

TECM2700: Technical Communication

UNT Dallas

SPRING 2015

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.

FH 136

The goal of this course is to prepare students to become informed and effective writers in the workplace. Students will learn to write clear, concise, and visually appropriate technical prose for their intended audiences in response to various assignments. They will learn to work individually and in teams to discuss, write, edit, and present technical documents following the conventions of the appropriate genres.

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I am also available to meet outside of class, during office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 1-5pm & Tuesday 1-2 pm.

From the University Core Curriculum:

Core Curriculum Objectives: This course is structured to address the following Core Objectives: Critical Thinking; Communication Skills; Teamwork; Personal Responsibility.

Meeting the Critical Thinking Objective: explain a problem, question, or issue; evaluate the logic and validity of arguments, and the relevance of data and information; examine alternatives, explore complex questions and solve challenging problems.

Meeting the Communication Skills Objective: written communication- demonstrate an understanding of context, audience, purpose, and disciplinary conventions; demonstrate content development to convey understanding of ideas; demonstrate use of sources and evidence to support ideas; and use language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers; oral communication - articulate a central message using supporting material; demonstrate an organized presentation structure to support ideas; demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal delivery; visual communication - present information to the audience in a clear and purposeful way; demonstrate command of visual conventions; present material using effective word choice in a clear and meaningful manner.

Meeting the Teamwork Objective: understand individual contribution to a team to ensure project completion and quality; work effectively in team activity within and outside the classroom; explain the benefits of working with a diverse group

Meeting the Personal Responsibility Objective: recognize and examine the multiple perspective of an ethical dilemma; apply ethical concepts to an ethical use and consider the ramifications of alternative actions.

Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach by Paul V. Anderson, 7th edition, 2009

Your grade in this class will be comprised of your work in three different areas: assignments; quizzes, exams; and class work. Assignments (60%) – written assignments designed to allow students to practice and become proficient in technical writing. Class work (20%) – hands-on collaborative activities designed to prepare students for major assignments and including five (5) peer reviews and in-class practice activities. Quizzes & Exams (20%) – assessment tools testing students' abilities to write and edit technical prose; there are only two exams (a mid-term and a final) and four(4) quizzes.

Grade Determination: A = 90-100%; B = 80–89%; C = 70–79%; D = 60–69%; F = less than 60%. All written assignments will receive grades if they exhibit some or all of the following features:

F – The assignment is not submitted; is plagiarized in part or in whole; or suggests that the writers did not understand the assignment or has only an uncertain grasp of the college writing conventions.

D – Writing has no controlling purpose; it does not follow the assigned topic and is poorly organized; no revision is evident; spelling, punctuation, vocabulary or grammar problems interfere with comprehension.

C – The submission may make some good points and may demonstrate understanding of the assignment, but it is not followed completely; the text is not rich, detailed, and well-supported; organization is loose or non-existent; sentences show little variety; many minor mechanical errors.

B – A solid document that fulfills the assignment; is well-organized; the point is clear and is supported by smart observations; the structure holds throughout the paper and is highlighted appropriately; punctuation is standard; may contain occasional minor mechanical errors.

A – Writing demonstrates detailed understanding of the assignment; is well written and well-supported; the point is made clearly and gracefully; organization is sound; sentences are varied and clear; few or no grammar and mechanical errors.

The evaluation criteria for the assignments will be detailed in individual assignment sheets.

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in this classroom or in any classroom at UNT Dallas. Committing academic dishonesty in any portion of your work for this course is grounds for course failure. You are expected to abide by the University's code of Academic Integrity 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 Academic Integrity at <http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/policies/Chapter%2007%20Student%20Affairs,%20Education,%20and%20Funding/7.002%20Code%20of%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf> for complete provisions of this code.

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. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed as accommodations are not retroactive. For more information, you may visit the Student Life Office, Suite 200, Building 2 (Founders' Hall).

Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness 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 consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

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.

Course Policies

Assignment Policy: All assignments should be posted to Blackboard before class time on the date they are due.

Late Submissions: There is no provision for late submissions. Once the deadline for an assignment passes, the online course management system (Blackboard) disallows tampering with access to it. You will receive a 0 for all assignments not submitted on time.

Readings: It is expected that you will have completed the assigned readings before coming to class. This means that you should come prepared to discuss what you have read. It is not unlikely or unusual for me to ask you to describe and summarize the chapter that you were assigned to read for that day. If you are not up on the readings, you will most likely perform poorly when evaluated on your class participation.

Exam Policy: All tests and exams will be taken as scheduled. No makeup examinations will be allowed except for documented emergencies (See Student Handbook).

Class Conduct

Technology Policies

In class, you will use a workstation. Electronic devices beyond the classroom equipment create distraction and are not allowed in class without the instructor's permission. They should be turned off and put away. If you must have your cell phone on during class time, please inform the instructor. Otherwise, if you use your phone during class time, you will lose 25 points off your final grade. This also applies to texting, emailing, checking for messages, surfing the net, or playing games in class.

All communication about this class will be sent to your UNTD account via Blackboard. Please make sure Blackboard information has the email address you are actually using.

To contact the instructor, please use the address on the front page of this document. Restrain yourself from using the email function on Blackboard. I check email regularly. I do not go to Blackboard everyday.

Attendance and Participation Policy: The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Class attendance and participation is expected because the class is designed as a shared learning experience and because essential information not in the textbook will be discussed in class. The dynamic and intensive nature of this course makes it impossible for students to make-up or to receive credit for missed classes. Attendance and participation in all class meetings is essential to the integration of course material and your ability to demonstrate proficiency. Students are responsible to notify the instructor if they are missing class and for whatever reason. Students are also responsible to make up any work covered in class. It is recommended that each student coordinate with a student colleague to obtain a copy of the class notes, if they are absent.

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 Office of Student Life as the instructor deems appropriate.

Course Schedule

Tuesday, January 20

Introduce the class; grammar checkpoint. Reading: Ch1. Writer's Guide p.91: Read and apply to your assignment

Thursday, January 22

Audience analysis for a syllabus (Assignment 1). Read Chapter 14 for design ideas

Tuesday, January 27

Assignment 1 due. Read Ch 14

Thursday, January 29

Formatting. Design ideas. Review of Ch14. Introduce Assignment 2

Tuesday, February 3

Continue Design work. Ch13.

Thursday, February 5

Organizing text. Read Ch8 for organizing text

Tuesday, February 10

Continue working on text organization. Draft Assignment 2 for peer review. Prepare for Quiz 1

Thursday, February 12

Quiz 1. Peer review Assignment 2 the rest of the class.

Tuesday, February 17

Assignment 2 due. Work on conciseness. Read Ch9

Thursday, February 19

Work on conciseness. Ch15

Tuesday, February 24

Work on style and conciseness. Introduce Assignment 3. Ch 4

Thursday, February 26

Notion of usability. Read Ch27

Tuesday, March 3

Writing instructions. Prepare for Quiz 2

Thursday, March 5

Quiz 2. Usability test for your instructions

Tuesday, March 10

Assignment 3 due. Review for a mid-term

Thursday, March 12

Mid-term

Tuesday, March 17 – Thursday, March 19: NO SCHOOL

Tuesday, March 24

Thursday, March 26

Writing persuasive memos. Ch18

Tuesday, March 31

Types of reports and writing conventions. Introduce Assignment 4

Thursday, April 2

Teamwork on Assignment 4

Tuesday, April 7

Teamwork on Assignment 4

Thursday, April 9

Teamwork on Assignment 4

Tuesday, April 14

Teamwork on Assignment 4. Prepare for Quiz 3

Thursday, April 16

Quiz 3. Peer Review for Assignment 4.

Tuesday, April 21

Assignment 4 due. Read Ch2 and 22 and bring a job ad for the next class.

Thursday, April 23

Writing a job application packet. Job ad analysis. Peer Review work.

Tuesday, April 28

Strategy for writing a job application packet. Writing a resume.

Thursday, April 30

Peer review resume writing. Write a letter of application.

Tuesday, May 5

Quiz 4. Peer review letter writing.

Thursday, May 7

Assignment 5 due. Review for a final exam

Tuesday, May 12

Final Exam

This schedule is a guide and is subject to change