

University of North Texas at Dallas  
 Summer II 2014  
 SYLLABUS

**TECM 2700D-090**  
**Technical Writing (3 hrs)**

Department of Languages and Communication	Division of Liberal arts and Life Sciences
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<b>Instructor Name:</b>	Christopher Dickman
<b>Office Location:</b>	Founders Hall (Building #2) #258
<b>Office Phone:</b>	(972) 338-1537
<b>Email Address:</b>	Christopher.Dickman@unt.edu

<b>Office Hours:</b>	M, 12-3 and by appointment
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<b>Classroom:</b>	DAL 2 136
<b>Class Days &amp; Times:</b>	MTWR, 10:00-11:50

<b>Course Catalog Description:</b>	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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<b>Required Text:</b>	<b>Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)</b> , found free online at <a href="https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/">https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/</a>
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<b>Recommended</b>	<b><i>Technical Communication: A Practical Approach, 8<sup>th</sup> ed.</i></b> , William Pfeiffer and Kaye Adkins
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<b>Access to Learning Resources:</b>	UNT Dallas Library: phone: (972) 338-1616; web: <a href="http://www.untDallas.edu/library">http://www.untDallas.edu/library</a> UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652; e-mail: <a href="mailto:1012mgr@fheg.follett.com">1012mgr@fheg.follett.com</a>
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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 professionally 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, researching information, and creating 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 UNTDallas Email and/or during class time.*

DATE	TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS
M, 7/7	Introduction to the course; Rhetorical aspects of technical writing	----
T, 7/8	Project 1 introduction and topic brainstorming	Text: 35-54
W, 7/9	Instruction set formatting options and strategies	Text: 215-233
R, 7/10	Example instruction set and format critique	----
M, 7/14	Instruction set user testing (in class)	----
T, 7/15	<b>Instruction Set due by beginning of class;</b> Job Application Materials Project introduction; résumés	Text: 598-617
W, 7/16	Résumé work day and conferencing	Reading from course site
R, 7/17	Cover letters	Reading from course site
M, 7/21	Job Application Materials conferencing and workday	----
T, 7/22	Mock Interviews	Reading from course site
W, 7/23	<b>Job Application Materials due by beginning of class;</b> Report Project introduction and topic brainstorming	Text: 88-105
R, 7/24	Topic decision making; Group formation	----
M, 7/28	Group goal and schedule setting; Collaboration and writing	Text: 59-80
T, 7/29	Group planning and work day	Text: 300-324

W, 7/30	Research breakouts with the library; APA formatting	Reading from course site
R, 7/31	Report & proposal formats; Report graphics	Text: 398-416; 479-518
M, 8/4	<b>Group Section Drafts due;</b> section conferences	----
T, 8/5	Whole report workday	----
W, 8/6	Report review and critique	----
R, 8/7	<b>Entire Report due;</b> course wrap-up	----

## Course Evaluation Methods

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

**Individual projects** – Several individual projects will form part of the grade for this course.

**Small Group Report Section** – Students will form groups and complete a significant section of a larger proposal report; each student in the small group will receive the same grade for the section.

**Proposal Report** – One larger report will be composed from all the Small Group sections; each student in the class will receive a common grade for the report.

**Work Reports** – Students will complete weekly work reports during the time spent on the Proposal.

**Contribution** – Students will be evaluated by team members on their effort and contribution to the 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 – Instruction Set	20%
Project 2 – Job Application Materials	20%
Small Group Report Section	20%
Proposal Report	15%
Work Reports	15%
Contribution/Participation	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Course Policies and Procedures

### Attendance and Participation Policy

The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Students may have up to two (2) maximum unexcused absences for the session without penalty. After these two absences, the instructor reserves the right to reduce the student's participation grade significantly. **More than four (4) 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](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](http://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 course Blackboard page. Files can be in a format of your choice, but I recommend converting files to PDFs, as that will preserve any specific formatting.

### **Late Policy**

Late work will 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.

During the summer, the Writing Center is open Tuesday-Thursday, 9-4:30 in Room 301N in Building 1; appointments may be made online at <http://www.untdallas.edu/writing-center>.