sign up for **Conferences over the Reports/Proposals**.

**Exercise:** In small groups, you will analyze a website regarding your selection of elements from each of the four chapters, Chs. 8-11. Questions to consider: how will you organize your critique? What elements of these chapters are the most important to consider regarding your choice of website? Be sure to identify the company, authors/designers (if possible), and intended audiences. Print a **hard copy** of the memo (3-5 pages) and **turn it in next class, T. Feb. 4**.

**Homework:** Complete group memo. Prepare for conferences. Bring 3 copies of drafts of your project **or** your laptop or other device that allows you to share your work with the small group in question. If you choose this latter option, get names and email addresses of those in your small group so that you may share your document.

**T. Feb. 4**—Conferences—small group critiques.

**Th. Feb. 6**—Conferences—small group critiques.

**Homework:** Read/review **Markel, Chs. 11 and 12** on document design and visual elements. **Bring to next class an example of document design with visual aids** that you find online, that we can easily access in class. Be ready to discuss it in light of your reading, especially considering such elements as page design, typography, chunking, queuing, and filtering, as well as color and graphics. Your brief critique memo (2-3 pages) of this document is due in **Dropbox T. Feb. 11 by 1:30pm**.

**T. Feb. 11**—Discuss reading. Present and discuss examples.

**Homework:** Prepare a **progress report memo** (2 pages) on your formal proposal or report. See Ch. 17, pp. 454-464. The progress report memo is due in **Dropbox Th. Feb. 13 by 1:30pm**. Read **Markel, Ch. 21** on oral presentations.

**Th. Feb. 13**—Discuss Ch. 21. Begin to consider how you will present your proposal or report to your intended audience/s. **Sign up for Oral Presentations. Sign up for Conferences.**

**Homework:** Prepare for conferences. Bring three copies of drafts of your project and samples of ideas for visual elements and document design **or** your laptop or other device that allows you to share your work with the small group in question. If you choose this latter option, get names and email addresses of those in your small group so that you may share your document.

**T. Feb. 18**—Conferences—small group critiques.

**Th. Feb. 20**—Conferences—small group critiques.

**T. Feb. 25**—Oral Presentations—Project 1.

**Th. Feb. 27**—Oral Presentations—Project 1.

**T. Mar. 3**—Oral Presentations—Project 1.

**Homework:** Complete your formal proposal or report. Complete projects are due in **Dropbox Thurs. Mar. 5 by 10:30pm.**

**Th. Mar. 5**—Review for **Exam 1.**

**T. Mar. 10**—**Midterm: Exam 1.**

**Homework:** Read **Markel, Chs. 14 and 15** on correspondence and job application materials. **Bring to next class copies of your own resumes if you have them. Also, find 2-3 advertisements for jobs in your field or for which you are qualified in general, and bring them to class (have them accessible on your device).**

**Th. Mar. 12**—Discuss samples of resumes and letters

**Exercise:** Target a letter and resume for a job advertisement that you found. Also, assume that you received an interview. Write the follow-up thank-you letter for the interview.

**Homework:** Polish these documents and bring three copies of them to next class **or** your laptop or other device that allows you to share your work with the small group in question. If you choose this latter option, use the names and email addresses of those in your last small group so that you may share your document.

**T. Mar. 17**—Spring Break.

**Th. Mar. 19**—Spring Break.

**T. Mar. 24**—Groups: peer critique of letters and resumes. Select one case to present to the class. Have one group member describe the job opportunity, one or two present the resume and letters, and one ask the job applicant potential interview questions invented by the group.

**Note:** For presentations—you will put your documents into a **PowerPoint presentation.**

**Th. Mar. 26**—Group presentations.

**Homework:** Everyone's job application assignment is due in **Dropbox T. Mar. 31 by 1:30pm**. It will include your job description with final, polished letters and resumes.

**T. Mar. 31**—Finish Group presentations if necessary. Begin discussing ideas for Project 2, Instructions. Consider process analysis.

**Homework:** Read **Markel, Ch. 20**, on designing instructions. **Bring to class a list of three possible topics for the instructions project, with potential audiences for each and a brief explanation of why you are qualified to create each of these sets of instructions.** Be prepared to present your ideas to the class on T. Apr. 7.

**Th. Apr. 2**—Prepare your list of three possible topics with audiences and your qualifications.

**T. Apr. 7**—Discuss second major assignment, Instructions. For general discussion, each student will present 3 possible topics for instructions with audiences and qualifications.

**Homework:** Write a **Project Proposal Memo** (2-3 pages) proposing your top choice of topic and the plan for your instructions project, due in **Dropbox T. Apr. 9 by 1:30pm**.

**Th. Apr. 9**—In class, discuss the memos and consider samples of instructions. **Sign up for Conferences.**

**Homework:** Work on instructions project. Bring to next class three copies of drafts of your instructions and samples of ideas for visual elements and document design **or** your laptop or other device that allows you to share your work with the small group in question. If you choose this latter option, get names and email addresses of those in your small group so that you may share your document.

**T. Apr. 14**—Conferences—small group critiques.

**Th. Apr. 16**—Conferences—small group critiques.

**Homework:** Over the course of the next two weeks, you will finalize your Instructions project and prepare your oral presentation.

**T. Apr. 21**—Discuss Oral Presentations for Instructions Projects. Sign up for Presentations.

Note: Instructions Projects are due in **Dropbox Th. Apr. 30 by 10:30pm**.

**Th. Apr. 23**—Oral presentations

**T. Apr. 28**—Oral presentations.

**Th. Apr. 30**—Oral presentations. Review for Exam 2.

**Final: Exam 2**—Thurs., May 7, 10:15-12:15.