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ENG 3005-002: Technical Communications

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ENG 3005-002 Course Policy
Technical Communication
9 am MWF, 3140 & 3210 Coleman Hall

Dr. Tim Taylor
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“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, 8th ed.

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

Course Description
Practice and instruction in technical writing and creating documents used in professional settings. Focus on increasing proficiency in effective writing and developing strategies for document design, accommodating specialized and non-specialized audiences, visual rhetoric, and Web publishing. Writing-Centered.

Student Learning Objectives for this Course
Students will...
- Refine writing and editing skills learned in previous writing courses
- Recognize the responsibility of technical and professional writers to communicate clearly and concisely to satisfy an audience’s need for information
- Understand the value of professional and technical writing for readers in the world of work
- Demonstrate college- and professional-level writing produced through the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading
- Write purposeful adequately developed paragraphs and sentences that are direct, economical, free of ambiguity, and structurally appropriate for the ideas expressed and for the audience to whom it is directed
- Develop research skills, including effective use of source materials and the principles of documentation
- Collaborate effectively in groups
- Learn and implement principles of effective document design

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 in-class writing activities, discussions of assigned reading, peer review sessions, major writing assignments, formal and informal presentations, and you can count on pop quizzes. There will be five major writing assignments. I also have a participation grade and a writing process grade. Active and constructive class participation can make a positive impact on your overall grade.

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 visit with me. Many times a short visit 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.

Attendance, Late Work Policy, and Expectations
Students are expected to attend every class. However, as detailed in the EIU Undergraduate Catalog, “properly verified absences due to illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity” are recognized. When an absence is unavoidable, students are responsible for acquiring missed course materials and the information supplied in class (sickness or emergency), submitting an assignment at a time in accordance with the instructor (University activity), or using one of their late assignment opportunities (sickness, emergency, or University activity).

You have the opportunity to use two extensions in order to submit late assignments of your choosing. If you want an extension to be granted, you must communicate with me about your situation prior to the class time that the assignment is due. This can be done by a phone conversation, an exchange of emails, or talking with me (Taylor) in my office. Unless it’s an extreme situation, I typically grant an extension of a day or two for late assignments.

I do not have an attendance policy that reduces students’ overall grades based on absences. But keep in mind that this course is a class in writing, one where students will be actively composing work and collaborating with others, so if excessive absences happen (five or more absences is excessive to us), those days missed are usually reflected in the quality of work produced by a student, and they also affect a student’s participation grade.

Although I keep accurate records of your grades and progress, we expect you to keep track of your grades. You should document all your point totals for essays, journals, quizzes, and other assignments throughout the semester to give yourself an idea of your grade in the course. It is your education, and students should take an active role in assessing how they are doing in their courses.
If there is an extreme discrepancy between in-class and out of class work, we reserve the right to base a student's grade on in-class work alone.

**A Note on Professionalism**

Unless otherwise indicated, all class work must be typed. If an assignment isn’t typed, we will not accept it.

**Revision**

Students can revise all of the major documents except for the advocacy advertisement. Time allotted for revision is usually one week from the day they are ready to be passed back in class. I will not grade revisions unless the original graded document is submitted with it. If you choose to revise, it should help your overall grade; however, I expect deep revision, not just surface editing.

**Using the Writing Center**

I encourage you to use EIU’s Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, and documenting your papers.

The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress. The center is not a proofreading or editing or remedial service, however. It is a place where you can learn how to become a more thoughtful, independent, and rhetorically effective writer.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929. The writing center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Friday hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Summer hours vary. Sessions last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Here is the official statement on plagiarism by EIU’s 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 guilt 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.”

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 commits plagiarism by

- 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.
As a rule of thumb, 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. I reserve the right to ask for pre-writing, drafts, etc. or faculty review to prove that it is the student's own work. As most instructors are, we are involved in a "network" to catch plagiarism, and we sometimes randomly—and sometimes not so randomly—check students' work to make sure it is their own. If there is a huge difference between the quality of in-class work and out-of-class work, we reserve the right to base the final grade on in-class work alone. 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. Do your own writing.

Class Conduct
Our 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. In sum, we expect students to act in a mature and collegial manner. Student-learners should come to class having read the material, eager to participate, and ready to write.

Guidelines to Abide by in Any College Course:
1. Come to class on time and stay the entire period.
2. When we discuss a reading or writing assignment, have the materials in front of you on your desk. When we are doing in-class writing, be prepared to actively brainstorm, draft and compose your ideas. Bring texts, paper, and pen
3. Have opinions and ideas and support your opinions and ideas with details and examples.
4. Play well with others. Respect others' opinions and be open to them. Actively help your peers in collaborative activities like peer review.
5. When working in a group, stay on the assigned tasks.
6. Do not carry on side conversations with other students when the instructor or a student "has the floor" during class.
7. General rudeness and disrespect is not tolerated.
8. Cell phones /pagers need to be turned off.
9. Text messaging is not tolerated.
10. No profanity.
11. No sleeping. If you do, we will ask you to leave.
12. Unless it's an emergency, use the restroom before or after class.

If you have concerns about this list or any other aspect of the class, please arrange to discuss the matter with me during my office hours. Similarly, if circumstances arise that will impact your performance in this class, let me know as soon as possible.
Composition of the Overall Grade
(all assignments and point totals are tentative)

Participation 50 points
Discussion, in-class writing, small group work, informal presentations

The Writing Process 45
10 pts. available for each Peer Review session except the Local Proposal (5 pts.)

Quizzes tbd

Formal Presentation on the Group Report 50

Shorter Writing Assignments 90
- Memo of Introduction 10
- Prospectus for the Local Proposal (Group) 30
- Interpretive Graphic (Group) 20
- Cover Letter for Local Proposal (Group) 20
- Evaluation Memorandum 10

Formal Business/Technical Documents 500
- Article Analysis 100
- Résumé 50
- Instructions 100
- Local Proposal (Group) 150
- Advocacy Advertisement 100

735 points + tbd

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

Overall Grading Scale:
100-90% = A
89-80 = B
79-70 = C
69-60 = D
59 and below = F
ENG 3005 Syllabus
All assignments and due dates are tentative

Week 1: 3140 CH
M 1-12 Introductions and Introduction to the Course
W 1-14 Unit I: Article Analysis
Ch. 1
Memo of Introduction due
F 1-16 Ch. 5
Using Web-based Databases in the Library

Week 2: 3210 CH
M 1-19 MLK Day—No classes
W 1-21 Ch. 6 (p. 98-110), Ch. 8
Bring possible articles for analysis for class
F 1-23 Using APA Style: Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting
Appendix A, Appendix B (584-99)

Week 3: 3140 CH
M 1-26 Classical Rhetoric, Persuasion, and Technical Communication
W 1-28 Comp Day
Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Exercise due
Integrating Quotations in APA Style Exercise due
Preparing for Peer Review
F 1-30 Peer Review of Article Analysis

Week 4: 3210 CH
M 2-2 Article Analysis due
Unit II: Résumé
W 2-4 Ch. 15 (p. 363-86)
F 2-6 Comp Day

Week 5: 3210
M 2-9 Peer Review of Résumé
W 2-11 Résumé due
Unit III: Instructions
Ch. 9
F 2-13 Lincoln’s Birthday—No Class

Week 6: 3140 CH
M 2-16 Ch. 19
Ch. 10
W 2-18 Ch. 11
Comp Day
F 2-20 Appendix C
Comp Day

Week 7: 3140 CH
M 2-23 Peer Review of Instructions
W 2-25 Unit IV: Group Report and the Formal Presentation
Group Logistics and Brainstorming
Ch. 6
Instructions due
Research and Brainstorming

Week 8: 3210 CH
M 3-2 Ch. 16
W 3-4 Ch. 16
Ch. 13
Anonymous Mid-Term Student Feedback
F 3-6 No Class but Mandatory Conferences with Groups

Week 9: 3140 CH
M 3-9 Comp Day
W 3-11 Field Research
F 3-13 Prospectus due

Spring Recess

Week 10: 3210 CH
M 3-23 Ch. 21
Presentation Methods—Working Together for a Cohesive Message
Using Graphics Effectively
W 3-25 Interpretive Graphic due
F 3-27 No Class—Research/Practice—Voluntary Conferences

Week 11: 3140 CH
M 3-30 No Class but Mandatory Conferences with Groups
W 4-1 No Class—Research/Practice—Voluntary Conferences
F 4-3 Group Presentations

Week 12: 3210 CH
M 4-6 Group Presentations
W 4-8 Group Presentations
F 4-10 Comp Day

Week 13: 3140 CH
M 4-13 Peer Review of Group Report
W 4-15 Group work on the report in class
F 4-17 Group Report due
Unit V: Advocacy Advertisement

Week 14: 3210 CH
M 4-20 Ch. 12
W 4-22 Mandatory Conferences
F 4-24 Mandatory Conferences

Week 15: 3140 CH
M 4-27 Peer Review of Advocacy Ad
W 4-29 Advocacy Ad due
F 3-1 Evaluation Memo due