

ENGL 3080 ► Introduction to Technical Communication

Instructor: [REDACTED]
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Office Hours: T/R 12:00 – 2:00, Tues. 9 – 11
Days Taught: T/R 10:30 – 11:45
Classroom: RBW 101

Course Description & Objectives

ENGL 3080 is designed to introduce students from various educational backgrounds to professional and technical communication and its influence and purpose in multiple workplace environments. With the idea that professionals who communicate need to be literate in multiple areas beyond simply reading and writing, this course focuses on many areas of communication that are useful in any field. Upon completion of the course, students can expect to have a solid understanding of what communication in the workplace means and demonstrate their technical communication skills by producing, both individually and collaboratively, diverse professional documents. By the end of the semester, students can expect to demonstrate the ability to do the following:

- Express ideas effectively in both written and visual formats
- Design effective and usable documents
- Collaborate on communication projects
- Use communication skills to effectively prepare for a career
- Analyze ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication
- Analyze communication context rhetorically by understanding audiences, purposes, and situations
- Create technical documents that solve problems and improve situations through communication

All in all, students will learn to be not only better writers, but better communicators in professional situations.

Course Fee

When you enrolled in this course, you paid a \$50.00 course fee. This fee supports the English department writing center and its tutors; the computer labs and its consultants, hardware, and software; and technicians to maintain equipment. As an enrolled student, you have unlimited access to the department computer labs (in RBW 101 and 102) and to the writing center, and you have 200 paid pages in these labs.

Required Text

Technical Communication Today, 2nd Edition by Richard Johnson-Sheehan. ISBN # 0-321-45758-7

Assignments

While many assignments could be considered “small,” there are a total of ten (10) over the duration of the course: an empirical research report, two (2) reflective memos, a résumé, a cover letter, a brochure, a proposal, a recommendation report, a group presentation, and a career portfolio. These assignments are divided into three (3) units and some will be turned in simultaneously. There is also an ongoing assignment to respond to weekly readings.

Unit 1: The first unit in the course will prepare you for the rhetorical and ethical decisions you will be required to make as a professional in your field. After conducting research (by consulting both primary and secondary resources) to discover the kinds of writing and ethical decisions that have to be made in your field, you will write a job report (empirical research report) that delineates your findings. In class, you will then write a reflective memo in which you express what you learned during this process.

Unit 2: The second unit in the course is designed to prepare you for professional communication and joining the workforce. After finding a job ad for a position you hope to someday apply for, you will create two documents that will help you get that job: a letter of application and a résumé. After learning document design skills, you will also be required to create a brochure that advertises the company for whom you are applying.

Unit 3: The third and final unit of the course will prepare you to produce technical documents while working in teams. Because teamwork is a vital component of professional communication, you will spend seven (7) weeks of the course working in a team to produce a recommendation report for a solution to a communication problem in your field. In order to complete this recommendation report, you will write a proposal and management plan and conduct research. You will write up recommendations for a local client about how you suggest to solve their problem. As a

team, you will give an oral presentation using PowerPoint that will describe your client, the client's problem, and the methods you used to conduct your research. You will then write a reflective memo in which you express what you learned during this process.

Reading Responses Almost every week you will be assigned to read from your textbook. You will be expected to write a 250 – 500 word response about what you learned from this reading and how it applies to your field. These responses will be posted in Syllabase.

An additional 10% of your overall grade will be based on attendance. Refer below for information on grading evaluation and breakdown and course policies.

Course Policies

Grading Evaluation and Late Work Your grade will be based on your attendance and completion of assignments. Some of your work will be completed individually while other assignments will be completed collaboratively. Everyone in collaborative groups will share the same grade unless documented circumstances indicate that a different arrangement is necessary. It is your responsibility to document any problems within your collaborative groups and to discuss these problems with me should they arise.

Every assignment will include an assignment description and scoring standard. It is up to you closely follow these documents. Your grade will depend on your ability to follow the guidelines given and to produce professional-level work in those areas.

I do NOT accept late work for full credit in this course except under extreme emergencies and circumstances. If an emergency arises, I must be notified by email PRIOR to the day the assignment is due. Depending on the gravity of the circumstance, I may grant an extension, although rarely will this happen unless the emergency includes a death in the family or other similar events. Otherwise, any late work turned in will receive 50% if turned in within one week of due date. Anything turned in after one week will be given no credit. If arrangements need to be made to turn something in early, that will usually be okay. Refer to **Table 1** below for a list of assignments by unit, title, and due date.

Table 1: Grade Breakdown by Unit & Attendance

Assignment	Point Value	Course Value	Due Date
Attendance	100 pts.	10% of Overall Grade	Ongoing
Unit 1 ► Understanding Technical Communication in Your Field			
Job Report (Empirical Research Report)	100 pts. (Individual)	10% of Overall Grade	February 5
Reflective Memo	50 pts. (Individual)	5% of Overall Grade	February 5
Total	150 Points	15% of Overall Grade	
Unit 2 ► Applying for the Professional Workplace			
Résumé	75 pts. (Individual)	7.5% of Overall Grade	February 26
Cover Letter	75 pts. (individual)	7.5% of Overall Grade	February 26
Brochure	50 pts. (Individual)	5% of Overall Grade	February 26
Total	200 Points	20% of Overall Grade	
Unit 3 ► Collaboration in Communication			
Proposal and Management Plan	100 pts. (Collaborative)	10% of Overall Grade	March 18
Recommendation Report	200 pts. (Collaborative)	20% of Overall Grade	April 8
Group Presentation	100 pts. (Collaborative)	10% of Overall Grade	April 8 – 15
Reflective Memo	50 pts. (Individual)	5% of Overall Grade	April 24
Total	400 Points	45% of Overall Grade	
Reading Responses			
Reading Responses	100 pts. (10 x 10pts.)	10% of Overall Grade	Ongoing
Grand Total	1000 Points		

Grading For each assignment within a unit, I will use a detailed grading rubric that scores content, design, and style/grammar. There are 1000 points total in the course. The student's overall grade will be taken from the percentage of total points earned during the semester. The following is a grade breakdown by percentages:

A	930 – 1000	B	830 – 860	C	730 – 760	D	630 – 660
A-	900 – 920	B-	800 – 820	C-	700 – 720	D-	600 – 620
B+	870 – 890	C+	770 – 790	D+	670 – 690	F	< 600

Attendance and Participation Because of the fast-paced nature of this course, it is expected that students will be in class, ready to learn and participate each day. For this reason, 10% of the overall grade in this class is dependant upon attendance and participation. Students are allowed three (3) free days where attendance will not impact their grade. After that, 10 points will be lost per day missed. If a student misses 10 or more days during the course of the semester, he/she will fail the course. Students who come to class but are not actively engaged in the discussions and in-class exercises and assignments will be considered absent.

Non-Productive and Disruptive Behavior All students and instructors have the right to enjoy a productive learning environment. If a student infringes on others' rights by being disrespectful or engaging in any non-productive or disruptive behavior, he/she will be removed from this class. No discriminatory behavior directed toward a person's race, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or other will be tolerated. This freedom from harassment and unlawful discrimination is guaranteed by Article II, "Responsibilities and Rights," of the [REDACTED] Student Code ([http://www.\[REDACTED\].edu/stuserv/scode/article2.html#sec1](http://www.[REDACTED].edu/stuserv/scode/article2.html#sec1)).

Cell Phones and Other Personal Items Noise-making devices such as cell phones, pagers, laptops, MP3 players, and other portable electronic devices can be very disruptive and annoying. Please be conscious of the learning environment for those around you. Do not answer cell phones, call, or text message during class. If you are expecting an emergency phone call during class, please inform me before class begins and turn your phone to vibrate.

Classroom Computers This classroom environment is unique in that each student works at a computer during class. This can and will be a great asset for the learning process. However, computers can also be very distracting during a classroom discussion. Please be aware of the day's objectives, and only use the computers when asked to do so. During class time, please do not play games, check email, surf the web, or do anything unrelated to the discussions going on in class.

At USU, university students, faculty, and staff are expected to make legal and ethical choices regarding computer usage. Please familiarize yourself with university policies regarding the legal and ethical use of computer hardware and software and observe these policies thoughtfully and carefully. (See *The Open Access Computing Facilities Policy Statement* at [http://www.\[REDACTED\].edu/~compserv/lab_policy.html](http://www.[REDACTED].edu/~compserv/lab_policy.html) and the [REDACTED] Student Code [http://www.\[REDACTED\].edu/stuserv/scode/article5.html#sec3](http://www.[REDACTED].edu/stuserv/scode/article5.html#sec3) for more specific details on university policies.)

Syllabase As an online component to this course, we will be using Syllabase. Although there are many uses for Syllabase, we will primarily be using the program to upload your reading responses. I have also posted your course syllabus to this site. I may, throughout the semester, post other helpful materials for you to look at. To login, go to [REDACTED]. Your username is your ENTIRE university email address (johndoe@[REDACTED].edu) and your password is your 'A' number (A123456789). Please check immediately to make sure you can login.

Plagiarism Plagiarism is a serious and prosecutable offense. Plagiarism interferes with a student's ability to trust his/her own ideas, and severely inhibits his/her opportunity to learn and contribute to society. If you have questions regarding plagiarism or proper citation, please meet with me. Students who are caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the course and face disciplinary action from the university—including the possibility of expulsion from the university or other such punishments. As a university student, you are expected to be academically and professionally honest when producing your work. For a more detailed discussion of professional and academic honesty policies, please see the [REDACTED] Student Code ([http://www.\[REDACTED\].edu/stuserv/scode/article5.html#sec3](http://www.[REDACTED].edu/stuserv/scode/article5.html#sec3)).

Unit 1 ► Understanding Technical Communication in Your Field

Deliverables: Job Report, Reflective Memo

Assignments Due: Tuesday, February 5.

Points Possible: 150 (Job Report – 100; Reflective Memo - 50), 15% of overall grade.

Date	In-Class	Homework
Week 1 Jan. 7 – 11	T Welcome and Course Syllabus	T -Review course syllabus and assignment schedule. Read Chapter 1, pp. 2 – 16.
	TH Introduction to Technical Writing and literacies. Basic literacy	TH -Read Chapter 2, pp. 17 – 38. -Post reading response #1 on chapters 1 & 2. *Review TCT Appendix A: Grammar and Punctuation Guide, pp. A2 – A18
Week 2 Jan. 14 – 18	T Job Report (Empirical Research Report). Technical writing process	T -Read Chapter 3, pp. 39 – 67. -Find professional to interview for job report
	TH Rhetorical literacy. Understanding audience and context.	TH -Read Chapter 5, pp. 94 – 118. -Post Reading Response #2 on chapters 3 & 5.
Week 3 Jan. 21 – 25	T Ethical literacy. Making decisions that impact stakeholders.	T -Read Chapter 7, pp. 144 – 178. -Begin working on job report.
	TH Drafting a report.	TH -Read Chapter 8, pp. 179 – 209. -Post Reading Response #3 on chapters 7 & 8 -Be prepared to workshop research reports in class on Tuesday, Jan. 29.
Week 4 Jan. 28 – Feb. 1	T Discuss reflective memo. Workshop job reports.	T -Continue drafting Job Reports. -Be prepared to workshop reflective memo on Thursday, Jan. 31. -Read Chapter 15, pp. 388 – 423. -Post Reading Response #4 on chapter 15.
	TH Discuss memo format. Workshop reflective memo.	TH -Finish Job Report. -Finish Reflective Memo. -Turn in Job Report and Reflective Memo at beginning of class on Tuesday, Feb. 5.

*Optional. Review only if you feel it necessary for your own benefit.

Unit 2 ► Applying for the Professional Workplace

Deliverables: Cover Letter, Résumé, Brochure

Portfolio Due: Tuesday, Feb. 26

Points Possible: 200 (Cover Letter – 75, Résumé – 75, Brochure - 50), 20% of overall grade.

Date	In-Class	Homework
Week 5 Feb. 4 – 8	T Turn in Job Report and Reflective Memo. Starting your career—what to include in a résumé and cover letter. Finding job ads and researching the company.	T -Find job ad to bring to class on Thursday. Be prepared to workshop cover letters on Thursday.
	TH Workshop cover letters. Research company for whom you are applying.	TH -Read Chapter 10, pp. 238 – 277. -Post Reading Response #5 on Chapter 10.
Week 6 Feb. 11 – 15	T Document design. Creating a résumé that employers will want to look at.	T -Skim Chapters 13 & 14 about emails, instant messaging, and websites. -Begin drafting Résumés
	TH Technological literacy. Learning how to learn new technologies. Practice new technology – InDesign. Discuss brochure assignment.	TH -Post Reading Response #6 on chapters 13 and 14 and technology. -Finish drafting Résumé and Cover Letter and bring to class on Tuesday for peer review.
Week 7 Feb. 18 – 22	T Peer review and workshop Cover Letters and Résumés.	T Finish Cover Letters and Résumés.
	TH Workshop Brochures.	TH -Finish Cover Letter, Résumé, and Brochure and turn in on Tuesday, February 26. -Read Chapter 4, pp. 68 – 93.

Unit 3 ► Collaboration, Persuasion, and Usability

Deliverables: Proposal and Management Plan, Recommendation Report, Group Presentation, Reflective Memo

Assignments Due: Proposal – March 17; Recommendation Report – April 8; Group presentation – varies between April 8 and April 15; Reflective Memo and Career Portfolio – April 24

Points Possible: 450 (Proposal and Management Plan – 100; Recommendation Report – 200; Group Presentation - 50; Reflective Memo – 50, Career Portfolio - 50), 45% of overall grade

Date	In-Class	Homework
Week 8 Feb. 25 – 29	T Turn in Résumé, Cover Letter, and Brochure. Social literacy—working in teams. Assign groups for final project.	T -Read Chapter 21, pp. 601 – 644. -Find time when group members can meet/swap information.
	TH Discuss proposals.	TH -Post Reading Response #7 on Chapters 4 and 21. -Begin finding client/communication problem to work with.
Week 9 March 3 – 7	T Workshop proposals.	T -Work on Proposals. -Read Chapter 6, pp. 120 – 141.
	TH Workshop proposals.	TH -Finish Proposal and Management Plan. Have ready to turn in on Tuesday, March 18. -Post Reading Response #8 on chapter 6.

Week 10 March 10 – 14	T	Spring Break – No Classes this week!	
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Week 11 March 17 – 21	T	Turn in Proposal and Management Plan at beginning of class. Persuasion and communication.	T -Work on recommendation report.
	TH	Workshop Recommendation Report.	TH -Continue working on recommendation report.
Week 12 March 24 – 28	T	Workshop Recommendation Report.	T -Read Chapter 16, pp. 424 – 463.
	TH	Giving and Preparing Presentations.	TH -Post Reading Response #9 on chapter 9. -Begin working on presentations.
Week 13 Mar. 31 – Apr. 4	T	Workshop Recommendation Report and Group Presentations.	T -Finish Recommendation Report.
	TH	Workshop Recommendation Report and Group Presentations.	TH -Finish Recommendation Report. Turn in on Tuesday, April 8 at beginning of class.
Week 14 April 7 – 11	T	Turn in Recommendation Reports at beginning of class. Presentations – Groups 1, 2, and 3	T -Prepare Presentations
	TH	Presentations – Groups 4, 5, and 6	TH -Post Reading Response #10 on suggestions for the course.
Week 15 April 14 – 18	T	Presentation – Groups 7, 8, and 9	T -Take a break.
	TH	Final Reflective Memos	TH Put together career portfolios.
Week 16 April 21 – 25	T	Final Reflective Memos and a review of literacies	T Work on Reflective Memos and Career Portfolios. Turn in on April 24.
	TH	Turn in Reflective Memos by 5:00.	TH Enjoy the summer!