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.

**Course description**

The SFA catalogue describes our course as:

**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). Prerequisite: six hours of freshman English.
**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.

**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 texts and materials:**
The 9th edition of the Anderson book is the best on the market. I’m currently using a slightly older edition (the 8th) to save substantial cash. It is available for cheap, particularly on Amazon.

A reliable way to store and transfer files (preferably a reliable cloud storage solution like Google Drive). Regular access to and ability to use D2L.

Enough money to print and bind your instruction manual if you choose to present a paper copy (you may also turn it in as a .pdf file). This is particularly important if you want to present it in color.

_Strongly recommended_ – Any writing handbook, such as the one you may have been required to buy in English 131 and 132. Cheap older editions can be gotten from Amazon for very little.

**Assignments:**

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 in order to pass this course. I will not accept any assignments more than one week late without an excuse, nor will I accept any assignments after the last class date.

You will be required to submit major assignments in a paper copy, and then online to the drop box on our D2L page. The process is easy and can be completed entirely in D2L, and I will carefully explain the process in class. For these assignments, you are expected to turn in both copies by the due date and time. I will NOT grade your assignment until you have submitted a copy to D2L.

**Grade determination:**

Homework, daily work, quizzes, and drafts .......................................................... 10%
Letter of complaint or petition and answer ................................................................. 5%
Job portfolio (job ad, résumé, cover letter, references sheet, follow-up letter) .................. 20%
Decision-making report

  - Project proposal ........................................................................................................ 5%
  - Annotated bib ......................................................................................................... 5%
  - Decision making report ......................................................................................... 20%

Instruction manual proposal (and oral pitch with visual aid) ........................................ 5%
Instruction manual ..................................................................................................... 20%
Final exam (comprehensive / editing exercise) ............................................................. 10%

Most major assignments except the final exam will include intermediate drafts and other materials required for full credit.

All major assignments will be graded according to rubrics that help to define the various aspects of each assignment (i.e. style, content, grammar, etc.) and you will be familiarized with the rubrics before each assignment is due.
Graded Daily Work Scale
5 = Excellent, flawless: Very insightful, and otherwise dazzlingly good. I think "wow! I wonder if I can get a copy to teach with next semester!" This is a rare score.
4.5 = Very good: Accomplishes everything needed with style and economy, reflects a strong understanding of the subject matter, and has no very significant errors. I think "good!"
4 = Good: Does the work expected, and contains only errors that might be expected of the average careful student at this point in the semester. I think "okay."
3.5 = Needs some work: Ideas may be incomplete or unfocused, organization may be sloppy. May be "off" in tone or style. I think "well, okay, I guess."
3 = Needs a lot of work: May be unclear in spots, or have numerous, embarrassing, or unprofessional errors. I think "well, maybe next time."
2 = Unacceptable: Fails to accomplish some aspect of the assignment, or has a variety of unprofessional errors. I think "maybe he or she had a high fever or something."
1 = Token effort: Wrong assignment or shows very little work. Accomplishes little of what the assignment asks. Reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the assignment or a deficit of effort or skill. I think "why did I ever get into this line of work?" A paper with a name on it and a sentence, turned in on time.
0 = Didn't turn paper in: I think "hmm, I wonder if he or she has dropped the course?"

Daily Work Completion Grades
Sometimes, when drafts or exercises are given student feedback in class, I will, in lieu of taking them up, walk around, ascertain whether they are complete or not, and give them a completion grade. Exercise completion grades will be a 4/4 if complete to reasonable standard, and less if not.

Percentage Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>70-79</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>69-60</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course policies:

Attendance: Regular attendance is required for success in this course. Lectures and discussions will highlight what sorts of things will be on the tests, there will be frequent short writing assignments and frequent reading quizzes will be given at the beginning or the end of classes. Please arrive on time. No homework or in-class assignments may be made up unless your absence is excused or has been pre-arranged with me at least a full day in advance. If you miss a class for a university-excused reason, you must (by the second day you return to class) present me with a typed memo explaining the reason for your absence, and you should attach any documentation (such as a note from your doctor) to this memo.

Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for all information and work covered in class. If you missed homework or in-class assignments during an excused absence, it is your responsibility to find out what you’ve missed and arrange with me to make it up.

Each unexcused absence over 4 may result in the lowering of your total grade by five points. According to university policy, missing more than the equivalent of three weeks’ worth of classes for any reason (9 class periods in this course) means you cannot earn a passing grade in the course.

Deadlines and late work: You are expected to turn in all assignments on time. Late work will be accepted only according to the following guidelines.

Late papers and free homework late
Each student has one (1) free late homework assignment: to use it, write “Oops” clearly at the top of the completed assignment and turn it in within one week of the assigned due date (and before the last day of class).
Other than this “oops” assignment, no late homework will be accepted without a university-approved absence or a very compelling excuse (my judgment) typed and correctly formatted as a memo, detailing your reasons and providing evidence as necessary.

Major papers (listed by percentages above) are not available for the “Oops” policy above. Major papers turned in after the beginning of the class period on which they are due will be considered late, and will have one full letter grade (10 percentage points) deducted from their final grade. Another full letter grade will be deducted for every twenty four hours that passes after the due date. The easiest way to receive a very poor grade in this course is to turn things in late. Most major papers will be turned both in paper copies and online for this course.

Revision policy: You may choose to revise your Job Portfolio and/or Decision Making Report project if you wish. Revisions are entirely optional, and allow you the opportunity to earn up to 15 additional points (the equivalent of one and a half letter grades) on the assignment. To receive any credit for a revision, you must adequately demonstrate that you’ve made intelligent and major revisions to the work. This will include a memo detailing changes and final draft with changes highlighted.

Revisions are due no more than one week (7 days) after you receive your original grade on the assignment (thus, revision due dates may differ slightly from student to student).

Specific instructions for the revisions will be given in class. No revisions that don’t follow the instructions will receive extra points.

Missed quizzes and missed in-class work: If you miss a reading quiz or other in-class activity due to a documented, excused absence, you will be given the opportunity to make up the work in some alternate form, but it is up to you to ask for the opportunity.

Original work: Your work, with the exception of résumés, must be created for this class. Work written for previous courses or other purposes is not acceptable for a passing grade, unless you have received approval from the instructor.

Plagiarism: I take plagiarism very seriously. According to SFASU Policies and Procedures:

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) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; 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 are (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 an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

If a student’s paper contains plagiarized material, the student will meet with me, and I will determine the outcome, which typically involve penalties from an un-revisable zero on the paper to an F for the course. In addition, an Academic Dishonesty Form will be filed. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or fear you may not have properly cited something, please talk to me immediately.

Difficulties: If you do not understand an instruction, or if you have questions or are having difficulties with the reading or writing assignments, the right time to ask about it is before it’s due. Feel free to come into my office hours, make an appointment, or write a concise and easy-to-answer inquiring email after you’ve reread the prompts for the assignment.
Email: Correspondence relating to this course must use your sfasu email account. Do not send email from the D2L system. The subject line must be ENG 273. I am not certain to respond to emails with any other subject line, especially if they resemble spam. I never accept assignments by email, and emails with attachments will not be opened.

Also, since this is a class in technical writing, if you’re emailing me, try to write well and actually tell me the things I need to know concisely and correctly. Otherwise, I may bounce a request back in order to get what I need to answer it, wasting both our time.

Computer Use: This section of ENG 273 is held in a computer lab. Please do not use the computers for anything that is not class-related. If I see Facebook or similar sites up on your monitor during class time without a compelling reason why, I will count you as absent for the day. Please do not use the lab to print non-class related material, and be aware that I will not be able to give you an extra 10 minutes to print before class starts. Have your homework and major papers printed before class.

Phones: If you have a cell phone, please put it away in our class unless you are looking up answers for discussion. If you must receive calls due to some developing emergency, please set the phone to a silent setting. If you must talk on your phone due to some earth-shattering emergency, please leave our classroom to do so. People texting in class may be lightly mocked for their uncontrolled addiction and told to stop.

Eating, Drinking, Sleeping and So On: This is a computer classroom—please leave food or drink somewhere safe and away from your computer. If you sleep in class, you will be woken up. At least feigning attention and interest is very important: please don't read the newspaper, listen to an ipod, or send instant messages during class. If I see Facebook come up during class time, I will be forced to laugh at you, stop you, and count you as absent for the day.

Bringing Your Book: Bring the course text to class every day. I will occasionally assign in-class quizzes or work that won’t be possible without it.

Accommodations for Disabilities: According to the University:
“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 the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.”

Withheld Grades: Do not assume you can get a WH for just any reason. According to the University: “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.”

I only consider WHs for unavoidable circumstances, and only when the vast majority of student work has already been completed with a passing grade and no previous academic dishonesty.
Important Dates

The following schedule is tentative. No due dates will be moved up, and I’ll try to keep changes to a minimum. The “assignments” file on D2L is always the authoritative source for assignments and due dates. Check here often. Daily work will be announced in class and listed on the “Assignments” file.

Jan. 30  Complaint (or petition) letter with brief memo analyzing audience, audience response due
Feb. 13  Rough draft of full job portfolio due (peer edit) (parts due before)
Feb. 15  Job Portfolio due
Feb. 27  Proposal memo due for research project
Mar. 6   Annotated bib FD
Apr. 3   Decision making report RD
Apr. 5   Decision making report FD
Apr. 12  Instruction manual project proposal due: presentation or screencast
May 1    Draft of Instruction Manual due (in class peer editing session)
May 3    Instruction Manual due
May 8    Final Exam: 1-3pm (Tuesday)

In addition to these due dates, I will be giving you frequent reading assignments (i.e. pages to read in the textbook) and short homework assignments, often scaffolding (parts of longer assignments). Other class activities (reading quizzes, collaborative activities, in-class writing) will be scheduled throughout the course, as well, though reading quizzes will always be unannounced. Check D2L’s day-by-day for all daily work assignments.

Tentative week-by-week

The following schedule is based on the average pace of previous semesters, and serves as a best guess. Small exercises, readings, quizzes, and revision opportunities will be added as necessary for the progress of the class. Deadlines will never be moved forward, but may be moved back if necessary.

Week 1
Introduction to course. Go over policies, difference between technical writing and academic writing.

Correspondence, letters, memo, email, twitter, various other formats. Memo and letter formats (handouts). Bad complaint letter. Read chapter 5 (persuasion), chapter 23.

Week 2
Tone / word choice / audience. Write letter requesting an action, audience memo, and response. Read chapter 10.

Look at complaint letter with rubric. Talk about grading.

Week 3
Complaint letter assignment due, January 30.
Read chapter 2 on job portfolio.

Look over prompts, talk about job portfolio. Find job ad. Write draft job letter.

Week 4
Bring in job ad and job letter. Get feedback. Go over resumes and resume styles.
Write draft resumes.

Grade/critique sample resumes. Peer edit resumes. Review other documents.
Write rough drafts

Week 5
RD of job portfolio for peer edit, February 13

**Week 6**
Writing style. Topics for report. Read on proposals (chapter 23). Pitch topics Wednesday.

Pitch topics. Talk about proposals. Proposals due next time. Read research chapters (6 and 7).

**Week 7**

**Proposals due, February 27.** Talk about research. Look over AB prompt and example. Write out research questions in class.

Continue discussion of research. Begin AB work.

**Week 8**
Look over citations. Work on research in class. Read chapter on revision (Chapter 17)

**Turn in FD bibs, March 6**
Review decision making reports, talk about evaluating options, logic.

**Week 9**
Spring break. Woo.

**Week 10**
Discuss sample report handout. Keep drafting report. Read Chapter 8 and 9. Write an intro for next time.

Review reports, look over rubric. Read material on graphics, page layout (Chapter 14, 16). Continue drafting, bring in another chunk.

**Week 11**
Review further part. Brief style review

**Week 12**

**Report RD due, April 3.** Peer edit report.

**Report FD due, April 5.** Instruction activity. Bring sample instructions for next time.

**Week 13**
Talk about sample instructions. General instruction best practices. Work in class on practice instruction sets as group work.

Review manual instructions, procedures, practices, styles. Write IM proposal for next time. Prepare Power Point for in class presentation, or record screencast with voiceover (instructions available).

**Week 14**

**Turn in IM proposal.** April 12 give incredibly brief presentation OR turn in screencast. Get head-nod.

Individual manual page review, design lessons. For next time: task analysis.

**Week 15**
Task analysis due. Work on manual.

Review manual intro.

**Week 16**
Peer review manual: May 1

**Turn in manual FD** May 3 Discuss final exam.

**Final exam:** Tuesday, May 8, 1-3pm