

University of North Texas at Dallas
Fall 2015
SYLLABUS

TECM 2700-001	
Technical Writing (3 hrs)	
Department of Languages and Communication	Division of Liberal arts and Life Sciences
Instructor Name:	Dr. Christopher Dickman
Office Location:	Founders Hall (Building #2) #258
Email Address:	Christopher.Dickman@untdallas.edu (preferred contact)
Office Phone	(972) 338-1537
Office Hours:	M 12:00-3:00; T 1:30-3:00, R 1:30-3:00
Classroom:	Dal 2 136
Class Dates:	TR 10:00-11:20
Course Catalog Description:	Expository writing, especially for science, pre-engineering, and business students. May be substituted for ENGL 1323 in some programs; students should consult advisers in their majors.
Required Texts and Software:	<i>Technical Communication: A Practical Approach, 8th ed.</i> , William Pfeiffer and Kaye Adkins (also available as a digital text via CourseSmart.com)
Recommended Texts:	Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) , found free online at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
Access to Learning Resources:	UNT Dallas Library: web: http://www.untdallas.edu/library UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652;

Course Overview:

TECM 2700 is designed to help develop foundational writing knowledge for work in your future majors and professions. Whereas the purpose of much academic writing is to showcase your acquisition of knowledge to an expert (your teacher), in technical writing, you will be the expert, tasked with clearly communicating information and ideas to an audience who needs to learn something or do something based on your work.

This class is not designed to teach you every kind of writing you will do in your major or career, and it is not designed for any one particular major. Instead, our interest is in developing skills, strategies, and awareness of writing that takes place in professional and technical settings. We will look at how to clearly, effectively, and efficiently provide many different audiences with the information they need to complete tasks or make decisions. Thus, much of our work will be in learning how to adapt our writing to fit the demands of changing situations through some representative professional genres; we'll refer to this in the class as a "rhetorical approach" to writing.

In addition, we will spend time developing one of the more important skills for 21st-century workers: information literacy. Throughout the course, we will develop skills in searching, evaluating, synthesizing, recording, organizing, and citing information. Formatting and organizing our work to ease reader effort and understanding is a central component of technical writing, and citing and recording information is a pillar of academic and professional work as well.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students should expect to gain significant experience in the following areas:

Critical Thinking and Rhetorical Strategy	Understanding contexts in which professional and technical writing takes place
	Adapting writing to the demands of specific professional situations and audiences
	Understanding how professional and technical documents are composed to meet the needs of workplace tasks and audiences
Communication and Presentation	Formatting professional documents effectively through the use of software
	Communicating in written, visual, and web-mediated modes of writing
	Understanding the writing process strategies of experienced writers
Ethics/ Personal Responsibility	Understanding the ethical and legal implications of various professional genres and tasks
	Reflecting on and assessing progress in the course and individual assignments
Information Literacy	Understanding and using relevant citation practices in professional fields
	Searching for and evaluating appropriate information for technical communication
Teamwork	Working effectively and productively with peers of different backgrounds

Course Schedule

- *Schedule is subject to change by the instructor; any changes to this schedule will be communicated on the Announcements page of the class Blackboard site.*
- *All projects and drafts are due by midnight on the days specified below, unless otherwise noted.*
- *“TCAPA” denotes Technical Communication: A Practical Approach, our required class text; “BB” denotes Blackboard.*

Date	Weekly Topics and Tasks	Due
T 8/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course • Review policies and procedures • Introduction to Project 1 – Problem Analysis • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pp. 167-172 in <i>TCAPA</i> ○ Chapter 2 and 4 in <i>TCAPA</i> 	
R 8/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • Project 1 topic selection • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 9 in <i>TCAPA</i> ○ Supplemental material on BB for Project 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Quiz
T 9/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting effective research • Class time for research/conferencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Proposal email (sent via your school email)
R 9/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating Sources • Class time for research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz over Chapters 2, 4, and email (all one quiz) • Quiz over Chapter 9
T 9/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated Bibliographies • APA style/citation tools • Class time for research • Source conferences 	

R 9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Analyses • Class time for Annotated Bibliography • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 10 in <i>TCAPA</i> ○ Chapter 11 in <i>TCAPA</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated Bibliography
T 9/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formatting Reports • Class time for Problem Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz over Chapter 10 • Quiz over Chapter 11
R 9/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example reports and formatting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of Project 1 - Problem Analysis Report (Friday by midnight)
T 9/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Analysis Review and Editing Day 	
R 9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Project 2 – Recommendation Report • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 5 in <i>TCAPA</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Project 1 – Problem Analysis
T 9/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating recommendations • Class time for creating Recommendation Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz over Chapter 5
R 10/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formatting recommendation reports • Class time for Recommendation Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of Project 2 - Recommendation Report (Friday by midnight)
T 10/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation Report Review and Editing Day 	
R 10/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Project 3 – Job Application Materials • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 16 in <i>TCAPA</i> ○ Chapter 17 in <i>TCAPA</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Project 2 – Recommendation Report
T 10/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example job documents • Class time for job documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz over Chapter 16 • Quiz over Chapter 17
R 10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resumes • Class time for resume – bring any drafts you have 	
T 10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover letters • Class time for cover letter – bring any drafts you have 	
R 10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class time for job application materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of Project 3 - Job Application Materials (Friday by midnight)
T 10/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Application Materials Review and Editing Day 	
R 10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Project 4 – Proposal Report • Team Leaders announced • Team Leaders pitch their topics • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 12 in <i>TCAPA</i> ○ Chapter 13 in <i>TCAPA</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Project 3 – Job Application Materials

T 11/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams announced, work begins on Project 4 Collaboration contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz over Chapter 12 Quiz over Chapter 13
R 11/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams work on proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration Agreement due
T 11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams work on proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal proposal plan due
R 11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference about proposal plans 	
T 11/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on proposals Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 15 in <i>TCAPA</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft of Project 4 – Proposal Report due (by midnight)
R 11/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal Report Review and Editing Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz over Chapter 15
T 11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations 	
R 11/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Class, Thanksgiving 	
T 12/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation run-through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Draft of Project 4 – Proposal Report
R 12/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final presentation/pitch to class 	

Grade Breakdown

Project 1 – Problem Analysis Report	Topic Proposal Email	25
	Annotated Bibliography	50
	Problem Analysis Report draft	25
	Problem Analysis final	100
Project 2 – Recommendation Report	Recommendation Report draft	25
	Recommendation Report final	100
Project 3 – Job Application Materials	Job Application draft	25
	Job Application final	100
Project 4 – Proposal Report	Team Collaboration Agreement	50
	Informal Proposal Plan	50
	Proposal Report draft	25
	Proposal Report final	100
Team Presentation	Presentation	75
Quizzes	10 quizzes at 25 points each	250
Total		1000

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Course Evaluation Methods

Student performance in this course will be evaluated by the following:

Major Projects – This course is primarily project-based, and four major projects will be the most significant measure of success in the class. Major projects will consist of several smaller assignments. Students should **very carefully** consult the project descriptions and the course materials (textbook and Blackboard) for details about how to complete each project.

Presentations: At the end of the course, teams will present their proposal plan for Project 4.

Quizzes – Students are responsible for reading material from the course text and any supplementary material in order to learn the basic concepts of the course. Students will be quizzed over assigned reading. See above for the schedule and dates of quizzes.

Grade Determination:

A = 90% or greater; B = 80 – 89 %; C = 70 – 79 %; D = 60 – 69 %; F = Less than 60%

Course Policies and Procedures

Participation/Professionalism Policy

Students should conduct themselves professionally throughout the course, and this includes several major categories. 1) Students should treat each other with courtesy and professionalism in any interaction throughout the course; please see the Openness/Constructive Criticism and Diversity/Tolerance policies below. 2) Student communication should always strive to meet professional standards of grammar, mechanics, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc. All communication should be treated as if your job (or grade) depended on it. 3) Students need to complete their work for me and for each other in a timely manner, and students should be responsive to requests from their peers or myself.

Student responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with all of the rules and policies set forth in this syllabus and to keep track of their progress in the class, including their grades, due dates, etc. You may of course ask me about any of these concerns at any point in the class, and I will be happy to let you know your progress. However, students need to exercise self-monitoring throughout the term.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

In short, **plagiarism** is the use of someone else's material – written text, images, or ideas – as your own work. This can happen when if you copy and paste material you find elsewhere into your own work, borrow work from other students' in a non-collaborative project, or fail to properly cite research you've done. **Plagiarism of other work will result in a zero on the assignment plagiarized and a permanent record of the offense in your student file. Repeated or egregious offenses of plagiarism may result in university sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion.**

In this class, we'll talk about the ethical codes and standards that guide work in various professions. These standards give professions their integrity, and serious legal consequences can happen if they are broken. One ethical standard practiced in all professions, as well as all academic disciplines, is the avoidance of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of any other person's words or ideas without giving them credit through a system of citation and giving credit. Instances of plagiarism may result in zeroes on assignments, failure of the course, or other academic discipline such as suspension or expulsion from the university. You are expected to abide by the University's code of conduct and Academic Dishonesty policy. Any person suspected of academic

dishonesty (i.e., cheating or plagiarism) will be handled in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct [here](#) for complete provisions of this code.

Technology Policies

Email

You must check your UNT Dallas or UNT email daily, as this will be my primary method of communication with the class and is the default email account for Blackboard; make sure you can log into this email from day one. **You will also need to send emails from your UNT or UNTDallas account**; emails sent from other addresses regularly land in spam, and I am not responsible for delayed or missing replies if this occurs.

Blackboard

Course materials will be posted to the course Blackboard site, accessible through *Learn.untdallas.edu* or *Learn.unt.edu*. Class announcements will also come through Blackboard, so **log on at least once a day**.

Grading and Assignment Policies

Project Formatting

Students do not need to submit assignments with a standard paper format or heading (including the MLA headings typically learned in high school). Instead, projects should be made to resemble their real-world, professional counterparts. Thus, formatting of the major projects will vary widely from assignment to assignment due to the nature of the course; students should pay close attention to the formatting details in each assignment description.

Late Policy

In fairness to all students, **no late work is accepted**. Some details of the policy:

- Links to submit assignments on Blackboard will expire at midnight on their due dates, after which no assignment can be submitted.
- Extenuating circumstances (emergencies) can only be accepted with documentation of the incident.
- If there is an error with Blackboard when trying to submit, you **must take a screenshot** of the error and send it to me.

It goes without saying – start early and submit early to avoid any problems.

Revision Policy

For each project, students have the option of re-revising their projects once a grade has been given; any revisions submitted will replace the initial grade for the assignment or project. Projects, however, must be revised **significantly** in order for the grade to be increased; much more needs to be done than fixing grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and mechanical errors to have the grade improved.

Revisions are due **no later than one week after an assignment has been returned with a grade** unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

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Writing Assistance and Consultation

Everyone, including – and especially - professional authors, gets advice about their writing to see how it is being understood and how they can improve. Getting others to read your writing should be a standard and frequent part of your process. For those able to make it to campus, you can get great advice and feedback from the Writing Center, a completely free service that offers students the opportunity to meet with a professional tutor to discuss their writing assignments for any course. Students can utilize the center for any stage of the writing process, even in initial brainstorming ideas. The Writing Center can also help you with presentations, speeches, etc.

During a writing conference, tutors will assist students in identifying any weaknesses and will work together with the student to improve the assignment. The Writing Center's most important goal is to help UNT Dallas students become better writers, which means that the Writing Center tutors will **not proofread or edit papers**; instead, they will help students develop the skills they need in order to successfully proofread and edit their own work. Please see the Writing Center's website (search "Writing Center" from UNTDallas.edu) for appointment information.

Additional Policies

Openness and Constructive Criticism

A good deal of the work in this class may involve reviewing and critiquing each others' drafts as we proceed through assignments. While we will discuss peer review in more detail, it should be said here that to make these processes useful, students need to keep an attitude of openness about their work in progress. We are all learning in this class - or else we wouldn't be here – and no one is expected to have perfect work in the drafts we'll be looking at. The purpose of peer review, critique, and revision is to change inevitably weak drafts into stronger papers not by saying what's wrong, but what can be improved. In this class, each student needs to be open and willing to have their work reviewed by others. The other side of this is that those who critique need to always be in the mindset of providing constructive – and not harsh or attacking – criticism.

Diversity/Tolerance Policy

Students are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights to class discussions. However, offensive & inappropriate language (swearing) and remarks offensive to others of particular nationalities, ethnic groups, sexual preferences, religious groups, genders, or other ascribed statuses will not be tolerated. Disruptions which violate the Code of Student Conduct will be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities as the instructor deems appropriate.

Students with Disabilities (ADA Compliance)

The University of North Texas Dallas faculty is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students' with documented disabilities are responsible for informing faculty of their needs for reasonable accommodations and providing written authorized documentation. For more information, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation/Student Development Office in Founder's Hall, room 204, or call Cindy Suarez at 972-338-1777.

Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) Policy:

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.