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 fact-based, clear, orderly, readable writing with careful consideration of audience, purpose, and situation.

Prerequisite

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

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)

USB Flashdrive – 2 Gb or larger

*Recommended Texts*

*The Technical Communication Handbook*, by Laura Gurak and Mary Hocks (TCH)

ISBN 978-0-32-136507-1 (Available at campus bookstores or through Amazon.com)

Other readings will be provided on Blackboard

HYBRID Course Requirements – Online access to BlackBoard modules MANDATORY to pass this course.

- Review on your BlackBoard home page the requirements you will need to work on BlackBoard from your home computer. **These requirements are mandatory for working in a hybrid class and will be reviewed in class once only.** Contact OIT according to instructions if you have a problem, or see me during office hours on Monday and I will help. Do not wait until the last minute to submit an assignment.

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1 NOTE: An online copy of this textbook is available for about 50% of the list price. See: [http://www.coursesmart.com/the-essentials-of-technical-communication/elizabeth-tebeaux-sam-dragga/dp/9780199890781](http://www.coursesmart.com/the-essentials-of-technical-communication/elizabeth-tebeaux-sam-dragga/dp/9780199890781)  

| this is the link for the coursemart.com purchase of the book second ed.

Important Note: This syllabus, along with course assignments and due dates, are subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to check Blackboard regularly for corrections or updates. Any changes will be clearly noted in course announcements or through Blackboard email.
• If you cannot access BlackBoard on one Web browser, know how to use others. (note: Be familiar with log in through Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome). Refer to the Blackboard Browser Tune-up page for instructions.

• Due dates for assignments will allow student to work on home computer, email their assignment to themselves, download it from a campus computer and then submit from a campus computer in the BlackBoard module where submission is required.

• BlackBoard tracks student participation each week. Students commit to logging into the BlackBoard course modules and completing assignments (whether team assignments or individual assignments).

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. Class will meet for lecture every Wednesday and for mandatory team meetings on Friday. Student will be marked absent for the week if they miss either the Wednesday or Friday meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Students agree to abide by UTSA’s attendance policies as stated in section 5.9 of the UTSA attendance policies. Students should review these policies in the website below if they are not aware of them. The web address is:


For this class, 2 (two) unexcused absences are allowed without penalties. Any unexcused absence after 2 (two) absences will deduct 3 points from the student’s final average. Excused absences involve medical reasons that can be documented if proof is required by the instructor.

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 at locations to be announced on the first day of class for each class.

Blackboard 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
• Meet with me during office hours with as much detail as possible about the problem you’re having.

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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 information report under the general topic of sustainability. This problem-based course 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 (by reference librarian Jeff McAdams) once the student teams pick their sub-topic in sustainability. Students will learn to use (among other valuable sources)

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,
- weekly work (quizzes, progress reports, presentations, and drafts of papers)
- unit tests
- one research-based paper,
- one research-based presentation based on the research paper
- one research poster for the team along the guidelines for research presentations at UTSA
- peer editing and discussion of papers and texts,
- conferencing with the instructor in class every FRIDAY and also during office hours on Mondays.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE COURSE:

Students will be graded on the following five components of class. (Students may obtain editorial assistance from the UTSA Writing Center.

At the Judith G. Gardner Center for Writing Excellence, peer tutors help undergraduate and graduate students with any step in the writing process, from brainstorming and understanding an assignment to planning and revising. The Writing Center can help with all types of writing assignments, including

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essays, technical writing, and research papers. In addition to one-on-one peer tutoring, we offer workshops throughout the semester on documentation and other writing topics. We have two locations: JPL 2.01.12D (on the main campus) and FS 4.432 (on the downtown campus). To learn more about our hours and our workshop schedule, visit our website: utsa.edu/twc. To keep up with the latest updates, follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Students will turn in:

**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.

**Grading Policy for Assignments and percentage of final score:**

- An **optional preliminary** essay during week 1 of the class which will let the student drop either assignment 1 or 2 of the **business assignments listed below**. (Remember: Assignment 3 must be turned in by every student in the class before credit can be given for the team recommendation report.)

- **Three major business assignments:** 15% of the grade. These assignments are: 1) team proposal for a technical information report; 2) individual abstract of research topic for team report; and 3) individual draft with documented research of each the individual student’s part of the team information report. **NOTE:** 

**Students who do not submit assignment 3** will not be given credit for their team information report.

- **Weekly assignments** 15% (will include individual assessments, team progress reports on sustainability recommendation report, plus class participation and individual BlackBoard completion of assignments in hybrid format)
  
- **Midterm** 20%
  
- **Technical Report** 20%
  
- **Individual Presentation** 05%
  
- **Final Library Quiz** 05%
  
- Final (2 parts) 20% (each part is worth 10 pts on the final average)

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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 Class assignments and quizzes will be based on content, accuracy, insight and formatting neatness.

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: Departmental 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. It is highly recommended that if a student misses more than five classes in one semester – no matter the cause, a student exercise their option to drop the course. Three points will be deducted from the students’ final average for every unexcused absence after the second unexcused absence.

Participation

In the face-to-face class sessions, attendance will be recorded by the instructor. In the online environment, Blackboard helps record student participation. It is extremely important for students to be involved in both class environments. Participation and involvement are good habits to develop now while in college that a student can take with them into their professional career.

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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. 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.

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

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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 September 3, 2012)

**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.

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY INSTRUCTOR)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WK #</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>WEEK’S ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to working on BlackBoard modules</strong></td>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>Film: <em>Inside Job</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Team selection</strong></td>
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<td>Video clip: <em>Generation Jobless</em></td>
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<td><strong>Preliminary essay</strong></td>
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<td>You Tube: <em>Did you know?</em></td>
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<td><strong>Monday Sept. 3 (or before) – first progress report from team</strong></td>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td><strong>QUIZ ONE: Active reading and outlining of “Sustainability Science”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>MODULE ONE</strong></td>
<td>Sept. 5, 7</td>
<td>See film <em>Garbage Warrior</em></td>
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<td><strong>LIBRARY ORIENTATION – Jeff McAdams</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>And</td>
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<td>September __________ – do not miss this!</td>
<td>And</td>
<td>And complete the discussion, assessment and assignment requirements for Module 1</td>
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<td>[email: <a href="mailto:Jeff.McAdams@utsa.edu">Jeff.McAdams@utsa.edu</a>]</td>
<td>Sept. 12, 14</td>
<td>As a team, e-mail each other and begin choosing your topic for your research paper. Post a preliminary outline of the topic. Work with the instructor on BRAINSTORMING and outline.</td>
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<td>Teams have exchanged emails, phone #, provide FIRST IDEA FOR RESEARCH PAPER</td>
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<td>PROGRESS REPORT #2 – Due Monday Sept. 10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assign for September 10: Key reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sustainability Science”²</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Active Reading techniques</strong></td>
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² Kennedy School of Government Faculty Research Working Paper RWP00-018, and submitted to *Science*, December 2000

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss OUTLINING as ACTIVE READING</td>
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<td>team names, phone numbers, emails and topic to be researched on sustainability and basic outline. Each member must also be ready on Week 3 to discuss ideas and research activities carried out that week for team research paper.</td>
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<td>TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS (WEEK 3):</td>
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<td>Research paper topics (assign the problem)</td>
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<td>Textbook: pp. 141-226</td>
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<td>The design, structuring, and development of a technical report with research-based recommendations and a presentation.</td>
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<td>Tentative Hybrid calendar of dates provided on February 3.</td>
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<td>Monday September 10</td>
<td>Team progress report 2 due</td>
<td>Optional Preliminary essay as individual students due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>MODULE TWO</td>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>See film Kilowatt Ours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Major Writing Assignment: Team Proposal Memo due Monday September 17.</td>
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<td>PROGRESS REPORT #4 – Due Sept 24*</td>
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<td>TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS:</td>
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<td>Define your terms in your chosen topic about “Sustainability Science”. Look at the research background of team report thus far and know where to go to get best information for your claims or counter-claims.</td>
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<td>Systems thinking on a problem</td>
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<td>*Outline your possible</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction – ETC Chapters 1, 2, and 3 – Week 3 –</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>Review the questions on meaning, writing strategies, reading critically, vocabulary and making connections.</td>
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|      | **BRAINSTORM First Major Writing Assignment – Team Proposal Memo** -- Define individual suggested structure of proposal, with possible outline. **MEMO FORMAT**                      |            | **research report.**
|      |                                                                          |            | Keep your outline and notes on questions for your research and as backup for any opinion you might write on this topic. |
|      |                                                                          |            | Progress Report #4 due Monday October 1                                           |
|      |                                                                          |            | Team progress report 4 assigned. Planning a presentation based on technical details: |
|      |                                                                          |            | Quantitative data, graphs, and charts – how to present them.                      |
|      | **Monday September 17**                                                  |            | **Team proposal memo – first major written assignment due.**                       |
| 6-7  | **MODULE 3 – Film: Affluenza**                                            | October 1 and 8 | **Progress Report #4 due:**
|      | **Individual Essay II – First individual memo. Abstract plus memo explaining research, sources, strategies due October 8.** |            | Planning a presentation based on technical details: |
|      | **Discussion of the midterm –**                                          |            | Quantitative data, graphs, and charts – how to present them.                      |
|      | **You can Peer review any essay with others.**                          |            | Individual Assessment on film.                                                    |
|      | **MIDTERM DATE October 10. Each student must provide at least 6 slides with quantitative and analytic data based on their research they have done on their team project, plus a revised abstract.** |            | **PROGRESS REPORT 5 – due October 8-**
|      |                                                                          |            | Cover memo and draft of at least 6 slides from each team member on current research. Memo must analyze weaknesses on presentation and research for each individual of the team. |

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Check library resources and provide **3 [THREE]** possible sources of information per team member to write the material required for the research paper.

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<td></td>
<td><strong>Monday October 1</strong></td>
<td>Progress Report #4 due</td>
<td>Individual Assessment on film.</td>
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<td><strong>Monday October 8</strong></td>
<td>Progress Report #5 due</td>
<td>Students must be prepared for the midterm which is on Wednesday October 10\textsuperscript{th}.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>MODULE 4 – Library orientation #2</td>
<td>3/8-3/10</td>
<td>QUESTION TO CONSIDER:</td>
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<td>10 minute preliminary presentation with visual to the class:</td>
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<td>Given the possible double dip recession in the U.S. economy, how focused can U.S. sustainability issues be in the face of mounting economic pressures?</td>
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<td>Topics covered: How to evaluate research sources</td>
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<td>Discuss in class research strategies –</td>
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<td><strong>Readings</strong> – Creating formatted sources for your research materials.</td>
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<td>Discuss in class visual strategies –</td>
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<td><strong>Research</strong> – Establish what the Recommendations your research report will suggest, what will be the opposition to implementing these recommendations, and how you will present them.</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/cid/programs/sustsci">http://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/cid/programs/sustsci</a></td>
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<td>See Dr. Clark’s presentation at Resilience 2011</td>
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<td><strong>Quizzes 4,5,6 assigned</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discuss Individual Recommendation Memo</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HANDOUT: ARGUMENTATION TECHNIQUES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review Planning Presentation and Research Report Details</td>
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| 9    | **MODULE 5** – Film: *Future of Food*  
Individual component of research writing – drafted by team members and discussed with team.  
Team member research weaknesses discussed with individual teams on time lines for each part of the research to be done.  
Storyboard of basic strategies due | Oct. 22-26 | PEER REVIEW  
Individual Recommendation Memo  
**Individual Recommendation Memo by 10/29/12**  
(Submit the working draft of your written part of the research topic in the team proposal for other class mates to review by next week). |
| 10-11| **MODULE 6** – Film: *The Corporation*  
Individual team meetings with instructors re rough drafts of research papers.  
Teams report on problems encountered with research. Individuals who are encountering problems with their research make appointment to meet with me if you have not already done so. | October 29-Nov. 9 | Questions to think about:  
What education subjects in sustainability and the jobs of the future s are being offered to individuals who are working full time and/or have families? Are those sustainability subjects being linked to jobs that do not exist yet? Why? Why not? |
|      | **Individual Draft of Team Technical Report due -** | Monday Nov. 12 | |
| 12-14| **MODULE 7** – PRESENTATIONS BEGIN  
Ethical communications | Nov. 12-23 | |

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The dates above are subject to change depending on class needs and discussion with instructor. This calendar is provided as a general flow chart of activities.

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