English 273: Technical Writing
Section 590
Summer II 2018

Instructor: Ms. Laura Osborne

Department: English

Office: Steen Library Room 218A (on the 2nd floor, in the same hallway as Info Lab 2)

Office Phone: 936-468-5832

Email: Use D2L to send me emails. If D2L is unavailable, send email to osbornel@sfasu.edu with an accurate subject line containing "273".

Class meeting time and place: Online

Online Office Hours

- Mondays from 7:00-8:30 PM

To chat with Ms. Osborne during her online office hours, contact her on Skype (lauraosborne74).
If you want to meet with Ms. Osborne face to face at any point during the term, please email her to set up an appointment.

Prerequisite

Students must have earned a grade of C or higher in English 131 and English 132 (or their equivalents).

Official Course Description

This is the course description that appears in the official SFA course catalog:

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 writing). Prerequisite: six hours of freshman English.
Course Overview

The general objective of this course is to learn, improve, and demonstrate effective, appropriate use of written Standard English in the context of the workplace. This course introduces you to the essential elements of technical writing in a practical and progressive structure designed to emulate the "real world." This course is both writing and reading intensive. You will produce a wide range of documents commonly found in the workplace, including but not limited to instructions, reports, proposals, memos, and letters. You will analyze typical rhetorical situations, recognize conventional styles of presentation, and learn how to tailor your writing to a variety of audiences.

The professional 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 documents that do what you need them to do without causing undue confusion, conflict, or offense.

As this is an online course, you will be making frequent use of a computer and of D2L. You'll be expected to log into the course and check the news announcements and check your D2L email once a day on weekdays. You can expect that work will be due in this course every week – all of the due dates are listed on the Course Timeline page in the Getting Started material.

Official Course Outcomes and Objectives

Note: The following information is a university-required inclusion on this syllabus.

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 English 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 Course Text


It doesn’t matter if your copy is new or used, or if it is a printed copy or an electronic copy – just as long as you have the 9th edition. Quizzes in this course will be based heavily on material from the text, and older editions might not contain the same information.

All students are expected to have a copy of the book by no later than the end of the first week of Summer II classes.
Deadlines and Late Work Policies

This is not a self-paced course. Technical writing in the workplace is deadline-oriented. To simulate this atmosphere, you are expected to turn in all assignments on time, and failure to do so will result in a grade deduction on the assignment of 5% per calendar day. No assignments will be accepted more than 4 days late and no assignments will be accepted after Saturday, August 11th at 11:59 PM.

Drafts, peer critiques, discussions, and quizzes must be posted/submitted by the due dates in order to receive any credit, and cannot be posted or submitted late.

Any time that you experience extenuating circumstances affecting your ability to meet a deadline, please contact your instructor immediately, in advance of the deadline, so that arrangements can be made for an extension if the situation warrants it.

As indicated on the Course Timeline, a few of the major assignments include a "grace period" due date, meaning that they will be accepted without question and without penalty up to 24 hours following their due dates - so if you find yourself running a bit behind on one of those major assignments, you have a built-in cushion of time in which to finish.

Communication

Course communication will occur primarily through D2L email, news postings on the course homepage, discussion posts, and online office hours. I will check my course email at least once a day, Monday through Friday, and will reply as quickly as possible.

Students are also expected to check their D2L email at least once each day, Monday through Friday, and to respond promptly to email queries from their instructor.

Phone Messages

During regular "work day hours" (8 to 5, Monday through Friday), I am employed full-time in the SFA Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL). While you may reach me by phone during those hours if you have a quick question, be aware that I am often conducting faculty training workshops, helping faculty with D2L, and otherwise away from my desk.

Don’t be worried if you call and I answer with “Center for Teaching & Learning, this is Laura…” Since most of the calls I get are from faculty, I usually introduce myself by first name when I answer the phone.

When in doubt, try contacting me by email in D2L. Or, if you send me an email outside of D2L, please include "273" somewhere in the subject line. Otherwise, your message may be easily lost amongst the large volume of email I receive each day.
Technical Difficulties

If at any point during the course you experience technical difficulties in D2L, please let me know immediately. Keep in mind that a technical glitch in D2L does not excuse you from completing and submitting assignments on time. If you ever find yourself unable to submit an assignment through D2L, you should submit it as an email attachment instead. And if D2L email isn't working, then send me your assignment through regular campus email (to OSBORNEL@SFASU.EDU).

Also be aware that you can contact Andra Floyd, the Support Specialist for D2L, by email (AFLOYD@SFASU.EDU) or phone (936-468-1919) for help. Andra is an expert at helping students solve technical difficulties in D2L.

Assignments and Assessments

All writing assignments must be typed and submitted as a Microsoft Word (or Rich Text Format) document online through D2L. All assignments will be graded for proper format, soundness of content, attention to rhetorical context, resourcefulness, grammar, mechanics, and (when specified by the assignment) document design.

Assignments submitted in an incorrect file type will be counted as late (and a grade deduction made accordingly) until an acceptable file type is submitted. After submitting an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to check their dropbox folder to verify that the correct file was submitted.

All assignments must be completed in the order in which they are given, and all three key assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Major assignments

There will be four major assignments in this class, of varying lengths and with varying point values. The three key assignments are the Resume and Cover Letter, the Product Evaluation Report, and the Illustrated Instruction Set. Failure to complete any of the three key assignments will result in a grade of F for the course.

- Project 1: Resume and cover letter
- Project 2: Research and documentation (working in small groups)
- Project 3: Product evaluation report
- Project 4: Illustrated instruction set

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.
Quizzes

Each module will contain a 15 point quiz. Quizzes will typically be timed to 20 minutes; if you need special accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services to complete the necessary forms.

Drafts & peer critiques

Projects 1 and 3 will each require posting a partial draft ahead of the due date, as well as responding thoughtfully to two of your classmates' drafts.

Grade Determination

Problem description memo ......................................... 40 points
Resume & cover letter .............................................. 100 points *
Research & documentation collaborative project .......... 70 points
  (Individual portion of grade = 35 points)
  (Group portion of grade = 35 points)
Product evaluation report ......................................... 100 points *
Instruction set ......................................................... 100 points *
5 quizzes @ 15 pts each ........................................... 75 points
Learning agreement .................................................. 5 points
Introductory post ..................................................... 5 points
Report topic post ..................................................... 5 points
Instructions topic post ............................................... 5 points
2 drafts @ 15 points each .......................................... 30 points
2 rounds of peer critiques @ 10 pts each round .......... 20 points

Total possible points ........................................... 555 points

* These are the key assignments of the course and MUST be completed in order to pass. Failure to complete any of these 3 assignments will result in an F for the course.

Minimum points required for an A...........499.5
Minimum points required for a B......... 444
Minimum points required for a C......... 388.5
Minimum points required for a D...........333

Any score below 333 points will result in an F for the course; scores will not be curved.
Extra credit

There will be one opportunity to earn extra credit, available to everyone equally, as follows:

- **Complete the official course evaluation (1 pt)** - Complete the official course evaluation (that will be available in mySFA near the end of the semester) and you will earn 1 point of extra credit, added to your overall total points.

Other extra credit opportunities may be made available during the semester; if so, they will be announced to the entire class and made available to everyone equally.

Using the Steen Library’s Resources (on-campus and from a distance)

Whether you live on or off-campus, and regardless of whether you are able to visit the Steen Library in person, there are numerous full-text materials (including articles, e-books, and more) that you can access online. Also, did you know that Interlibrary Loan materials can be mailed to you if you live at a distance?

The research librarian for students in English classes is:

Janie Richardson  
936-468-1896  
richardsjl3@sfasu.edu

(Have research questions involving assignments in your other courses? Find the complete list of research guides for each subject area, including contact information for the librarians, here: http://libguides.sfasu.edu.)

Other Course Policies

Academic integrity (and policy on recycled work)

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated in this course. **Documented proof of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade (of zero) on the assignment, and usually also a failing grade in the course. Rewrites and second chances are seldom permitted. All assignments you submit will be checked for plagiarism via Turnitin.**

In addition, all work submitted in this course must be 1) written by YOU and 2) written THIS semester, for THIS specific section of this course (not recycled from any other course you’ve
taken, here or elsewhere, and not recycled from any previous time you may have attempted this course). If it is discovered that you have turned in a "recycled" assignment, you will receive an F (zero) for that assignment.

The following is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section 4.1 of Academic Affairs:

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

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/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf)

**Acceptable Student Behavior**

A recent policy from the Provost’s Office states, “Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.”

**Withheld grades**

A grade of WH (for Withheld) will be granted only in rare circumstances. Here is the official SFA policy on withheld grades:

**Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

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.

**Students with disabilities**

There is relatively little material in this course that requires listening to audio files or watching videos in order to complete an assignment or quiz. The majority of the course material is text based and easily accessible. There are some PDF files included in the course materials. Any students having difficulties accessing or reading those files (or any other materials in the course) should contact Ms. Osborne for assistance.

Here is the official SFA policy regarding students with disabilities:

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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Course timeline and due dates**

See the Course Timeline page in the Getting Started module for a schedule of all due dates. Module-by-module reading assignments will be given in the modules themselves.

_Last updated on July 9, 2018_
## English 273 Course Timeline

### Summer II 2018

Subject to small changes and corrections as needed; any changes will be posted to the course news.  
*Please note: all times given are in United States central time.*

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| **Getting started** and **Module 1: Correspondence and Audience** | Tuesday, July 10\(^{th}\) | Begin the getting started activities.  
  - Read all the material in the Getting Started module  
  - Buy your textbook  
  - Post your introduction on the Introduce Yourself discussion board.  
  - Complete the Learning Agreement quiz with a perfect score (can be taken as many times as needed)  
  - Upload a picture to your D2L profile (if you haven’t already done so) |
| | Wednesday, July 11\(^{th}\) | Deadline for completing all activities in the Getting Started module – by 11:59 PM.  
  Start working on Module 1 as soon as you’ve completed the Getting Started module. (You will not have access to Module 1 until you’ve submitted the Learning Agreement quiz with a perfect score and finished/saved the Getting Started checklist.) |
| | Saturday, July 14\(^{th}\) | “Problem description” memo assignment is due in the dropbox by 11:59 PM.  
  Module 1 quiz closes at 11:59 PM. This quiz (ONLY this quiz) can be taken twice, and only the average of the two scores will count. |
| **Module 2: Writing a Resume & Cover Letter** | Sunday, July 15\(^{th}\) | Module 2 opens at Noon  
  Begin reading module material and assigned chapters from the textbook.  
  Module 2 quiz opens. |
<p>| | Monday, July 16(^{th}) | Find or write a job advertisement to respond to (for the assignment due this week), so you can start planning your materials. |</p>
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<th>Activity</th>
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| **Tuesday, July 17**th | Finish reading the module material and assigned chapters from the textbook.  
Start drafting your Resume & Cover Letter assignment. |
| **Wednesday, July 18**th | Draft due (of either the resume or the cover letter) by 11:59 PM -- posted to the draft discussion board |
| **Thursday, July 19**th | Peer critiques due by 11:59 PM -- critiques of two drafts, posted as replies on the draft discussion board |
| **Saturday, July 21**st | Resume & Cover Letter assignment is due in the dropbox by 11:59 PM (don’t forget to include the job ad, too!)  
Module 2 quiz closes at 11:59 PM |
| **Sunday, July 22**nd | **Grace period window of time for submitting the Resume & Cover Letter assignment without late penalty closes at 11:59 PM** |

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| **Sunday, July 22**nd | **Module 3 opens at noon**  
Begin reading module material and assigned chapters from the textbook. Sign up for a group right away (look under Communication Tools > Groups).  
Module 3 quiz opens. |
| **Monday, July 23**nd | **Anyone who hasn't signed up for a group by tonight at 11 PM will be randomly assigned.**  
Begin researching your group’s topic; be sure to use the Steen Library’s online databases and resources. Contact a research librarian or reach out to your group members if you need help. |
| **Wednesday, July 25**th | Deadline (**Noon, not midnight**) for posting 3 relevant source citations (with an explanation of how/where you found each one).  
Remember, they must be peer-reviewed journal articles or other reliable materials such as government documents or dissertations (all of which you will find through the library’s databases).  
Also, your sources cannot duplicate anything your group members have already posted. Each of you must find 3 sources that haven’t already been mentioned. |
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<th>Event/Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, July 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>By now, you and everyone in your group should be working on proofreading and critiquing one another’s citations. Keep working on this, with an eye towards compiling one “master post” to be posted to the class discussion board by Saturday night.</td>
<td>Part of your grade for this project will be based on your “active, timely” individual participation throughout the week. Remember, you are each responsible for ensuring that your group members’ citations are correctly written and formatted, and that the research process/justification for each source is clear, specific, and succinct.</td>
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<td>Saturday, July 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>One person from each small group should post their group’s collective master post to the “Research and Documentation” discussion board (by 11:59 PM). Part of the grade for this project will be a “group score” based on the overall quality, completeness, logic, and correctness of your group’s post.</td>
<td>Module 3 quiz closes at 11:59 PM.</td>
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<td>Sunday, July 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><strong>Module 4 opens at noon</strong></td>
<td>Begin reading the module material and assigned chapters from the textbook. Keep researching your topic and gathering sources.</td>
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<td>Monday, July 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Start working on comparing the products and their features, and taking detailed notes.</td>
<td>Report topic discussion post due by 11:59 PM.</td>
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<td>Tuesday, July 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Start working on drafting your report.</td>
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<td>Wednesday, August 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Draft due (of at least 2 pages of the report body) by 11:59 PM -- posted to the draft discussion board</td>
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<td>Thursday, August 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Peer critiques are due by 11:59 PM -- critiques of two drafts, posted as replies on your group’s draft discussion board</td>
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<td>Saturday, August 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Product Evaluation Report assignment is due in the dropbox by 11:59 PM</td>
<td>Module 4 quiz closes at 11:59 PM.</td>
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<td>Sunday, August 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><em>Grace period window for submitting the Product Evaluation Report assignment without late penalty closes at 11:59 PM</em></td>
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| Sunday, August 5th        | Module 5 opens at noon
Begin reading module material and assigned chapters from the textbook
Module 5 quiz opens. |
| Monday, August 6th        | Get started on planning your Instruction Set and taking the screenshots, photos, or other graphics you will need.
Instructions topic discussion post due by 11:59 PM. |
| Tuesday, August 7th       | Start working on drafting your Instruction Set.                      |
| Wednesday, August 8th     | Optional revision of the Job Portfolio assignment is due in the dropbox by 11:59 PM. This is the final deadline (no late revisions will be accepted). |
| Friday, August 10th       | Instruction Set assignment is due by 11:59 PM
Module 5 quiz closes. |
| Saturday, August 11th     | Grace period window of time for submitting the Instruction Set assignment without late penalty closes at 11:59 PM
The absolute cut-off time for submitting work for the Summer II semester is on this date at 11:59 PM. No late work will be accepted after this date and time. |

**End of Semester**

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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 15th</td>
<td>Your instructor will post official semester grades in D2L and in the mySFA system by Noon.</td>
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*Last updated on July 9, 2018*