English 273–596: Technical & Scientific Writing  
Online Course Spring 2020

Professor Jennifer McLaughlin  
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Physical Office Hours (in LAN 244)  
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10AM – 11AM  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Appointments  
In the past, I haven’t really had students utilize set online office hours, I am more than willing to meet with any student who cannot make the hours above. I can meet via Zoom, Skype, phone, or face to face. I can meet during the hours listed above or (if needed) in the evening.

Please be advised that we will both need to agree to the appointment time and location at least 24 hours in advance.

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

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 format 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 process 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.

**English Learning Program 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**

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. (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. (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).
3. Write technical and workplace documents by applying the appropriate categorical modes for rhetorical composition (descriptive, expositive, scientific, etc.), integrating visuals with text, and presenting information in an oral format. (Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).
4. Work in groups to produce and critically evaluate documents, integrating different points of view. (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility).
5. Use critical-thinking skills and exhibit technical proficiency in the invention of composing processes. (Critical Thinking and Communication Skills).
6. Understand ethical considerations in technical and professional writing, understanding the consequences of communication acts. (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. (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. (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).
Credit Hour Justification
Technical and Scientific Writing (3 credits; fully online) typically meets online for 8 units over the course of 15 weeks in regular semesters and 5 weeks in summer semesters. For each unit, students are required to work through online course pages and complete readings of the textbook and other relevant sources, and 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. In addition, the final product for the class is a formal decision-making report. To successfully complete this course, in a regular semester, students must spend a minimum 6-8 hours per week working in the course management system and another 5-7 hours in reading field-specific documents. For summer sessions, the workload is condensed and requires a total of about 20 hours per week, including all activities.

Required Texts and Materials

I will post pdfs of all relevant material from the textbook for the first three weeks of the course. In that time, it is your responsibility to obtain a copy of the book.

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

Grade Breakdown
Grading in this class will be done via points. Each assignment is worth a certain amount of points. At the end of the semester, they will add up to 1000 points.

To determine your final grade, simply add them all up and move the decimal over one spot. The distribution for each is as such:

- Professional Correspondence ______100 points
- Job Portfolio _______________ 150 points
- Decision-Making Report _______ 150 points
- Instruction Manual ___________ 200 points
- Final Exam _________________ 150 points
- Daily Work __________________ 250 (62.5 points X 4 units)

Total Points per Letter Grade
A: 1000-900
B: 899-800
C: 799-700
D: 699-600
E: 599 and below

Major Assignment Due Dates
A more detailed schedule (including due dates for major assignments and daily work) will be provided on D2L, but here is a list of the due dates for all of our major assignments. Please see below for specific rules and regulations on the submission procedure.

- Professional Correspondence – Friday, January 1/31
- Job Portfolio – Friday, February 21
- Decision-Making Report – Friday, March 27
- Instruction Manual – Friday, April 24
- Final Exam – Wednesday, May 6

Note on End of Semester Grading
In order to be fair to everyone in the class, I do not offer extra assignments or revisions to individual students, especially at the end of the semester. I do have a few extra credit options built into the course, but they are available to the entire class, not specifically assigned to a single student.

Also, like many professors, I do not "bump" grades. However, I do round 9s to 10s, so 89% will be rounded to 90%, but 88% will not. Given that the course is out of 1000 points, that 1% difference is actually 10 points.

Any assignment can earn above the points possible (if done exceptionally well), and there are few small extra credit opportunities throughout the course, so any student asking for a bump has already had ample opportunity to earn those points.

Deadlines and Late Work Policies
Please realize that this is not a fully 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 it.

Unless otherwise notified, all assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the date listed. This is according to United States Central Standard Time zone (CTS). I do not recommend waiting until the very last minute to submit though, as file upload speeds and individual computer clocks can vary.

Drafts, progress memos, peer critiques, discussions, and quizzes (aka "Daily Work") must be posted/submitted by the due dates and times in order to receive any credit and cannot be posted or submitted late.

Major assignments can be submitted up to seven days late before they will automatically earn a zero. Please note that a 5% deduction will automatically be applied for each day it is late. This is
calculated by the date and time the assignment was originally due. Please be mindful that this
does not include the final exam. It, unfortunately, cannot be taken late.

Anytime that you experience extenuating circumstances and are unable to meet a deadline,
please contact me immediately, in advance of the deadline, so that arrangements can be made for
an extension if the situation warrants it. That does not guarantee an extension or alternative
assignment/submission process. Those will be given on a case-by-case basis.

Desire 2 Learn (D2L) Online Classroom and Email Access
Given the fact that this course is online, D2L will, obviously, be a vital part of succeeding in it.
In order to make things a little easier for both of us, this site will be the primary place for
communication and coursework.

It is your responsibility to access the site regularly. At absolute minimum, I would recommend
looking at the newsfeed, your email, and (depending on the week) your group discussion board
at least once a day, even if you are done with the coursework for the week.

Other Classroom Policies:
Since this class is modeling professional/business environments, please realize that you will need
to be respectful to those in the course. For the most part, you will be working alone with me
during this course. But, small group work is required for the course (course objectives 1 and 4),
and you have the ability to email your other classmates as well.

If I see any student being disrespectful, I will step in and mediate the issue. Depending on the
issue, this could result in a warning, actual points taken off your grade, alternative assignments,
or (in severe cases) my contacting chair of the department or higher administration. My hope is
that this policy is not actually needed this semester but please realize that it will be enforced if
needed.

Academic Integrity
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 (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an
author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
Course Specific Policy on Plagiarism
I take plagiarism and cheating very seriously. Part of completing this or any technical course successfully is the submission/completion of one's own work. Should an issue arise, depending on the severity of the situation, a student found committing one of these offences could suffer points lost off the assignment, a complete zero on it, or (in extreme cases) being reported to the chairs of the English and Creative Writing department and the department of that student's major, which would include paperwork of plagiarism being filed into the student's permanent record.

Withheld Grades - Semester Grades Policy
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
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/.

If you have disability paperwork filed for this course, it is your responsibility to confer with me to determine the best application of your accommodations. Basically, you and I still need to discuss your accommodations, even after you have paperwork filed. I want to make sure that you are getting what you need from me when you really need it.

Last Notes
If, at any point in the semester, you feel that you need to talk to me outside of class, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am more than willing to help by reviewing some of the content covered in class, brainstorming topic ideas for your assignments, or anything of that nature. You are welcome to e-mail me if you have any questions or cannot make my hours and/or special appointment.

Many students have almost a fear of contacting the professor, because they find it daunting, do not want to "bug" the professor, or (worse) feel “unworthy.” Please, please do not think anything like this. If you have a question or if you need help, contact me. I’m here for a reason, and I want to help you. It is my job to help prepare you for your future classes and career. I want to help you
succeed. I really do hope that you enjoy your time in this class, improve your skills, and learn some things you never knew.

I look forward to working with each one of you this semester.