English 273  
Section 597  
Technical and Scientific Writing  
Department of English, SFASU

Professor: Dr. Megan Condis  
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Office: LAN #210  
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 – 2:00, Wednesday 11:00 – 1:00  
Also available by appointment in person or via Skype

Description

ENG 273 Technical and Scientific Writing: “Study of the rhetorical principles involved in technical and scientific workplace writing. Emphasis on the production of professional documents, such as analytical reports, in both traditional and online formats. Will not satisfy literature requirement; will not count toward an English major or minor (except for a minor in technical writing).

Additional Information

In English 273 you will learn and practice the forms of written and oral communication used in science, business, engineering, and the workplace in general. You will analyze typical rhetorical situations, recognize conventional styles of presentation, and learn how to tailor your writing to a variety of audiences. You will study and practice the processes of written composition and the general principles of good communication, with the aim of becoming an efficient and effective writer and editor.

The business world is plagued by inefficient, incorrect, and sometimes unethical writing. By the time you finish this course, you’ll be part of the solution, not part of the problem. You’ll be able to write things that do what you need them to do without causing undue confusion, conflict, or offense.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives

In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the English Foundational Component Area in Communication Writing may be assessed. These objectives are:

1. Critical Thinking: Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

2. Communication Skills: Effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

3. Teamwork: The ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

4. Personal Responsibility: The ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

Assessment of these objectives at SFA will be based on student work from all core curriculum courses. This student work will be collected in D2L through LiveText, the assessment management system selected by SFA to collect student work for core assessment. LiveText accounts will be provided to all students enrolled in core courses through the university technology fee. You will be required to register your LiveText account, and you will be notified how to register your account through your SFA e-mail account. If you forward your SFA e-mail to another account and do not receive an e-mail concerning LiveText registration, please be sure to check your junk mail folder and your spam filter for these e-mails. If you have questions about LiveText call Ext. 1267 or e-mail SFALiveText@sfasu.edu.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to LiveText this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to LiveText. Not every assignment will be collected for assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s) must be submitted for assessment in LiveText this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in LiveText</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills: Written</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>Decision Making Report</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>and Visual</td>
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**English Program Learning Outcomes**

This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

**Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 273**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the recursive writing and social editing process and be able to write a variety of technical documents in an acceptable level of Standard American English. (This outcome aligns to the Core objectives for Communication Skills and Teamwork).

2. Write a variety of technical documents, demonstrating their awareness of audience and facility in addressing different audiences and stakeholders in complex rhetorical situations. (This outcome aligns to the Core objectives for Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).

3. Write technical and workplace documents by applying the appropriate categorical modes of rhetorical composition (descriptive, expositive, scientific, etc.), integrating visuals with text, and presenting information in an oral format. (This outcome aligns to the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).

4. Work in groups to produce and critically evaluate documents, integrating different points of view. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility).
5. Use critical-thinking skills and exhibit technical proficiency in the invention and composing processes. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking and Communication Skills).

6. Understand ethical considerations in technical and professional writing, understanding the consequences of communication acts. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility).

7. Tailor communications to social and ethical frameworks, editing them to be effective and responsible in international and intercultural situations. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).

8. Adequately research a topic and use documented evidence to support a paper written in the style applicable to their individual field of study. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).

**Required Text and Materials**


A reliable way to store and transfer files (preferably a USB/Flash drive).

Regular access to and ability to use D2L and cloud backup of important files and projects

**Strongly recommended**

Any writing handbook, such as the one you may have been required to buy in English 131 and 132. Note: Cheap older editions can be purchased from Amazon.

**Course Requirements**

All writing assignments prepared outside of class must be typed. The format will vary for each writing assignment, depending on its purpose and audience. Ideally, the topics for your major assignments will relate to your major field and/or future professional interests. All assignments will be graded for proper format, soundness of content, attention to rhetorical context, resourcefulness, grammar, and mechanics.

All assignments must be completed in the order in which they are given, and you must complete all the major assignments and the final exam in order to pass this course.

Late work will receive a 5% penalty per day up to 7 days after which the assignment will receive a zero.

If you foresee that you will have difficulty meeting a due date, let me know in advance and we can work out an accommodation. Otherwise, the penalty outlined above will apply.

All assignments will be turned in via D2L by midnight on their scheduled due date. We will go over how to do this in class. Technical difficulties with D2L will not be an acceptable excuse for late work. If you have questions about how to turn in an assignment, you need to let me know in advance so we can work on it together.

Most major assignments except the final exam will include intermediate drafts and other materials.
Grading Policy

Grades will be computed in the following fashion:

Discussion Sections and Online Participation: 10%
Memos: 10%
Complaint Letter: 10%
Résumé Project: 20%
Decision Making Report: 25%
Instruction Manual: 25%

Assignments

Discussion Sections

During each unit, students will be asked to participate in online Discussion Sections and other forms of Online Participation. Sometimes, students will simply post their own thoughts and reactions to the course material. Other times, students will respond to one another.

Discussion posts are graded as either Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory based on whether they adequately address the questions posed in the prompt. Posts may also be deemed Unsatisfactory for being so poorly written as to be illegible.

Memos

During each unit students will write a memo responding to the key points of the week’s readings. They may use any resources they like to complete the memo, including materials that I have provided in class and materials found online. However, any sources that you use should be cited in APA format.

Memos are graded on formatting, clarity of prose, accuracy of information, and proofreading/copy editing.

Complaint Letter

Students will pose as consumers and write complaint letters asking for redress. Letters may refer to real experiences or hypothetical ones.

Job Portfolio Project

Portfolio will include:

- A job posting
- A résumé tailored to that ad
- A reflection memo

Decision Making Report

Students will write a report to aid readers with making a decision. Students may choose between a consumer report or a charity assessment. This assignment will include:

- An initial pitch
- An annotated bibliography
- A thoroughly-researched report including at least two visual aids
Instruction Manual and Video

Students will create a suite of instructional materials designed to teach readers how to make or do something for the first time. These materials will include:

- A written instruction manual containing at least four visual aids
- An instructional video

A Note Regarding Grades

In college, the grading scale used by your instructors to assess your work is likely very different from the one by your high school. In college, "A" work is truly exceptional, both in the sense that it is extremely high in quality and in the sense that it bears the unique stamp of the individual who created it. "B" work exceeds expectations, but is more expected or less insightful than "A" work. "C" work meets expectations for the assignment and goes no further. "D" and "F" work both have serious issues that need fixing if the student hopes to move forward in the course. Keep this in mind as you work on your assignments for the semester.

Grading Scale

A (excellent performance): 90-100.
B (above average performance): 80-89.
C (average performance): 70-79.
F (failure): 0-59.

Plagiarism/Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication.

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp and http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.

My policy is simple: plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that assignment, or a failing grade for the course depending on the severity of the violation.

We will be discussing the proper way to cite your sources during this class, but in the meantime, if you have any questions about this definition or about a particular case in any of your courses, it is up to you to approach me (or any of your other instructors) for help.
Classroom Conduct

In order for our classroom sessions to be productive, we need to create an environment in which none of us are afraid to put ourselves out there in front of each other. Rudeness will not be tolerated. We may discuss “hot button” issues, but we need to be respectful of the opinions, feelings, and life experiences of others. Hateful language or behavior such as racism, sexism, homophobia, etc is not acceptable. Students who engage in this behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Special Accommodations

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Resources

The AARC offer free writing tutoring, which is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. They also offer online writing tutoring services and workshops about writing-related topics. For more information, go to http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/, visit them on the first floor of the Steen Library, or call them at 936-468-4108.

Unit 1: Introduction to the Course | January 15th – January 21st

Read the syllabus

What is Reader-Centered Writing?

Read Chapter 1: Communication, Your Career, and this Book and Chapter 21: Writing Reader-Centered Correspondence: Letters, Memos, and Emails in Technical Communication

Emails

Memos

All Unit 1 Materials Due in D2L by midnight on January 21st

Unit 2: The Complaint Letter | January 22nd – January 28th

Read Chapter 3: Defining Your Communication’s Goals and Chapter 10: Developing an Effective Professional Style in Technical Communication
The Three Rhetorical Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

Business correspondence

All Unit 2 Materials Due in D2L by midnight on January 28th

Unit 3: The Job Portfolio | January 29th – February 11th

Read Chapter 2: Overview of the Reader-Centered Approach: Writing for a Job and Chapter 7: Drafting Reader-Centered Communications in Technical Communication

Identifying Your Skills and Achievements

Finding and Reading Job Postings

Crafting an Effective Resume

All Unit 3 Materials Due in D2L by midnight on February 11th

Unit 4: The Decision-Making Report | February 12th – February 11th

Read Chapter 6: Organizing Reader-Centered Communications and Chapter 24: Writing Reader-Centered Empirical Research Reports in Technical Communication

Introduction to the Decision-Making Report

The DMR Format

The Pitch

Pitch Due in D2L by midnight on February 23rd

Read Chapter 4: Conducting Reader-Centered Research: Gathering, Analyzing, and Thinking Critically about Information and Chapter 5: Using Six Reader-Centered Research Methods in Technical Communication

Avoiding Plagiarism

The Annotated Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography Due by midnight on March 2nd


Data Visualization

Final DMR, Unit 4 Discussion Boards, and Unit 4 Memo Due in D2L by midnight on March 25th

Unit 5: Instructional Manual and Video | March 26th – May 4th

Read Chapter 14: Designing Reader-Centered Pages and Documents and Chapter 27: Writing Reader-Centered Instructions in Technical Communication
Introduction to the Instruction Manual

Read Chapter 15: Revising Your Drafts and Chapter 16: Testing Your Draft for Usefulness and Persuasiveness in Technical Communication

The Pitch

Pitch Due in D2L by midnight on April 9th

Peer Review

Peer Review of 2 Group Members' Instruction Manuals Due in D2L by midnight on April 20th

Instructional Videos

Final Version of Manual and Video as well as Unit 5 Discussion Boards and Unit 5 Memo Due in D2L by midnight on May 4th