ENGLISH 273/2311
INTRODUCTION TO
TECHNICAL &
SCIENTIFIC WRITING

SUMMER SECTION, ONLINE

In this section of Technical and Scientific Writing we learn and practice how to write technical and scientific information for various readers. We begin by surveying the work of technical writing – basic project management design, how to navigate work environments, how to work with standards and templates, and other basic knowledge expectations for technical and scientific writers. We will then practice writing several genres of technical writing including instructions, proposals, data visualizations, usability tests, and reports.

Throughout the course we will explore how to shift our writing to accommodate the needs of our readers and the stakeholders in our work. This rhetorical point of view is the essential starting point for good technical and scientific writing in many fields.

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION AND CREDIT HOUR JUSTIFICATION

“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 from ENG 131, ENG 132, or ENG 133.”


Unit of credit and course load math

Semester-long, 15 week, 3-hour course schedule:
Class 3 hours/week for 15 weeks = 45 hours in class total.
For each hour in class, at least 2 hours of prep/homework are expected.
Total course load = 9 hours/week for 15 weeks = 135 hours total.
Summer, 4.5 week, 3-hour course schedule:
Class 10 hours/week for 4.5 weeks = 45 hours in class total.
For each hour in class, at least 2 hours of prep/homework are expected.
Total course load = 30 hours/week for 4.5 weeks = 135 hours total.

What this means for your schedule

You should expect to be on Brightspace, reading content, watching videos and/or participating in a Zoom session for ~2 hours every day, M-F. (This is the equivalent of in-class time.)

You should expect to spend time doing homework exercises, writing your own work, reading the textbook, etc. for ~4 hours every day, M-F.

Do many students spend less time and still succeed? Yes. However, if you fall behind it is nearly impossible to catch back up during a short summer course. Therefore, schedule yourself using this math and be pleased with yourself if it takes you less time to complete your work.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 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)

- 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)

- 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. (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility)

- Work in groups to produce and critically evaluate documents, integrating different points of view. (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills,
Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility)

• Use critical-thinking skills and exhibit technical proficiency in the invention and composing processes. (Critical Thinking and Communication Skills)

• Understand ethical considerations in technical and professional writing, understanding the consequences of communication acts. (Critical Thinking, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility)

• Tailor communications to social and ethical frameworks, editing them to be effective and responsible in international and intercultural situations. (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility)

• 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)

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Access to SFA websites and applications including Brightspace LMS, the library, email, SFA 360, etc.

Students must maintain access to readings posted on Brightspace through a personal laptop or handheld device or by printing out texts.

**Required Textbook**

Practical Strategies for Technical Communication: A Brief Guide Third Edition by Mike Markel and Stuart A. Selber. ISBN: 978-1-319-10432-0 (ebook PDF version can be found for ~$20)

**ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT**

Stephen F. Austin provides students reasonable accessibility accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities or services. Students requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should 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 Dr. Parks and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided.

The full policy is available at:
SFA uses Brightspace as its virtual course management system. You can locate our course website through your MySFA login.

Class handouts, reading links, assignment sheets, and important documents such as this syllabus will be posted on Brightspace in the content tab.

We will use the discussion board and other Brightspace features.

Assignments will be submitted electronically. Look in the assessments tab for submission folders.

Locate the site’s gradebook. You are in charge of checking the gradebook for errors throughout the semester.

Please opt in to receiving emails from Brightspace so that Dr. Parks can communicate with you outside of class.

Technical and Scientific Writing is an attention-intensive class. If you skip class webpages, readings, videos, and assignments you will miss important information, group work, and practice tasks. If you get off schedule it is difficult to catch back up.

Therefore, there are due dates for assignments and a planned weekly content schedule that you should try to adhere to as much as possible.

The second unit of our class (Week of June 8-12) is a team unit. Although completely asynchronous teamwork is possible, please keep in mind that you will likely want to schedule at least one synchronous online meeting with your team.

Please contact Dr. Parks in advance or as soon as possible after you have an extraordinary circumstance occur that affects your performance in this class.

There are no extra penalties for getting off schedule beyond the natural consequences of missing instruction and assignments. However, these natural consequences add up quickly.
Dr. Parks’ office hours are held during the day – which means some students may not be able to attend office hours. If this is the case, you may request to meet outside of these hours. Dr. Parks will send you a Zoom link if you request this.

Dr. Parks strives to maintain a 24-hour response time for email if you have a relatively simple question. Feel free to email her at any time at Sara.Parks@sfasu.edu.

**GRADES**

Introduction to technical and scientific writing courses use a set of program standards to ensure students across all the sections are held to similar standards to earn at least a C in the course. Please consult the technical and scientific writing program standards checklist (included at the end of this syllabus) to track your progress towards a C in this class.

Below is a list of deliverables you will prepare and submit for this course. Each section of the class is listed in bold with the weight of grades in that portion of the course indicated.

**Contexts for Writing – 15%**
- Scheduling preparation
- Database preparation
- Practice note-taking
- Speech community report

**Talking about Writing – 10%**
- Team charter
- Correspondence & Work documents project
- Team proofreading/editing practice

**Writing in Public – 25%**
- Public expert data design analysis
- Public expert writing analysis

**Writing for Information – 25%**
- Short Proposal
- Research analysis notes and perfect works cited
- Infographic

**Testing our Writing – 25%**
- Usability progress/decision-making report
- Usability testing report
Completed standards-based grading rubric (P/F)

As you can see, the grades in this class are weighted heavier later in the class, with teamwork weighing the least. This means you have a bit of a safety net at the beginning of the course to settle into a schedule that works for you. Also, if your team fails that failure won’t sink your grade in the course. The “Talking about Writing” unit is the only unit you will complete in a team.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Work for any course should be newly generated by you or your assigned team for each assignment.

Plagiarism involves using another’s work, words, or ideas without correctly giving credit to the author. It is just as serious to plagiarize the work of another student as it is to plagiarize the work of a published author.

Use a standard documentation style to credit your source. If you have questions about correct documentation, please ask!

In a collaborative class such as this, you may not always fully understand what is and is not plagiarism or what type of collaboration outside of class is and is not allowed. If you have questions, please ask!

**General Policy**

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.
Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

**WITHHELD GRADES**

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.

**OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES APPLY**

See these links for some other university-wide policies and explanations:

- Student athletes and representatives in sponsored events.
- What University letter grades mean.
- What University credit hours mean.
- How to appeal a grade.
- How to request a medical withdrawal.
- What happens when you don’t follow the SFA rules.
- Your professor is a mandatory reporter for Title IX.

**GENERAL SCHEDULE**

Please refer to the Brightspace content for a full schedule. This is just the required outline.

- Week 1: Contexts for Writing
- Week 2: Talking about Writing
- Week 3: Writing in Public
- Week 4: Writing for Information
- Week 5: Testing our Writing
STANDARDS-BASED GRADING OUTLINE

Each of these standards must be met to pass with at least a C in Introduction to Technical & Scientific Writing.

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<th>Program Standards</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have identified the parts of a scholarly research article (IMRAD).</td>
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<td>I have demonstrated understanding of the importance of audience on technical &amp; scientific writing 3 times.</td>
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<td>I have accurately paraphrased an expert source in language a non-expert can understand.</td>
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<td>I have created a visualization that accurately displays quantitative data.</td>
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<td>I have evaluated a text for its usability (ease of understanding, ease of access, reader relevance).</td>
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<td>I have created a perfect works cited or references page.</td>
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<td>I have proofread and corrected errors in my writing 3 times.</td>
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I have demonstrated awareness of a stakeholder other than the main intended reader for a document.

I have practiced writing in at least 3 different rhetorical modes of writing. (ex. narration, exposition, description, definition, argumentation, synthesis, analysis, summary, etc.)

**Course Standards**

I have earned at least a 70% or C in the course gradebook.

**Will I pass?**

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<td>All of these boxes must be checked.</td>
<td>Evidence must be recorded (understandable to the instructor – usually the name of an assignment) for each box.</td>
<td>Notes allow unique situations and exceptions to be addressed.</td>
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“Double dipping,” using the same assignment as evidence for multiple standards, is allowed for program standards.