

Fall 8-15-2009

ENG 3005-001: Technical Communication

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**English 3005-001—Technical Communication
Fall 2009**

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Office hours TTH 12:30-2:00pm; W12:00-1:00pm;
and by appointment

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Texts

Markel, *Technical Communication*, 8th ed.
Alred et al, *Handbook of Technical Writing*, 8th 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 must be prepared to look professionally completed. Word-processing is required. Documents should be printed on laser printers or very high quality ink jet printers. Messy printing, errors in proofreading, incorrect formats, and poor page design will substantially reduce grades. The last three stipulations hold true for non-paper formats, too, including web pages, emails, and PowerPoint slides.

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.

--Hand assignments in on time. If you're having problems, let me know. Assignments a week or more late without a university-approved excuse will not be accepted at all. Also plan to show up for exams. Again, if you have problems, let me know. 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.

--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.

Requirements

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

Tentative Schedule

T. Aug. 25—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.

Homework: Read **Markel Part One: Chs. 1, 2, 3, and 4** carefully to get an overview of technical communication.

Th. Aug. 27—Discussion: Consider differences between academic and technical/professional writing. Be prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

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

T. Sept. 1—Introduction to major assignments. Be prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Examine student examples. Brainstorm further on your topics. For each possible topic, 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.

Homework: Read **Markel Part Two: Chs. 5, 6, and 7** on document planning. Prepare to present your three developed topic ideas for general discussion.

Th. Sept. 3—In class, each student will present his or her three developed topic ideas for general discussion.

Homework: Read **Markel Part Three: Chs. 8, 9, 10, 11** on persuasion, definition and description, coherence, and effective sentences.

T. Sept. 8—Go over 3005 Checklist handout. In-class assignment: on **p. 199 in Markel**, do **exercise #4**, defining terms. In your paper's heading, identify your audience.

Th. Sept. 10—Discuss basic writing issues based on the recent writing exercises. In-class assignment: Analyze a web site and turn in the report.

Homework: Review **Markel, Ch. 16, Writing Proposals**.

T. Sept. 15—Write a **Project Proposal Memo** proposing your topic and plan for your first major assignment, a formal proposal or report. See the "Sample Internal Proposal" in Markel, pp. 419-424, and the "Writer's Checklist," p. 427. ***Due next class***.

Th. Sept. 17—Turn in **Project Proposal Memo**. Begin the research process. (Possible assignment: Library Worksheets). Work on projects.

Homework: Read **Markel Part Four: Chs. 12 and 13** on document design and visual elements. **Bring to next class 3-5 examples of document design and visual aids** that you find in magazines, journals, newspapers, web sites. Be ready to discuss them in light of your reading.

T. Sept. 22—Discuss reading. Present and discuss examples. Assignment: **Markel, p. 331**, in groups, do **project #4**.

Homework: Compile a report of your group's analysis to turn in.

Th. Sept. 24—Turn in report. Regarding your individual projects, based on your work so far, complete your **Progress Report with Annotated Bibliography**, ***due next class***.

Homework: Read **Markel Ch. 21** on preparing oral presentations. **Sign up for conferences**.

T. Sept. 29—Turn in **Progress Report with Annotated Bibliography**. Discuss oral presentations. **Sign up for Oral Presentations**. Review for Exam I.

Homework: Prepare for conferences. Bring 3 copies of drafts of project and samples of ideas for visual elements and document design.

Th. Oct. 1—Conferences

T. Oct. 6—Conferences

Th. Oct. 8—Exam I

T. Oct. 13—Oral Presentations

Th. Oct. 15—Oral Presentations

T. Oct. 20—Oral Presentations. **Finished Reports and Proposals are due**.

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.**

Th. Oct. 22—Discuss samples of resumes and letters. **Assignment:** Target a letter and resume for the 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 3 copies of them to next class.

T. Oct. 27—Groups: peer critique of letters and resumes. Select one or two cases to present to the class (We'll decide how many when we see the size of groups). 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—put your documents into a **PowerPoint presentation**.

Th. Oct. 29—Group presentations

T. Nov. 3—Group presentations

Th. Nov. 5—A planning day. Begin listing ideas for your Instructions project.

Homework: Read **Markel, Ch. 19**, on designing instructions. Bring to class a list of three possible topics for an instructions project, and be prepared to present your ideas to the class.

T. Nov. 10—Everyone will turn in their job descriptions with final, polished letters and resumes. Discuss second major assignment, Instructions. For general discussion, each student will present his or her 3 possible topics for instructions.

Homework: Write a **Project Proposal Memo** proposing your topic and plan for your instructions project.

Th. Nov. 12— In class, go over the memos and consider samples of instructions.

Homework: Work on instructions project. Bring to next class three copies of a draft of your instructions and a list of ideas for visual aids. Bring samples of your v.a.'s if you have them.

T. Nov. 17— Groups critique instructions drafts and discuss approaches to visual aids for the project, as well as approaches for presenting the instructions to the class. **Sign up for conferences and oral presentations.**

Th. Nov. 19—Conferences

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

T. Nov. 24—Thanksgiving

Th. Nov. 26—Thanksgiving

T. Dec. 1—Conferences

Th. Dec. 3—Oral presentations

T. Dec. 8—Oral presentations. **Instructions are due.**

Th. Dec. 10—Oral presentations. Review for Exam 2.

Exam 2: Mon., Dec. 14, 10:15am-12:15pm