

University of North Texas at Dallas
Spring 2015
SYLLABUS

TECM 2700D-090
Technical Writing (3 hrs)

Department of Languages and Communication		Division of Liberal arts and Life Sciences
Instructor Name:	Dr. Christopher Dickman	
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Office Hours:	T, 12-3 or by appointment	
Classroom:	DAL 1, 201D	
Class Days:	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/ ; <i>APA Publication Manual, 6th ed.</i>	
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 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 and 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 Outline

- *This schedule is subject to change by the instructor; any changes will be communicated on the Announcements page of the class Blackboard site.*
- *All projects are due by midnight on the days specified below, unless otherwise noted*
- *All readings should be completed by the time of class on the day listed*
- **“TC” denotes Technical Communication: A Practical Approach, our required class text; “BB” denotes Blackboard.**

Date	Weekly Work Schedule	Due
T 1/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to course and technical writing 	
R 1/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Project 1: Job Application Materials • TC: pp. 167-173 for email; pp. 598-609 & 622-631 for job application materials 	Introductory email to instructor by start of class
T 1/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job application materials workshop with Career Services 	Bring any resumes and cover letters to class
R 1/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Review of Job Application Materials 	Need polished draft of resume and cover letter in class
T 2/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Project 2: Professional Controversy Research Report • TC: pp. 167 & 182-83 about memos 	Project 1 materials due on BB
R 2/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal, exploratory, and web-driven research • TC: pp. 249-269 & 283-88 about research 	Topic Proposal Memo due on BB

T 2/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library visit – research with academic sources; memos returned TC: Chapter 1 for Metacognitive Reflection #1 	
R 2/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided research day, one-on-one work with topics 	Metacognitive Reflection #1 due on BB
T 2/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotated Bibliographies and APA end-text citation style Read materials on BB about APA style and about Annotated Bibliographies. 	
W-R 2/18 2/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one research conferences; please check BB for sign-up link 	
T 2/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesizing information, APA in-text style, and plagiarism 	Annotated Bibliography due on BB
R 2/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing information, using style sheets, incorporating graphics TC: Chapter 10 on report formatting 	Metacognitive Reflection #2 due on BB
T 3/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of example reports TC: Chapter 5 for style sheets 	Metacognitive Reflection #3 due on BB
R 3/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided work day 	Style Sheet due on BB
T 3/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review of research reports 	Polished draft of research report needed in class
R 3/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Project 3: Proposal Website 	Research Reports due on BB
T 3/17	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
R 3/19	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
T 3/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal presentations – vote after class 	Topic proposal posted to BB before class
R 3/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team formation and teamwork contracts 	Metacognitive Reflection #4 due on BB
T 3/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals: audiences, evidence, persuasion 	
R 4/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work day – planning and research TC: pp. 525-539 about website planning 	
T, 4/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work day - content creation TC: pp. 540-567 about website content 	
W-R 4/8 4/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Meetings 	Informal Proposal due in team meeting

T-W 4/14 4/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Creation, Weebly 	
R 4/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website page organization/design principles 	Metacognitive Reflection #5 due on BB
T 4/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphics – choices and guidelines 	
R 4/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided work day 	Design Choices Worksheet due on BB
T 4/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usability testing in class 	
R 4/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation basics and essentials; presenting as a team TC: Chapter 15 about presentations 	Proposal Websites Due on BB
T 5/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Presentations in class 	
R 5/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Presentations in class 	

Course Evaluation Methods

Student performance in this course will be evaluated by the following means.

Major Projects – This course is project-based, and three major projects will be the primary measure of success in the class. Each project is composed of a number of smaller, progressive assignments designed to lead to a successful final product. Students should **very carefully** consult the project descriptions for details

Metacognitive Reflections – Throughout the term, students will complete 5 reflections that are designed to make them think about their own writing process and strategies in the class.

Team Presentations - Teams will present their final proposal websites to the class at the end of the semester

Grade Determination:

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

Grade Breakdown

Project 1	Job Application Materials – Resume and Cover Letter	150
Project 2	Topic Proposal Memo	50
	Annotated Bibliography	100
	Report Style Sheet	50
	Report	150
Project 3	Informal Topic Proposal and Plan	50
	Design Choices Worksheet	50
	Proposal Website	150
Other	Team Presentations	100
	Metacognitive Reflections	150
Total		1000

Course Policies and Procedures

Participation/Professionalism Policy

The policies in this section outline the basic habits of professionalism expected in this course.

Students should conduct themselves professionally throughout the course; 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) Students communication should always strive to be 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 myself or their peers.

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 it 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*. Announcements about the class will also come through Blackboard, so **log on at least once a day**.

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:

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. Thus, 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.

Grading and Assignment Policies

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.

During the Fall semester, the Writing Center will be open Monday-Thursday, 9-7; Friday, 3-7; and Saturday, 10-3. The Writing Center is in Room 301N in Building 1 in a large class enclosure; appointments may be made online at <http://www.untdallas.edu/writing-center>.

The Writing Center does not currently have online consultation capabilities.

Project Formatting

Students do not need to submit assignments with a standard paper format or heading, including 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.

Submitting Projects

Please check the submission guidelines on each project description, but in general final versions of major projects should be submitted through the course's Blackboard page. When submitting files, I recommend converting them to PDFs, as that will preserve any specific formatting that you see on your computer. Generally, you should be able to do this by doing a "Save As" and choosing PDF as the file type. Make sure to keep the original version for revision and editing.

Project Completion

Projects in this class will consist of both smaller and larger assignments that lead progressively toward a final product or set of products. Students must turn in all portions of a project to receive a grade; that is, Projects must be completed in their entirety. Any missing assignments will result in a zero on the final Project grade.

Late Policy

Late work will be reduced five (5) percentage points for every day past the due date. Work that is a week or more late will not be accepted.

Late work will NOT be accepted for peer reviews, which must be done by the appointed deadline. Not late reviews may be counted, as peers must have feedback in a timely manner to proceed with revisions.

Revision Policy

For each project, students have the option of revising their projects once a grade has been given; any revisions submitted will fully 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 one week after an assignment has been returned unless otherwise noted by the instructor. The following steps should be taken to submit a revision:

1. Contact me by UNT email and let me know that you would like to submit a revision.
2. I will then open up another attempt at the same assignment on Blackboard.
3. Submit your new attempt on BB by the specified revision due date.

Additional Policies

Openness and Constructive Criticism

A good deal of the work in this class will 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, Suite 115 or call Laura Smith at 972-780-3632.

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.