Engl 2413: Technical Writing, Fall 2012

If you wish to print this syllabus, "shrink to fit" or two pages per page gives you about 3 pages, 50% about 2 pages. I checked both settings and they were still legible.

All links will be active in the electronic copy in Blackboard.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is provided for information purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate. I will communicate all changes in a timely manner in class, and update the official copy of the syllabus in Blackboard (changes in red). Students are responsible for being aware of those changes.

jump to course requirements -- course schedule

Marie L. Coffey
Office: MB 2.486, 458-xxxx (office hours only)
Hours: TR 11a-12p, appt, chat, email
Marie.Coffey@utsa.edu

sec 008, TR 8a-9:15, MH 2.01.08
sec 009, TR 9:30a-10:45, MH 3.04.22

While this course uses Blackboard, I do not use the grade or email features.

Catalog description

3 hours credit. Prerequisite: Completion of the Core Curriculum requirement in rhetoric. Content: Techniques of expository writing, particularly adapted to students in technological and scientific subjects.

Technical Writing is a term for writing within a discipline and its forms. While the basic features of "good" writing remain, here the emphasis is on style, clarity, audience, purpose, and design. This course encourages students to actively think about their writing skills. Knowing why they write and who they are writing for will help students learn to write and present in different ways for specific audiences and purposes.

Textbooks and materials


Diigo page of helpful links. There are more on the site, but I thought those would be most useful for this course.

Learning objectives

This course will provide students an opportunity to master:

1. understanding how the writing process is recursive, connected, interactive, and necessary for successful professional writing;
2. writing to the specific rhetorical needs and goals of ones audience;
3. various types of technical writing projects such as memo reports and instructions;
4. giving oral presentations which review larger projects;
5. how to correctly integrate cited materials using appropriate style manuals; and,
6. how to integrate graphics and visual aids into professional documents.

Course Requirements

Assignments

• Some daily assignments will be given during class while others will be attached to homework readings. Most in-class assignments will not appear on the assignment schedule.
• Students will not always have a formal reading check, especially if I want to leave more time to work on a project. However, if students do not complete the readings, they will not have the necessary information for class discussion or completing assignments.
• Students will make at least one oral presentation
• Mid-term grades will be assigned around the end of week 7.
• All assignments will be typed using Times New Roman 12 or Arial 11 as well as an appropriate documentation style. Reading responses will use MLA format.
• Many assignments will include an audience analysis as an integral part of the grade (we'll talk about this more later).
• I accept assignments either in print or via email. Emailed assignments must be attached documents because I grade and return them electronically. Students are responsible for keeping track of emailed work. If you don’t get it back within a week, check that I got it. Technology problems are not an excuse for late assignments.

Grading standards

Assignments will be graded using the writing quality standards of The Writing Program (A = extraordinary and perfectly edited, ready to "go public." B = needs some revision. C = successfully completes all parts of the assignment, but still needs a lot of
revision. D = attempted to complete the assignment. F = Off topic, rushed, or incomplete). I'll post the detailed description in Blackboard.

Most daily work is graded with a focus on ideas. Clear, complete assignments usually earn an 85-90. Larger projects will be graded according to an attached rubric.

Most graded assignments will be returned with comments. It's important that you read this feedback to help you on future assignments. Given the nature of this course, many of the comments will focus on helping you develop a clear, concise writing style and an awareness of audience. Ask for help if you have trouble understanding comments or correcting an issue.

Class discussion

My role in class discussion is both moderator and “devil’s advocate.” What I say doesn't necessarily reflect my beliefs, but I'm trying to help you expand your ideas and learn to defend your ideas orally as well as in writing. Don’t just sit back and feel put down if I disagree with you—support your opinion with concrete evidence. (to a point—we want to discuss, not argue)

Student responsibilities

In addition to the general comments in the syllabus, students are responsible for:

- keeping track of their own grades. You know what’s due, so you can start from there.
- asking questions and looking up answers. Asking a second time if needed.
- dealing with comments on assignments. You are responsible for correcting problems.
- checking their default (usually school) email periodically for messages.

Evaluation (calculating weighted averages)

15% participation/daily work (quizzes, responses, small assignments)
10% style guide fact sheet
10% web page analysis
10% resume/application materials
55% research project (5% memo of sources, 5% interview, 10% proposal, 10% annotated bibliography, 10% memo report, 10% popular dissemination, 5% project analysis/participation)

The English department assigns plusses (+) or minuses (-) for final grades (82 = B-, not B). While I use numeric grades in class, I will assign your final grade according to the scale in the handbook. Please note that the school defines a "C" as average: successful completion of all tasks. If you’re curious about the workload, there is a copy of the UTSA definition of a credit hour online.

Attendance and late work issues

Attendance

- Students need to be in class whenever possible. Essential information will be dealt with in groups, class discussion, and questions. Some daily work missed because of absence or tardiness may not be made up, but others might have alternate assignments. Make sure to ask if any work was missed during an absence.
- Missing more than two weeks of class will drop your final grade by 10 points. The only exceptions are official school events. Having zero or one absence (including excused and tardies) will add 3 points to your final grade.
- Every three tardies will count as an absence. Arriving more than 20 minutes late counts as an absence. Leaving early may have a penalty.

Late work

- Assignments are due when class starts. Up to two weeks late, assignments will only lose 10 points. After that,
  - daily work: will not be accepted
  - projects: 20 point deduction
- If you are unable to attend class, email me your assignment or send it through a classmate.

Dropping and withdrawing

If you are having trouble in a course, you should first see your professor for help. If you still wish to drop, make sure you officially drop and don’t just quit coming to class. Dropping a course after the census date means that it shows up on your transcript. Once your enrollment in a course is official, if you drop you need to consider the undergraduate credit limitation, six-drop policy, and three-attempt rule. Withdrawing from all courses is a separate procedure.

Academic dishonesty

Complete texts of school policies about academic dishonesty are available online. The student information bulletin has information about honesty and cheating/plagiarism. The Roadrunner Creed is available in the "About UTSA" section.

The University of Texas at San Antonio Academic Honor Code

1. 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.

2. **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.”

3. **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.

**Disability services**

http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm

**Technology**

No activated beepers or cellular phones are permitted in the classroom. Use of laptops is permitted, as long as you don’t interfere with the classroom environment. *Using IM, email, etc, only hurts you—class participation is imperative.*

Along with physical office hours, you can contact me via email. I usually check it once a day during the semester. Make sure you include a useful subject line and your course (time). We can also schedule a live chat in Blackboard.

*Technology problems are not an excuse for late assignments—there is always another option. As with any rule, there are some minor exceptions which I will deal with on a case-by-case basis.*

**Outside help**

Besides getting help from your instructor or classmates, you have two good resources on campus you don’t have to pay out-of-pocket for.

The *Writing Center* (TWC) serves students in all fields, not just Composition. Trained tutors can help students with their writing; however, students should not expect that a tutor will “grade” or “edit” their papers. The volunteers are there to assist with writing, organization, and development. Students may ask questions about grammar and mechanics, and tutors may take advantage of teaching moments.

The *Tomás Rivera Center’s* (TRC) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. Services include one-on-one study skills assistance, Supplemental Instruction for "historically difficult classes,” and walk-in tutoring for a variety of subjects.

**Tentative class schedule of readings and assignments**

Bring Gurak and Lannon (G&L) to class every day, whether or not its on the schedule. You are responsible for keeping up with the readings even if you are not directly tested over the material.

**Week 1**

Aug 30: expectations, Hartman article, G&L ch 1

**Week 2**

Sep 4: ethics and G&L ch 1 (cont)

• *due: read ch 5*

Sep 6: audience and organization

• *due: read ch 4 and 6.*

**Week 3**

Sep 11: definition and description, citation styles. Appendix A

• *due: read ch 12 and 13. Turn in a 250 word audience response (MLA): Choose an electronic set of directions for something. Take the role of a specific person who could reasonably be the audience (8-year-old girl, 30ish construction worker), and analyze the directions using the information in ch 4 and 6. Make sure you include the link to the manual (aim for 1-2 pgs long) and the perspective you are writing from.*

*Sep 12: Email me the link to a web page or other electronic file you think is particularly well or poorly designed. We'll look at some of them in class.*

Sep 13: document design and visual elements. Fact sheet assignment

• *due: read ch 8 and 9.*
Week 4
Sep 18: The Writing Process review, revision and editing techniques
  • due: 250 word response. What techniques have helped or hindered your writing in the past?
Sep 20: revision and editing practice, giving instructions
  • due: read ch 14 (instructions)

Week 5
Sep 25: fact sheet peer revision
Sep 27: writing style--tone, conciseness, etc
  • due: read ch 7, review Appendix B

Week 6
Oct 2: in-class audience analysis and discussion
  • due: fact sheet
Oct 4: web design and analyzing visuals
  • due: read ch 21

Week 7
Oct 9: work in pairs on web page analysis project
  • due: read ch 2
  Oct 10: Email me the link to the web page you analyzed by 8pm
Oct 11: presentations
  • due: web page analysis

Week 8
Oct 16: career-oriented preparation
  • due: read ch 10. 250 word response: what are you career goals and how are you preparing for them?
Oct 18: work on career materials

Week 9
Oct 23: introducing the research project. Memos and types of research materials
  • due: read ch 11 and 3; career materials.
Oct 25: Research materials and proposals
  • due: read ch 18

Week 10
Oct 30: discuss project ideas with the class
  • due: interview
  Nov 1: annotated bibliographies, work on proposals

Week 11
Nov 6: trip to library for research
  • due: proposal
Nov 8: work on annotated bibliographies
  • due: annotated bibliography--by 8pm
**Week 12**
Nov 13: memos
  - *due: read ch 16*
Nov 15: work on memo report

**Week 13**
Nov 20: project updates and discussion. In-class extra credit assignment (no out-of-class make-up).
  - *due: memo report.*
  - *No late work accepted after this date, and no future assignments can be turned in late. This is also the deadline for your extra credit assignment.*

Nov 22: **No class, Thanksgiving**

**Week 14**
Nov 27: finishing up projects
  - *due: popular dissemination by 8pm*
Nov 29: **project analysis**

**Week 15**
Dec 4: work on final presentations
  - This week is the time to talk to me about excused absences if you went over 4. This is also your last chance to clear up any errors in my attendance records.

Dec 6: class discussion, start presentations

**Final exam.** Our final will be a presentation of your projects
  - 8am: Th Dec 13, 7:30a-10
  - 9:30pm: M Dec 17, 10:30a-1