

University of North Texas at Dallas
Spring 2014
SYLLABUS

TECM 2700D-092
Technical Writing (3 hrs)

Department of Languages and Communication	Division of Liberal arts and Life Sciences
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Instructor Name:	Christopher Dickman
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Office Hours:	M/W: 1-4, and by appointment
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Classroom:	DAL 1 201D
Class Days & Times:	M/W, 8:30-9:50

Course Catalog Description:	Expository writing, especially for science, pre-engineering, and business students. May be substituted for ENGL 1320 in some programs; students should consult advisers in their majors.
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Required Text:	Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) , found free online at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
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Recommended	<i>Technical Communication: A Practical Approach, 8th ed.</i> , William Pfeiffer and Kaye Adkins
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Access to Learning Resources:	UNT Dallas Library: phone: (972) 780-3625; web: http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/library.htm UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652; e-mail: 1012mgr@fheg.follett.com
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Course Overview:

Overview: Technical Writing is a broad field, but in general this course will concern itself with developing skills, strategies, and communicative awareness for writing done in professional settings. A strong focus will be placed on understanding the rhetorical concerns germane to the kind of writing done in these settings – that is, considering how the audience, author, text, purpose, and circulation of technical documents should affect how our writing is composed in sample workplace settings. Through a series of major projects, in-class activities, workshopping, user testing, and reflection, students will work to develop clear, concise, and appropriate writing that fulfills the goals of representative professional tasks and assignments. Throughout the course, an emphasis will also be placed on developing a writing process and the creation of multiple drafts that help the writer develop, expand, and clarify the ideas they want to communicate.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students should expect to:

1	Understand contexts in which professional and technical writing takes place
2	Adapt their writing to the demands of some specific professional situations
3	Understand how professional and technical documents are designed and formatted to meet the needs of workplace tasks and audiences
3a	Be able to format professional documents effectively
3b	Be able to use professional software to design and format documents
4	Understand the ethical and legal implications of various professional genres
5	Understand the writing process strategies of experienced writers
5b	Use writing to think through and develop their ideas
6	Reflect on and assess their own progress in the course and on individual assignments

Course Outline

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated by UNTD Email and/or during class time.

DATE	TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS
M, 1/13	Introduction to the course; syllabus; professional and technical writing overview; writing processes	----
W, 1/15	<i>Introduction to Project 1 – Crime Report Form</i> ; circulation of criminal justice documents; law enforcement and observation	<i>TCAPA</i> , 35-54; “Police Reports”
M, 1/20	NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	----
W, 1/22	Form design, user behavior, and ethics	Koppl and Sacks, “The Criminal Justice System...”
M, 1/27	Problems in crime reporting; witness error	Wise, Fishman, and Safer: “How to Analyze....”
W, 1/29	<i>Introduction to the Web Portfolio project</i> ; form creation software and strategies; partial work day	----
M, 2/3	Crime Report Form User Testing, Day 1	----
W, 2/5	Crime Report Form User Testing, Day 2	----
M, 2/10	Project 1 – Crime Report Form Due ; <i>Introduction to Project 2 – Instruction Set</i> ; instruction set rhetorical considerations	<i>TCAPA</i> , 215-233
W, 2/12	Instruction set formatting and document design	<i>TCAPA</i> , 117-139
M, 2/17	Instruction Set Proposal Due ; User testing procedures and practices	
W, 2/19	Practice instruction set and critique	----
M, 2/20	Instruction Set User Testing, Day 1	----

2/24		
W, 2/26	Instruction Set User Testing, Day 2	----
M, 3/3	Project 2 – Instruction Set Due; Introduction to Project 3 – Survey Creation, Data Collection, and Visualization	
W, 3/5	Midterm Reflection Due; Survey design, dissemination, and collection	TCAPA, 270-281
M, 3/10	NO CLASS – Spring Break	----
W, 3/12	NO CLASS – Spring Break	----
M, 3/17	Analyzing survey results; data visualization formats, methods, and technologies	TCAPA, 479-518
W, 3/19	Data Visualization work day	----
M, 3/24	<i>Introduce Project 4 – Proposal Report</i>	----
W, 3/26	Project 3 – Survey Creation, Data Collection, and Visualizations Due; Proposals and persuasion; audience values and rhetorical appeals	TCAPA, 398-416
M, 3/31	Proposal formatting and content strategy	TCAPA, 300-324
W, 4/2	Example proposals and critique	Example proposals on course website
M, 4/7	Peer Review of Project 4 – Proposal Report	----
W, 4/9	Project 4 – Proposal Report due; <i>Introduction of Project 5 – Job Application Material;</i> Résumé and cover letter basics	----
M, 4/14	Résumé and Cover Letter Presentation from Career Services	----
W, 4/16	Job application material work day/conferencing	----
M, 4/21	Peer Review of Job Application Materials	----
W, 4/23	Project 5 – Job Application Materials Due; Interview Strategies	Forbes.com – “How to Answer the 50 Most...”
M, 4/28	Mock Interviews, Day 1	----
W, 4/30	Mock Interviews, Day 2	----
M, 5/5	Final Reflection and Web Portfolio Due	----

Course Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

Major Projects – Students will compose five (5) major projects during the course of the semester. These projects will vary widely in their expectations, and students should pay close attention to each individual assignment description.

Reflections – Both at mid-term and at the end of the semester, students will compose detailed reflections of their work and experience in the class. Reflections will respond to specific questions on assignment sheets to be distributed closer to midterm and finals weeks. The final reflection will act as an introduction to the portfolio.

Web Portfolio – Throughout the semester, students will continuously develop a web-based portfolio of their work; the portfolio will be due during finals week, and the final reflection of the course will also act as an introduction to the portfolio.

Mock Interviews – Students will participate in mock interviews related to the job application materials from Project 4.

Class Participation – Students will be expected to attend daily classes, participate in discussions, constructively add to the class, and work on projects for *this class only* when given time in class.

Grade Determination:

A = 900-1000 pts; i.e. 90% or better

B = 800-899 pts; i.e. 80 – 89 %

C = 700-799 pts; i.e. 70 – 79 %

D = 600-699 pts; i.e. 60 – 69 %

F = 599 pts or below; i.e. less than 60%

Grade Breakdown

Project 1 – Crime Report Form (and User Testing)	125
Project 2 – Instruction Set (and User Testing)	125
Midterm Reflection	50
Project 3 – Survey Creation, Data Collection, and Visualization	100
Project 4 – Proposal Report (and Peer Review)	125
Project 5 – Job Application Materials	100
Mock Interviews	75
Final Reflection	100
Web Portfolio	100
Participation	100
Total	1000

Course Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Participation Policy

The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Students may have up to four (4) maximum unexcused absences for the semester without penalty. After these four absences, the instructor reserves the right to reduce the student's participation grade significantly. **More than six (6) unexcused absences will result in a loss of all participation points for the class and may be grounds for failure of the course** at the discretion of the instructor. Students more than 10 minutes late will be considered absent for that day.

Absences may be excused for emergency circumstances or school-sponsored activities **only with prior notification and written documentation of the absence**. Students are responsible for making up any work covered in class.

Technology Policies

Cell phones, Computers and Laptops

Students should be engaged with classroom activities and discussion throughout each class period, and should use technology in the classroom accordingly. Repeated behavior that distracts from participation, disrupts classroom activity, or engages with material outside of the course is grounds for loss of participation points.

Email

You must check your UNT email regularly, as this will be my primary method of communication with the class; make sure you can log into it from day one, and make sure to check it at least once a day. Please note that I cannot communicate with you via a personal email address for legal reasons.

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, assignment submission, tardies, and absences. I will not tell you every time you are late, have an unexcused absence, or lose participation points. Of course, you are encouraged to 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.

Openness and Constructive Criticism

A good deal of the work in this class will involve talking to each other about our work and reviewing and critiquing each others' drafts as we proceed through assignments. While we will discuss peer review in more detail in class, 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.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a hallmark of higher education. 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 at http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html for complete provisions of this code.

Bad Weather Policy:

On those days that present severe weather and driving conditions, a decision may be made to close the campus. In case of inclement weather, call UNT Dallas Campuses main voicemail number (972) 780-3600 or search postings on the campus website www.unt.edu/dallas. Students are encouraged to update their Eagle Alert contact information, so they will receive this information automatically.

Grading and Assignment Policies

Project Formatting

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 and File Naming System

Projects should be submitted through the link on the course home page. Files can be in a format of your choice, but I recommend converting files to PDFs, as that will preserve any specific formatting.

Files should be named in a standard format with the student's last name (only) and the Project number. For example, a student named John Smith submitting the first project for this class would name their file "Smith – Project1".

Late Policy

Late work may be reduced the equivalent of one-half letter grade for every day past the due date.

Revision Policy

Students who would like to revise their projects once a grade has been given have the option of doing so in this course. Any revisions submitted will fully replace the grade for the assignment or project. Any revisions are due **no later than one week after the assignment is turned back to the student**. Students need to change their writing **significantly** in order to expect an increased grade on their revisions. That is, students need to do much more than fix grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and mechanical errors to have their grade lifted. Reconceiving sections of the paper, responding thoroughly to instructor comments, and rewriting and reformatting documents is needed.

Writing Center

The Writing Center 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 (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing). During a writing conference, tutors will assist students in identifying their 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.

The center is open Monday – Thursday from 8am -7 pm in Room 301N in Building 1.