English 273: Technical Writing

SPRING  2020

Instructor: Kristi Warren

Department: English

Office: Liberal Arts North (LAN) 230

Office Phone: 936-468-2136 (I almost never answer this number and PREFER email)

Email: Use the D2L email tool here within the course or email warrenkr@sfasu.edu with an accurate subject line containing ENG 273 and your section number.

Class meeting time and place: Online

Office Hours

- Wednesdays from 9:00-10:30 am and 7:00-9:30 pm (online)
- Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm (on campus)
- By appointment (request a time via email)

To contact Mrs. Warren during her online office hours, use the "Office Hours" chat room here on our course D2L page (preferred) or send a message using the Pager tool.

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: 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 should be able to create easy-to-read documents that communicate clearly without causing undue confusion, conflict, or offense.

As this is an online course, you will need frequent access to a computer and D2L (also known as Brightspace). You'll also be expected to use email and to conduct online research. The syllabus indicates clearly the progress expected, so you can prepare ahead if you are so inclined. **This is not a self-paced course, and it is your responsibility to keep up with weekly deadlines.**

The focus will be on clear, concise, complete written communication. This level of communication requires a well-defined concept of "audience" and a carefully thought-out message.

**Official Course Outcomes and Objectives**

The following information is required to appear on the syllabus for this course.

**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.

**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.

**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 Course Text and Materials**


ISBN-10: 1305667883

You'll need a reliable way to store and transfer important files and projects (a USB/Flash drive or cloud backup) and frequent access to D2L.

**Also required:** *The ability to record video and audio on your computer*. You do not need any specific model of web cam or microphone for this. Just be aware that there will be one assignment in the course requiring that you record yourself and your computer screen while talking through a presentation.
Deadlines

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 day for major assignments. Assignments such as drafts and peer critiques are especially time sensitive and will only be accepted one day past the due date (for partial credit). **No major assignments will be accepted more than one week late, and no assignments will be accepted after Saturday, May 2 at 10:00 PM. Again this is not a self-paced course, and you may have several things due in a week (all assigned well in advance of the deadline).** However, if you experience extenuating circumstances and are unable to meet a major deadline, please contact your instructor in advance of the due date so that arrangements can be made for an extension if the situation warrants it.

As indicated on the Course Timeline and Calendar, some of the major assignments include a "grace period," meaning that they will be accepted without question and without penalty up to **24 hours** following their due dates. Consequently, if you find yourself running a bit behind on one of those major assignments, you do have a built in cushion of time in which to finish. **Quizzes and peer review do NOT have built in extensions.**

Communication

Course communication will occur primarily through Brightspace 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 often and to respond promptly to emails from their instructor. I strongly suggest setting your Brightspace account to send notifications of News, emails, etc.

As with your Brightspace email, if you send me an email through MySFA email, please include "ENG 273" somewhere in the subject line. Otherwise, your message may be easily lost among the large volume of email I receive each day.

If you wish to see me on campus, my office is Liberal Arts North (LAN) 230.

Technical Difficulties

If at any point during the course you experience technical difficulties in D2L, please let me know immediately. Also, 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, submit it as an email attachment ONLY
as a last resort (I won't grade papers submitted via email, but I'll reopen the dropbox for you). Please note that you can only email my D2L account from your D2L email (in other words, you can't send an email from your Yahoo account to a D2L email address). You may also contact Andra Floyd, the Student Support Specialist for distance education, by email (AFLOYD@SFASU.EDU) or phone (936-468-1919) for help with D2L.

Assignments

All writing assignments must be typed and submitted online through Brightspace in either Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format. The Pages program (found on Mac computers) is not an accepted format in D2L or Turnitin.com (where D2L automatically sends papers for plagiarism detection). All assignments will be graded for proper format, soundness of content, attention to rhetorical context, resourcefulness, grammar, mechanics, and document design.

After submitting an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to check the Dropbox folder to verify that the file was accepted. 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.

All assignments must be completed in the order in which they are given. **No assignments will be accepted more than 7 days late,** nor will any assignments be accepted after 10 PM on Saturday, May 2.

- **All core assignments (see Projects below) and the Final Exam must be completed in order to pass the course.**
- Minor assignments (including topic posts and memos, drafts, peer critiques, and quizzes) must be completed by the due dates in order to receive full credit. A quiz cannot be reopened once it closes.
- If you are running into delays completing any assignments (major or minor) and want to avoid grade penalties, **CONTACT MRS. WARREN AHEAD OF THE DUE DATE** to explain the problem and ask for a short extension (which may under some circumstances be granted).

Be aware that your instructor will be running almost all of your course work through Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. See the Academic Integrity section for penalties for plagiarism.

**Major assignments**

There will be six major assignments of varying lengths and with varying point values in ENG 273. **Failure to complete any of the six core assignments or the Final Exam will result in a grade of F for the course.**
- Module 2: Job Portfolio
- Module 3: Annotated Bibliography (research for the Decision-Making Report that is actually due during Module 4)
- Module 4: Decision-Making Report (DMR)
- Module 5: Illustrated Instruction Manual (IM)
- Module 6: Presentation
- Module 7: Collaboration Project (contains both individual and group components)

Quizzes

Modules 1-6 each contain a 20-point quiz. The quizzes will cover info from the assigned chapters in the textbook as well as material from the learning modules. Quizzes close on the last day of the module and can be taken at any time during their respective units.

Quizzes will be timed at 30 minutes. **Students will be able to take each quiz up to 2 times**, the scores for your first and second attempts will be averaged, and only the average score will count. If you need special accommodations, please be sure to contact the Disability Services office and complete the necessary paperwork.

Final Exam

There will be an essay format Final Exam where you will revise and/or write short documents in response to various scenarios. See the Course Timeline for the date range during which the final will be open.

Drafts & peer critiques

Some projects will each require posting a partial draft ahead of the due date as well as responding thoughtfully to the drafts of your group members. See the Peer Critique discussion board for specific instructions on how to receive full credit for your feedback.

Grade Determination

**MAJOR PROJECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job portfolio</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography / research analysis</td>
<td>65 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making report</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Manual</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration Essay (individual)</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaboration Group component. .......................... 50 pts

**SMALLER PROJECTS**
Correspondence assignment .......................... 30 pts
Report topic proposal memo .................. 20 pts
Instructions topic proposal memo ............... 20 pts
Instructions analysis .............................. 25 pts
Collaboration Reflection memo .................. 25 pts

**DRAFTS**
Job portfolio draft .................................. 20 pts
Citation/annotation draft (very brief) .............. 10 pts
Decision-making report draft .................... 20 pts
Instruction manual draft ............................ 20 pts

**PEER CRITIQUES**
Job portfolio critiques ............................. 15 pts
Decision-making report critiques .................. 15 pts
Instruction manual critiques ..................... 15 pts

**QUIZZES & EXAMS**
6 module quizzes @ 20 pts each .................. 120 pts
Final exam ........................................ 60 pts

**MISCELLANEOUS**
Learning agreement quiz .......................... 10 pts
Introductory post .................................. 5 pts
Presentation topic post ............................ 5 pts

**Total possible points** .......................... 1000

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.). Rubrics are available near the assignment instructions in each module.

Minimum points required for an A...........900
Minimum points required for a B...........800
Minimum points required for a C...........700
Minimum points required for a D...........600

Any score below 600 points will result in an F for the course; scores will not be "rounded up" or curved.
Extra credit

There will be three opportunities to earn extra credit available to everyone equally:

- **Use of office hours (2 pts)** - Drop by Mrs. Warren's online or campus office hours to ask her a question or to discuss an assignment at least once during the semester, and you will earn 2 points of extra credit added to your overall total. While you may use the online office hours as frequently as you like, you will only earn extra credit once.

- **Report a typo or error (1 pt)** - If you spot a factual error or typo in the course and are the first person to post about it on the Typos & Error Reports discussion board, you will earn 1 point of extra credit added to your overall total. You can report more than one error, but you'll only receive extra credit the first time.

- **Complete the official course evaluation (2 pts)** - Complete the official course evaluation (that will be available in mySFA near the end of the semester) and you will have 2 points of extra credit added to your overall total.

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

**Grade Criteria:**

Overall, your grade will be based on a total of 1000 points. To figure your grade out at any point in the semester, simply add up the number of points you have and divide that by the number of points possible. This will give you an overall percentage.

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. It is important to remember that a student can receive 0 out of 100 points. In the case that a student only partially completes an assignment or completes a work (in terms of page length, but not purpose) s/he may receive 0 points.

Other Course Policies

Academic integrity (PLEASE do not skip this section)

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 grade of zero on the assignment and oftentimes a failing grade in the course. Paperwork that documents the incident will also be filed with the Dean's office (as per university policy). All assignments you submit will be checked for plagiarism via Turnitin. The following is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section A-9.1 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/academic_integrity.asp.

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 for that assignment.

Withheld grades


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

Although some video components will be posted, there is very little material in this course that requires listening to audio files or watching videos in order to complete an assignment. The majority of the course material is text based, includes the Webreader, and is easily accessible. Any students having difficulties accessing or reading those files (or any other materials in the course) should contact Mrs. Warren 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 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/.

See the Course Timeline on the next page for all the due dates of this semester.