Technical and Scientific Writing

Course Description
ENGL 2311 “Technical and Scientific Writing” (3 credits) typically meets three times each week in 50-minute segments or twice each week in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. In addition to weekly readings from the textbook and other relevant sources, students will create a variety of documents including correspondence, job portfolios, feasibility reports, instruction manuals, and visual presentations. Other course requirements include peer review exercises, online quizzes, topic approval memos, and discussion boards. Students are required to submit at least five major projects, one of which is a collaborative writing project that includes a class presentation. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Prerequisite: Six hours from ENG 131, ENG 132, or ENG 133.

Course Objectives
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.

Inefficient, incorrect, and sometimes unethical writing plagues the business world. 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.

Student Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, you should be able to:

• Analyze audience and rhetorical situation in realistic settings, and tailor writing style and form to match them;
• Write acceptably clear, concise, and precise standard English prose suitable for business and scientific purposes, relatively free from stigmatized errors;
• Understand the role of standard form in business and scientific communication, and demonstrate your ability to write in a conventional form;
• Demonstrate your understanding of the role of visual presentation layout in technical communication, and tailor documents to meet context of use;
• Work together in small groups to plan, create, and edit documents;
• Carry out a variety of research, including library work, surveys, and interviews; and
• Plan, design, and deliver oral presentations on a researched topic in your chosen field.

Required Texts
Technical Communication, Fourteenth Edition by John M. Lannon and Laura J. Gurak

Any writing handbook.

Materials Needed Daily
• Pens/pencils, highlighters
• A variety of ink (optional)
• Work ethic
• Large spiral notebook or binder
• Technology, Google Suite, and D2L access

Methods of Instruction
I have high expectations for students in this course. My goal is to provide you with the basic tools for professional writing. I also want to help students develop basic analytical and communications skills.
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. Major assignments will be evaluated using a rubric. Assignments will be graded for proper format, soundness of content, attention to rhetorical context, resourcefulness, grammar, mechanics, and when specified--document design. **All assignments, excluding the resume, must be completely original documents created for this class.**

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.

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

**Method of Evaluation**

This course will follow Palestine High School's grading policy of 10 daily grades recorded each six weeks, accounting for 40% of the period average, and three major grades recorded each six weeks, accounting for 60% of the period average. For grading periods in which there are only five weeks, the number of grades is reduced to 7 daily and 2 major.

**Grading Standard:**

**A: 90-100:** Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one's ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

**B: 80-89:** Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one's ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and expression.

**C: 70-79:** Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one's ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole), and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student's hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and a struggle to develop complex, critical thinking skills.

**D: 60-69:** Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and a lack of completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one's struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

**F: 0-59:** Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either not have completed the assignment, will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or will have completed the assignment and
demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation.

**Expected Time Requirement for this Course**

Approximately five to six hours per week of time spent reading, reviewing, and completing assignments is recommended to complete this course.

**Desire2Learn (D2L)**

For D2L technical support, contact student support in the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. If you call after regular business hours or on a weekend, please leave a voicemail. For general computer support (not related to D2L), contact the Technical Support Center at 936-468-4357.

**Classroom Policies:**

**Attendance:** All students must be in compliance with the attendance laws concerning public schools of Texas. Students have however many days missed in order to complete and submit the makeup work upon their return. Include your absence date(s) and submission date with your work.

Being absent is **not an excuse for missed information or assignments.** Contact a classmate (or me) to find out what occurred in class if you are not able to attend. Pick up any missed material. Be responsible for all the material discussed in class on the days you were absent — and for the material for the next class period. Plan your absences wisely.

**Late Work:** Students should strive to turn in work on time. However, a 24-hour grace period is provided in which students may turn in late work for a 10-point grade penalty for each day that it is late.

**Devices:** Texting, looking at a cell phone, etc. when others are talking is so obviously not acceptable that it goes without writing out. **Phones should be kept in the phone cubby or your backpack** — unless you are waiting for a notification during a family emergency (please tell me before class begins).

**Work Ethic:** 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). Students will lose points for sleeping during class or disrupting the class agenda. Please find another class if you consider this an inconvenience.

**University Policies:**

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1):** 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.

**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 (5) 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

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, 468-5004 / 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/facultyandstaff/syllabus.asp

Course Outline

Week One, January 7-10

Week Two, January 13-17

Week Three, January 21-24

Week Four, January 27-31

Week Six, February 10-13
Job portfolio choices and research. Find job ad. Write job letter draft.

Week Seven, February 17-21
Peer edit job ad and letter. Apply feedback through revisions/edits. Introduce resumes and resume styles. Write draft resumes.

Week Eight, February 24-28
Grade/critique sample resumes. Peer edit resumes. Review other documents. Write rough draft of job portfolio.

Week Nine, March 2-6
Peer edit rough draft of job portfolio. Final draft of job portfolio. Word choice. Writing style.

Week Ten, March 9-12

Week Eleven, March 16-20: Spring Break

Week Twelve, March 25-27
Peer edit proposals. Proposals due. Write research questions. Focus on research sources and processes. Create annotated bibliography.
**Week Thirteen, March 30-April 3**
Proof citations. Final annotated bibliography due. Review decision-making reports, evaluating options, logic.

**Week Fourteen, April 6-9**
Discuss sample report handout. Continue drafting report; write an introduction/summary and conclusion.

**Week Fifteen, April 14-17**
Peer review reports, rubric. Read material and view samples on graphics, page layout. Continue drafting report.

**Week Sixteen: April 20-24**

**Week Seventeen, April 27-May 1**

**Week Eighteen, May 4-8**

**Week Nineteen, May 11-15**
Peer review instruction manuals.

**Week Twenty, May 18-22**
Final exams: final draft of instruction manual presentations.