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ENG 3005-001: Technical Report Writing

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English 3005: Technical Report Writing
Spring 1997

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Texts
- A good collegiate dictionary

Materials
- An e-mail account (Student Services Building)
- 2 computer diskettes (3.5", high density). You should also purchase a carrying case for them.
- Drafts of work in progress

Goals
The main goal of this course is simple: it is designed to help you develop your writing and communication skills so you can use them as functional and persuasive tools in your chosen career. To achieve this end, each writing project will not only stress the broader concerns of writing (such as, clarity of purpose, development of ideas, invention and sentence strategies), but will also introduce you to strategies of document design, audience accommodation, and visual rhetoric. In addition, this course will serve as an introduction to web publishing and the many complexities and possibilities for technical writing therein.

Requirements
To pass the course, each student must satisfactorily complete all six major writing projects in sequence. Failure to complete and submit a major writing project will result in a failing grade for the semester. Your final grade will be determined according to the following breakdown of points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Projects</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Technical Description [R]</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your Own Homepage [R]</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evaluation Memo (collaborative)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Instruction Writing [R]</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Web Publishing (collaborative)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
   (collaborative; results of Project #5) 225 points
   \[700 \text{ points (subtotal)}\]

   Additional Requirements
   1. Participation 200 points
   2. Exercises, brief writing assignments 100 points
   \[300 \text{ points (subtotal)}\]

There are 1,000 points possible, 70% of which comprises your written work, 30% your in-class performance over the duration of the course. You should note, too, that 20% of that 30% performance grade is based on your participation. This course is entirely at odds with a lecture-type of course. The success of the course and what you learn from the course depend absolutely on what you contribute. You need to be in class on time, fully prepared to contribute to class discussions, ask questions, or offer constructive feedback on your classmates’ work in progress.

**The Major Writing Projects**

Since there are six major writing projects, you will be completing one just about every two weeks. For each assignment, we will work through a process of prewriting, writing, peer reviewing, and more revising. That sounds like a lot of writing—and it is. However, the course is designed so that you will be working toward the final draft of any one project from the day the project is introduced. You will need to write and revise in increments, not just the night before the final draft is due. There will be some in-class writings and some brief writing exercises as homework. Most of class time, however, will be devoted to your individual projects and questions. Also the majority of your out-of-class work will be on the projects themselves—so don’t waste your time!

Sometimes the projects will overlap. That is, I may go ahead and introduce a new writing project just as you are finishing one up. This should allow you plenty of time to begin searching for topics and other pre-writing activities.

**Evaluating the Major Writing Projects**

Each time we begin a new project (or just prior to a peer review session), I will usually spell out explicitly the grading criteria for each particular project. Since this is a course in "professional writing," I expect you to conduct yourself as if you were working in a professional setting. Therefore:

- Your punctual attendance at all class meetings is a requirement. (See "Attendance Policy" below.)
- You need to adhere strictly to deadlines. (Keep in mind this common guideline in the business world "It's better to be 80% complete than 100% late.")
- You need to be prepared to participate in class discussions and to comment actively on the work of your peers.
- You should also be prepared to submit your final drafts as if you were submitting them to your superior, to a client, or to a professional journal in your field. They should be neatly typed, grammatically correct, and thoroughly proofread. (See "Submitting
Failing to abide by these requirements shows an unprofessional contempt for the course and your classmates; your final grade will reflect that fact.

**Attendance Policy**

You need to attend every class session. Problems and difficulties always arise over the course of 15 weeks, so I usually allow three absences—excused or unexcused. After the third absence, I will lower your final grade one letter grade for each absence. Seven or more absences will result in a failing grade. Quizzes or in-class writing assignments cannot be made up.

Please note well: Peer review sessions are crucial for successfully completing your final drafts. During these sessions, you can receive indispensable feedback on your work in progress as you learn how to become a better reader and more effective commentator. Your classmates are depending on you. As a result, an unexcused absence for a peer review session will count as two absences.

**Submitting Assignments**

If you turn in a paper late, I reserve the right to downgrade the paper one letter grade for each calendar day the paper is late. Please talk to me in advance of the due date if you have some kind of difficulty in completing the paper.

**Revisions**

An [R] next to an assignment (see “Requirements” section above) means you can revise the assignment for a higher grade if you (1) speak with me about the revision and (2) turn in the revision (with the original) within one week of the date you received the original assignment back. I will not accept any revision without having discussed it with you in an individual conference. No exceptions to this policy.

**Conferences**

If you are having any problems with a paper, I encourage you to come by and see me during my office hours or make an appointment for a more convenient time. I will be more than happy to talk any number of times about a single paper or particular writing problem.

**Format for Papers**

Your final drafts should conform to the following guidelines, unless of course a particular project demands unique or alternative formatting.

- All of your papers must be typed. With the exception of memos and business letters—something we will talk about in class—all of your work should be double-spaced.
• Use at least a "near letter quality" printer for your final copies.

• 1"- to 1.25"-inch margin at top, bottom, and sides.

• You do not need a cover page; instead, type "Beebe Engl. 3005/ Jane Doe" (and the date) on the top right corner of your first page.

• Number your pages, beginning with page 2.

• Paper clip or staple your pages together and do not use a plastic report cover.

• Proofread! It is perfectly acceptable to correct your errors in pen (black ink preferably), but keep this to a minimum.

• Turn in your final copy in a two-pocket folder, one pocket for the final draft and the other for rough draft(s) and notes.

• Overall design should be efficient and striking.

**Students with Disabilities**
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.
Tentative Schedule (due dates and assignments may change)

**TW** = Technical Writing (Reep)
**EO** = English Online (Crump and Carbone)
**H** = Handbook for Technical Writing (Shelton)

### Due Dates for Major Writing Projects
- **Technical Description**: 1/31
- **Web Page**: 2/17
- **Evaluation Memo**: 2/26
- **Instructions**: 3/10
- **Web Page for Client**: 4/9
- **Manual / Final Report**: 5/2

#### January
13) Introduction to course, each other, and Project #1 (Technical Description);
   Questionnaire
15) What is Technical Writing and Why Should I Care?: **TW**, Chap. 1 & 2 (1-24; 36-41)
   & Kirtz and Reep (522-24); **H** (1-9); Group Work
17) Memo due; e-mail account (must be activated); **TW**, Chap. 7 (175-91)

20) **No Class**
22) Document Design: **TW**, Chap. 4 (90-128); discuss exercises; Group Work
24) Document Design continued; **TW**, Benson (451-59) mock-ups due

27) Preparing for a Peer Review: **TW**, Chap. 5 (129-47) & Porter (545-49); Group Work
29) Peer Review for Project #1
31) Final Draft of Project #1 Due; Begin Project #2 (Web Page)
   What's the Internet All About? Why Build a Web Page?: **EO**, Chaps. 1-3 (3-20)

#### February
3) Layout: **EO**, Chap. 14 (128-137); **TW**, Sherblom (562-67); Mock-up of Web Page
   Due; Group Work
5) Making it Work: **EO**, Chaps. 8 & 10 (77-83; 96-107)
7) Testing and Redesigning; Brief Presentations

10) Expanding Your Web Page
12) Peer Review for Project #2 (Group Reviewing); Intro. Project #3 (Assign Groups)
14) **No Class**

17) Final Draft of Project #2 Due; Begin Project #3 (Evaluation Memo);
   Proposal Memo Due for Project #3
19) Format: **TW**, Chap. 11 (312-16) & **TW**, Chap. 10 (269-76); **TW**, Porter (543-44)
21) Draft of Work in Progress & Mock-ups of visual aids; **TW**, Chap. 3 (61-77);
   **H** (32-38)
24) Peer Review of Project #3
26) Final Draft of Project #3 Due; Begin Project #4
28) TW, Chap. 8 (203-13); H (96-103); Group Work

March
3) Proposal Memo Due for Project #4; Sample Instructions
5) Draft of Work in Progress; User Tests; Group Work
7) Peer Review of Project #4

10) Final Draft of Project #4 Due; Begin Project #5 (Web Pages for Client); Discussing Audience and Design; Assign Groups
12) Draft of Letter of Inquiry (refer to TW, Chap. 12); Develop Templates
14) Continue Developing Templates and Interviews

***** March 17 - 21 Spring Break *****

24) Finalize Templates
26) Group Work
28) Group Work

31) First Test; Group Presentations

April
2) Second Test; Peer Reviewing; Client Review
4) Group Work (draft of final memo)

7) Begin Project #6 (Overview and Procedure)
9) Final Memo for Project #5 Due; Set Timetable for Project #6
11) Group Work; TW, Chap. 8 (214-234)

14) Group Work; H (137; 144-69)
16) Group Work
18) Group Work

21) Progress Memo Due (from each group)
23) Group Work; Discuss Presentations
25) Group Work; Informal Review

28) Presentations
30) Presentations

May
2) Final Report Due

There is no final exam for this class.