ENG 3005-001: Technical Communication

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Objectives
This course is designed to help you develop the following skills and abilities:

- Responsibly and effectively research technical subjects
- Write documents that serve specific purposes for specific audiences, including the following skills:
  - understand the different needs of specialist and nonspecialist readers
  - know and use the principles of persuasion
  - know and use the techniques that make instructions easy to follow
  - correctly use both formal and informal styles of documenting research sources
  - write effective openings and closings and effectively organize the bodies of technical documents
  - use correct standard English that is concise and clear
- Know and use basic principles of good document design and incorporate visual elements to enhance all kinds of documents
- Identify and use conventional formats for producing letters, memos, and emails
- Enhance your time management and project management skills

Text: Mike Markel, Technical Communication (7th ed.)

Grading

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Writing exercises</td>
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<td>Professional conduct</td>
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<td>900</td>
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Final grading scale:
- 900-1000 A
- 800-899 B
- 700-799 C
- 600-699 D
- 599 and below F

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

The English Department’s Statement on Plagiarism

“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 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.”

Electronic Writing Portfolio
This is a writing-intensive course, so you may submit a paper from this course for the EWP (except for seniors, who are required to make a submission from their senior seminars). A link to the EWP submission form can be found on the class web site. The deadline to obtain my signature on an EWP submission form is the date of our final examination.
**Writing exercises**

1. Career report—50 points
2. Statistical summary report—75 points
3. Document redesign—50 points
4. Instructions—75 points
5. Unsolicited recommendation—75 points
6. Technical report—100 points
7. Definition for a nonspecialist audience—25 points
8. Legislative issue report and recommendation—100 points
9. Rewrite of recall letter—50 points
10. Resume—50 points

The ten writing exercises due in this class are to be completed and submitted at your own pace, and may be revised for an improved grade as many times as you like, with the following restrictions:

(a) The last date to submit an exercise or a revision is **Wednesday, December 8**.
(b) You may submit no more than two items (exercises and/or revisions) per class session.
(c) Ordinarily, I will return graded exercises or revisions one class session after they are submitted; however, during the last two weeks before the final date to submit exercises, I may not be able to do so.
(d) Revisions must be accompanied by the original, graded version of the exercise (and any intervening revisions).
(e) Exercises and revisions must be submitted either (i) in person or (ii) in my mailbox.

**Quizzes**

Quizzes will cover topics that should be of use to you on multiple projects in the course, and *I expect that you will apply what you learn in preparation for quizzes to your projects and that you will keep quizzes as a source to review for the final exam.* If you’re not happy with your grade on a quiz, you may if you wish retake the quiz for an improved grade any time until the last day of class. Missed quizzes must be made up within one week of your return to class. It is your responsibility to talk with me to arrange a time to make up a quiz; do not expect me to remind you. Quizzes that are not made up within that time frame will be recorded as a 0 and may not be made up or retaken.

**Homework**

There are only three graded homework assignments. Unlike the writing exercises, homework assignments have firm deadlines—by 4 p.m. on the date listed on the syllabus (in class is easier, but if you miss class or don’t have your homework in class, you have until 4 p.m. to turn in your homework in my mailbox or in person). Late homework will not be accepted unless you can present documentation that you were unable to submit the homework all day due to a serious, unforeseeable illness or emergency.

**Collaborative Proposal**

Group meetings will be scheduled during class time throughout the semester; your groups may also need to meet outside of class. The first task your groups will complete will be to write a group contract outlining the conduct expected of group members. Once it is approved by the instructor, this contract will be as binding as other class policies. Except as stipulated in the group contracts, the grade on the collaborative proposal will be the same for all members of the group. If a group ejects one of its members following the procedures in its contract, that individual will be required to complete the group project on his or her own.

**Final Exam**

The final exam will be comprehensive and will test your knowledge of the skills and abilities outlined in the course objectives.
Time and Project Management

One of the most challenging aspects of this course is the need to self-manage your progress on the 10 writing exercises. Although I do not set deadlines for these exercises, I will ask you in Homework #2 to outline a tentative schedule, and in Homework #3 to report on your progress at mid-semester. In addition, I expect you to be prepared to discuss the writing exercises in our scheduled conferences. If you have previously had difficulty balancing multiple projects, feel free to ask me for extra help with your time and project management skills. In real life, you will often have to manage multiple projects and set your own deadlines in order to ensure you meet final project deadlines. The self-managed aspect of this course is designed to help you develop those skills, which are very important in real-life writing situations.

Professional Conduct

In this course I expect you to behave in a professional manner toward your classmates and toward me. The half-letter-grade designated for "professional conduct" is designed to reward you for such conduct—and as an incentive to develop professional habits. When you fail to follow the guidelines below, you can expect that points will be deducted from those allocated for professional conduct.

During class: This may seem like common sense, but for the record: Don’t read the paper, do work for other classes, hold private conversations, check email, or surf the web during our class. If you carry a cell phone, turn it off before class. When we’re in the regular classroom, I don’t mind if you eat and drink, but be sure to throw your trash away at the end of class.

When you miss class: Since I don’t penalize you for missing class, you don’t need to give me an excuse. (That’s one element of these guidelines that might not apply to your other classes, since other instructors have other attendance policies.) Even though I don’t ask for an excuse, you need to take responsibility for your absence by doing the following: (1) check the syllabus to see what we were doing in class that day, (2) ask a classmate who was in class whether you can copy his or her notes and whether there were any important announcements in class, (3) if there were handouts, ask me for copies, and (4) look through handouts and notes before asking me for any necessary clarifications. (Never ask an instructor “Did I miss anything?”) Note: See section on quizzes for policy on missed quizzes.

If you must miss a group meeting: Let someone in your group know BEFORE the meeting, by phone (not email), and if you were supposed to have any materials to share with the group at the meeting, do your best to get those materials to someone else in the group before the meeting. Failing to do so is a serious breach of professional conduct.

If you must miss a conference scheduled with me: Let me know, by phone, BEFORE the meeting. Failing to do so is a serious breach of professional conduct.

Responding to communications from me or from your group members: If, for some reason, your group members or I give you a written message or phone message and request that you respond, you should respond in a timely manner. Failing to do so is a serious breach of professional conduct.

Communicating with me: Be smart about communicating with me (and with your other instructors). Check office hours first, and take advantage of them if convenient. If office hours don’t work, make an appointment. If you prefer to use email, keep the following in mind: (1) You shouldn’t use email for anything that you need answered in less than 24 hours (that’s what the phone is for); (2) When you email an instructor, you must be certain to include your FULL NAME in your message; (3) When you email an instructor, you should follow the conventions of standard written English and professional courtesy; and (4) It’s generally a bad idea to use email to avoid a difficult conversation.

If you phone me and I’m not in the office, you’ll get my voice mail. To make the best use of voice mail, leave a complete message, including these three parts: (a) start with your full name and phone number (speak slowly), (b) give the reason you’re calling, including any specific questions you have, and (c) repeat your name and phone number. Leaving phone messages this way ensures that the person receiving your message will hear and understand your name and number and that, if they call back and get your voicemail, they can leave an answer to your question instead of just a message telling you they called.
Schedule (Subject to Change)

Week One (lab)

Aug. 23—Introductions; begin preliminary assessment.
Aug. 27—Research techniques and strategies. DUE TODAY: Homework #1, Preliminary Assessment

Week Two (classroom)

Aug. 30—Discuss exercises 1 and 2. Audience analysis and accommodation.
Sept. 1—Formal and informal styles of documentation. Homework for next time: Write a memo to instructor outlining a tentative schedule for completing Exercises 1-10.
Sept. 3—Quiz 2 (Audience accommodation and documentation). Introductions, conclusions and organization. DUE TODAY: Homework #2, Memo re: Tentative Schedule for Exercises

Week Three (lab)

Sept. 6—No class (Labor Day holiday)
Sept. 8—Quiz 3 (Introductions, conclusions, and organization). Concision and clarity.
Sept. 10—Demonstration and practice: Creating tables in Microsoft Word.

Week Four (classroom)

Sept. 15—Quiz 4 (Document design). Guidelines for instructions.
Sept. 17—Quiz 5 (Instructions). Introduce collaborative proposal project. Assign groups. First group meeting.

Week Five (lab)

Sept. 20—No class—conferences.
Sept. 22—Introduction to techniques of persuasion.
Sept. 24—No class—conferences.

Week Six (classroom)

Sept. 27—Discuss Exercises 5 and 6. Letter and memo format.
Sept. 29—Persuasive techniques continued.
Oct. 1—Quiz 6 (Persuasion). Collaborative proposal group meeting.

Week Seven (lab)

Oct. 6—Discuss Exercise 10. Resumes. Review of use of tables in MSWord. Homework for next time: Write a progress report to the instructor, in memo format, reporting on your progress on the writing exercises in this course.
Oct. 8—No class (fall break)

Week Eight (classroom)

Oct. 11—Concision and clarity. DUE TODAY: Homework #3, Progress Report
Oct. 13—Quiz 7 (Concision and clarity). Selected grammar review.
Oct. 15—Collaborative proposal group meeting.
Week Nine (lab)

Oct. 18, 20, 22—Formal conferences this week; class time for work and informal conferences; group meetings optional.

Week Ten (classroom)

Oct. 27—Review: Document design; creating tables and charts; integrating visual elements.
Oct. 29—Review: Openings and closings; concision.

Week Eleven (lab)

Nov. 1, 3—Formal conferences on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; class time for work and informal conferences; group meetings optional.
Nov. 5—No class/no conferences.

Week Twelve (classroom)

Nov. 8—Review: Persuasion.
Nov. 10—Review: Instructions.
Nov. 12—Review: Concision.

Week Thirteen (lab)

Nov. 15, 17, 19—Formal conferences this week; class time for work and informal conferences; group meetings optional.

Thanksgiving Break—November 22-26

Week Fourteen (classroom)

Nov. 29, Dec. 1, 3—Instructor available during class time and office hours for informal conferences; group meetings optional.

Week Fifteen (lab)

Dec. 6—Course evaluation. DUE TODAY by 4 p.m.: Collaborative Proposals.
Dec. 8—Begin review for final exam. Last day to submit exercises or revisions.
Dec. 10—Review for final exam. Last day to retake quizzes.

Final Exam: Wednesday, Dec. 15, 8 a.m.-10 a.m.