Part 1. Course Description

This class is designed to introduce students, in all fields of study, to the kinds of communication required in most careers. A technical background is not needed. Writing on a word processor is required, but you do not need previous experience. Technical writing focuses on clear, orderly, readable writing with careful consideration of audience, purpose, and situation.

Prerequisite

In order to take Technical Writing, you must have successfully completed all Freshman Composition courses (WRC 1013, WRC 1023).

Textbook and Course Materials - Required

*The Essentials of Technical Communication*, by Elizabeth Tebeaux and Sam Dragga.
ISBN 978-0-19-538422-2 (Available at campus bookstores or through Amazon.com) (ETC)

Headset w/microphone for Wimba participation
USB Flashdrive – 2 Gb or larger

Recommended Texts

*The Technical Communication Handbook*, by Laura Gurak and Mary Hocks
ISBN 978-0-32-136507-1 (Available at campus bookstores or through Amazon.com)

Other readings will be provided on Blackboard

HYBRID Course Requirements

Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
Access to Blackboard (note: Be familiar with log in through Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome)
Part 2. Course Structure

This course is designed to provide a hybrid experience, including both face-to-face and online activities. Contact time will be divided approximately as follows: 60% face-to-face and 40% online.

Online sessions will be a blend of self-paced and group activities using Blackboard and other web sites. Activities will include discussions, chats, blogs, assignment submissions, emails, and presentations. Some activities will be individual and some will be group-based.

Face-to-face sessions will be held at the UTSA campus in MB 1.206.

Blackboard Access

This course will be delivered partially online through Blackboard, a course management system. To access a course on Blackboard, you will need access to the Internet and a supported web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari, etc.). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins, please run the Browser Check from your Blackboard course. Refer to the Blackboard Browser Tune-up page for instructions.

Technical Assistance

If you need technical experience at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard, you may call (210) 458-5538 and/or

- Visit one of the OIT Student Computing Centers on campus, or
- Send your instructor an email with as much detail as possible about the problem you’re having.

Part 3. Course Objectives

This course is designed to help you learn about the type of writing you can expect to produce in most careers after college. Moving away from essay writing, you will instead write material that is tightly focused on specific audiences and with very specific purposes. Some projects will incorporate collaboration as you learn to work with a team to produce a final product. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to give presentations, again with a pre-determined audience and purpose in mind.

In order to meet these objectives, you are expected to participate both for your own work and within your groups to complete group projects. Many, if not most, careers that involve any type of writing require collaboration with a team. This course offers you the chance to gain experience in handling some of the challenges that are inherent in teamwork.

A principal part of the course will be the design, research and writing of a team technical report under the general topic of sustainability. This will provide the students with valuable professional skills required in today’s information-driven, technically complex environment. The research resources of the UTSA library will also be explained once the student teams pick their sub-topic in sustainability. Students will learn to use (among other valuable sources)

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1. CQ Researcher on-line reports on current “hot” topics of concern to the U.S. and Texas.

2. Primary sources – Getting opinions and information from experts in their chosen field of research who can provide guidance and/or further areas of investigation.

3. Secondary sources – Accurate, reputable printed sources that are current, accurate, well-documented and effective in supporting a given hypothesis.

Methods of instruction to help students develop these competencies include the following
- instructor lecture and handouts,
- student reading and discussion of texts,
- daily work (quizzes, progress reports, presentations, and drafts of papers)
- unit tests
- one research-based paper,
- one research-based presentation based on the research paper
- peer editing and discussion of papers and texts,
- conferencing with the instructor during office hours

**Preparation/participation**

Students will be graded on the following five components of class. (Students may obtain editorial assistance from the website associated with the textbook: [www.mhhe.com/locker6e](http://www.mhhe.com/locker6e))

- Three major business essays 20% (as many as 4 might be assigned, TBD) proposal, definition, causal analysis + a preliminary essay if time permits
- Weekly assignments 10% (will include progress reports on technical report)
- Midterm 20%
- Technical Report 20%
- Individual Presentation 05%
- E-portfolio 10%
- Final essay 15%

**Extra credit points:** 5 points on the final average -- create a personal information folder, with complete background checks, clean revised typed copy of a resume (skills resume, electronic resume), typed sample cover letter, typed sample follow-up letter, and websites of companies you are interested in joining. Formatting styles to be discussed with instructor.

Grading of 4 major assignments, the midterm and the final will be: 70% content, 10% style, 10% punctuation, 10% grammar. Grading of Class assignments and quizzes will be based on content, accuracy, insight and neatness.

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Written Assignments

Written Assignments are due as indicated on the schedule calendar of the course (TBD). Student will follow standard business format rules. Please review spelling, grammar and punctuation as they are included in each assignment grade. Please keep copies of the papers you turn in and retain copies of graded assignments that are returned to you throughout the semester for reference purposes. Late assignments may be accepted after the assigned due date with the instructor’s permission.

Late Work Policy

It is your responsibility to keep up with deadlines. There is no make-up opportunity for large projects or any group projects without a documented emergency and instructor approval. If you know you’re going to have to miss ahead of time, you would be well-advised to make arrangements ahead of time.

Graded Assignments

Grades are numerical on a scale from 1-100. All projects are expected to be organized, proofread, and neat, in addition to well-written. Writing Program Grading Rubric will be provided. In addition, the student should be aware of the following criteria.

Excellent work. Work is neat, professional, and well-written. Material is comprehensive, supported and followed the assignment. Deadlines were met.

Good work. Material is nicely done, with just a few mistakes.

Average work. Material was on time, but more effort should be put on proofreading or attention to detail; or the material was not quite what the assignment asked for.

Below average work. Material did not follow the assignment. The final product was messy or contained a great deal of mistakes.

Failing work. Work is unacceptable.

Important note: For more information about grading at UTSA, visit the academic policies and grading section of the university catalog.

Part 4: Course Policies

Attend Class

Students are expected to attend all online and face-to-face class sessions as listed on the course calendar posted on Blackboard. Attendance at face-to-face class meetings and class participation in online activities is essential for the success of the hybrid experience.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to determine what you missed and whether or not this work can be made up. It is highly recommended that if you miss more than five classes in one semester – no matter the cause, it will become extremely difficult to pass the course.

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Participate

In the face-to-face class sessions, attendance will be recorded. In the online environment, Blackboard helps me record your participation. So it is extremely important for you to be involved in both class environments. Participation and involvement are good habits to develop now while in college that you can take with you into your professional career.

Build Rapport

The online environment can be tricky at times. Success in an online class, as well as a hybrid class, takes self-discipline and good planning habits. It is important to build a rapport with your classmates and your instructor so that you will have a fun and successful learning experience. Make sure you are proactive in letting your instructor know when you run into problems. You should also be proactive with your group when it comes to working on group projects. These habits will follow you throughout college and post-college.

Complete Assignments

Respect yourself as a college student. This means you should strive to have all assignments done by their deadlines and following their requirements, as well as contributing to your team.

All projects for this course will be submitted electronically through Blackboard unless otherwise instructed. Assignments must be completed and submitted by posted deadlines unless special permission is given by the instructor before the due date. Extensions will not be given without documentation of an extreme emergency.

Discussion board assignments must be completed by their due dates and times. This includes original responses, as well as responding to your classmates’ online comments, per instructions.

Dropping the Course

It is the student’s responsibility to understand when a course can be dropped. Refer to the UTSA Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is needed to drop from the course. Serious and compelling refers to 1) documented and significant change to your work hours or 2) severe physical or mental injury or illness to you or someone in your immediately family.

Incomplete Policy

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. An incomplete will only be assigned if 60% of the semester’s work has been completed and the student had at least a C in the course. The petition must be made before final grades for the semester are posted. If approved, all incomplete course assignments must be finished within one year of the approval date. After that time, the standing grade will apply.

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Special Accommodations

If you have a specific learning disability and require accommodations, please let me know within the first two weeks of school. It is your responsibility to obtain and provide official documentation.

Academic Dishonesty

It is expected that the work handed in by each student will be his or her own. Scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating during tests, will result in penalties ranging from a "0" on the assignment to an "F" in the course. In some cases, academic dishonesty may result in expulsion from the University. Plagiarism involves using someone else's words, ideas, or pattern or organization without properly acknowledging the source. Consult your textbooks, or visit with me, for a more detailed explanation of what constitutes plagiarism and how to correctly use and document sources.

Basically, the writing you do in all courses must be your own. Sometimes, plagiarism is committed because of a misunderstanding as to what it actually is. Plagiarism is defined as:

- Failure to acknowledge the sources of information, which is neither common nor personal knowledge.
- Failure to place another's direct words in quotation marks or to indent in the case of longer quotations. If a passage is copied in the exact words of the original text, it must be placed in quotation marks in addition to citation of the source.
- Failure to document a source that has been paraphrased.
- Collusion - collaboration with another person to prepare work presented for credit. Collusion includes allowing someone else to write or to edit your papers.

Any form of academic dishonesty may be reported to the office of student affairs.

The University of Texas at San Antonio Academic Honor Code

A. Preamble

The University of Texas at San Antonio community of past, present and future students, faculty, staff, and administrators share a commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge. We honor the traditions of our university by conducting ourselves with a steadfast duty to honor, courage, and virtue in all matters both public and private. By choosing integrity and responsibility, we promote personal growth, success, and lifelong learning for the advancement of ourselves, our university, and our community.

B. Honor Pledge: In support of the ideals of integrity, the students of the University of Texas at San Antonio pledge: “As a UTSA Roadrunner I live with honor and integrity.”

C. Shared responsibility

The University of Texas at San Antonio community shares the responsibility and commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge and adheres to the UTSA Honor Code.
Part 5: Topic Outline/BlackBoard Schedule (To be finalized by Sept. 6 2011)

Important Note: Refer to the course calendar (on Blackboard) for specific meeting dates and times. Syllabus should be finalized second week of class. Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each project’s learning module. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact your instructor.

Introduction – ETC Chapters 1, 2, and 3 – Week 1 – Reasons for communications in a business and/or professional environment. The book discusses ethical behavior with regard to writing and speaking in a business environment, specifically technical writing.