COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course, which examines the techniques of expository writing, is designed specifically for students preparing to enter any of the allied health professions. In it, we will examine how the body of medical knowledge and practice is constructed, focusing on the variety of audiences affected by these documents. All features of good writing emphasized in other writing courses are emphasized again with particular stress on style, clarity, technical correctness, and audience analysis.

Technical Writing for Medical Professionals will provide intensive practice in editing and in the writing of various types of documents, including proposals, instructions, medical descriptions, e-mail, memorandums, letters, and reports. Reading and analysis of appropriate medically based writing models will assist students in the development of these writing skills. Students will also study the regulations and laws surrounding their profession, including the system of ethics involved with medical discourse and decisions. Students will deliver a professionally-prepared oral presentation analyzing a complex issue involved in modern medicine. The course culminates with a formal report that integrates the skills gained throughout the semester.

The assignments will involve varying occasions for both non-technical (e.g., patients) and technical audiences, though the latter is stressed. In the professional world, the ability to communicate effectively gains positive rewards and recognition – as much as or more than any other criterion. Therefore, sharpening these skills, which are such highly prized assets, is imperative.

TEXTBOOKS:

Heifferon, Barbara A. *Writing in the Health Professions.*

Dodds, Jack (Ed.) *The Ready Reference Handbook, 4th Edition*

GOALS FOR THE COURSE:

Students will--

- gain an overview of the kinds of technical writing commonly done in health professions and will practice the writing process as it relates to particular medical / health contexts
- be aware of the unique demands the audience requires in this communication triangle
- write assignments based on the strategies of description, definition, process, comparison and contrast, and persuasion
- produce electronic correspondence, reports, graphics, business letters, memorandums, syntheses / analyses, and proposals
- give an oral presentation of the proposal, which is also a written project
- collaborate within a group setting. Since much of the communication within the health environments derives from committee and group work, a major goal of this course is to promote collaborative work.

COURSE EVALUATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All written assignments</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impromptu “real world” writings / quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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POLICIES / REQUIREMENTS:

1) MANDATORY ATTENDANCE. In complying with Department policy, I will require that you attend all classes and scheduled conferences throughout the semester. More than four absences will result in points being subtracted from your overall average. Any combination of three late arrivals and/or early departures will equal one absence. **Being absent, regardless of the reason, does not excuse you from the assignments for that day.** Never use absence as an excuse for not having completed an assignment. **YOU CANNOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE IF YOU MISS MORE THAN EIGHT CLASSES, WHETHER EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED!**

2) You are allowed one late assignment with a 10-point penalty. However, any late assignment must be submitted within one week following the date it was due. Thereafter, an automatic grade of “F” will be assigned the paper, except under very unusual circumstances, which will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Projects are due at the beginning of each class, *when I call for them.* All papers submitted after I have collected them will be considered late.

3) For each assignment, all stages of the writing process must be submitted, the final draft to be typed and double-spaced. All in-class assignments will be typed. **ALWAYS KEEP A CLEAN COPY OF EACH PROJECT YOU TURN IN. FOR IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, PRINT OFF A COPY FOR YOURSELF OR E-MAIL IT TO YOUR OWN ACCOUNT. GIVEN THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH TECHNOLOGY, I DO NOT ACCEPT E-MAILED PROJECTS.**

4) Missed in-class assignments, as well as missed grammar quizzes, must be made up in my office, within one week of your return to class. It is YOUR responsibility to arrange for all make-ups. If you miss a class in which any project is returned, you must come by my office to retrieve it.

5) Just as you expect—and deserve—honesty and integrity from your instructors, so too I expect the same from all students. If I discover any plagiarism, collusion or cheating of any sort, I will give the project a 0; if such dishonesty occurs twice, I will fail the student for the semester and perhaps submit the plagiarized materials to the UTSA Judiciary Committee for further action.

6) CONFERENCES. I will occasionally request that you meet with me individually, but I encourage you to visit me any time you feel the need for assistance. You may schedule an appointment or simply drop by during my office hours. Naturally, all scheduled appointments receive priority over drop-ins.

7) Turn off all cell phones, pagers, iPods, etc., when you enter the class. When the computers are on, they will be used for class activities only!

SPECIAL NEEDS:
If any students have special needs or require additional considerations, they must inform me of their issues during the first week of class. I will accommodate their needs; however, they must present an official letter of documentation for my files.
AGENDA: Subject to revisions / changes as necessary
You will need a packet of Scantrons, 882 E, and #2 pencils for the quizzes, TBA.

1/11 Introduction to the class, books, policies, syllabi. Student introductions. Overview of writing in the health professions

1/13 Group activity: oral vs. written communication. HW: Read Ch. 1, “Audience Analysis and Context Analysis”

1/18 Writing process, rhetorical triangle and rhetorical analysis. Introduction to personal statements for admission to graduate healthcare schools / internships. Grammar Pre-test. Bring a Scantron.

1/20 Assign essay 1: Personal statement. Brainstorming and composing activities.

1/25 Editing / grammar activities. HW: Read Ch. 2, “Ethics in Medical Writing”

1/27 Peer evaluation of Personal Statement. BRING ONE COMPLETE TYPED COPY TO CLASS. Grammar activities. HW: Read Ch. 10, “Presenting Written Materials Visually”

2/1 ESSAY 1—Personal Statement—due at the beginning of class. Preparation for Project 2. Collaboration project. Interview techniques. Prewriting: potential interview questions. In-class memo request for interview.

2/3 Group activity: Rhetorical analysis of health care brochure. In-class memo request for interview. HW: Read Ch. 3, “Document Design Principles and Project Management”

2/8 Continued rhetorical analysis of brochures. Progress reports on collaboration project. Class work for input and design principles.

2/10 In-Class Essay 3: Critical Evaluation of a healthcare brochure. HW: Take draft of project to Professor for critique / revisions suggestions.

2/15 Report to class on Professor’s comments. Additional class work on the projects. HW: Present revised draft to the Professor for approval. Conferences with me during the week if there are problems meeting expectations or deadlines.

2/17 Grammar activities. Citation and documentation review.

2/22 Completion of collaboration project. Preparation for class presentations.

2/24 Presentation of collaboration projects to class / guests. HW: Read Ch. 8, “Grants, Proposals, and Government Documents”


3/8 Peer evaluation of Essay 4. BRING ONE COMPLETE TYPED COPY TO CLASS.

3/10 ESSAY 4 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS. Discussion of media communication. Group activities. HW: Read Ch. 11, “Electronic Medical Writing”

3/22 Discussion of electronic medical writing. Assign Essay 5: Proposal. HW: Read Ch. 6, “Health Education Materials”
3/24  Group analysis of software-documentation genres and on-line tutorials.  HW:  Read Ch. 7, “Public Health Campaigns”

3/29  Topic approval for Proposal.  Organizational activities.

3/31  Discussion of process analysis, instruction sheets.  Preparation for in-class essay.

4/5  **IN-CLASS ESSAY 6: PROCESS ANALYSIS / INSTRUCTION SHEETS.**  HW:  Read Ch. 6, “Health Education Materials”

4/7  Conferences – MANDATORY.

4/12  Peer evaluation of proposal essay.  BRING ONE COMPLETE TYPED COPY.

4/14  **PROPOSAL ESSAY DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED!**  Preparation for oral presentations

4/19  Oral Presentations

4/21  Oral Presentations

4/26  Grammar Post-test; preparation for final exam