ENGL 2311.001  
Technical and Scientific Writing  
TR 9:30–10:45, Ferguson 184

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Office Hours: TR 8:00–9:00, W 2:00–5:00, and by appointment

**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 ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302.

In this section, we will learn and practice how to write technical and scientific information for various readers. We will 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 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.

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.

**Course Format:** From the SFA website: “Hybrid: A course that is delivered as a blend of face-to-face and online, face-to-face and livestream, or online and livestream. Classes meet at regular, scheduled intervals. Your faculty will share the dates and times when on-campus or livestream attendance is required.” So there are three kinds of hybrid classes: face-to-face and online, face-to-face and livestream, or online and livestream. This hybrid class is and always was listed as face-to-face and livestream, which means that some face-to-face attendance is required and that the faculty member determines when face-to-face attendance is required.

We will be dividing the class into two roughly equal groups, A and B. **On Tuesdays, group A will be F2F and group B Zoom; on Thursdays, group B will be F2F and group A Zoom.** Note that it is not the case that you can just decide how to attend—you have to attend according to your group. Differing individual accommodations will be made only in the case of a compelling reason. (Also, if you have a laptop that you can bring on your F2F days, please do so.)

**Zoom Notes:** During the time of this class, this class is all that you are to be doing. You will not be at a job, or driving, or working on another class, or whatever. Eating/drinking is permissible if done discreetly. Cameras must be on and faces visible unless otherwise instructed.

As your professor, I am here to guide you through the course topics and materials and to evaluate your work and performance. The key thing to note is that the extent to which I can teach you
depends integrally on your investment in learning: your willingness to engage the subject, your attentiveness to the assigned readings, and your participation in class endeavors.

**General Education Core Curriculum:** 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 editing process and be able to write a variety of technical documents in an acceptable level of Standard American English (Communication Skills and Teamwork); to write a variety of technical documents, demonstrating their awareness of audience and facility in addressing different audiences in complex rhetorical situations (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility); to write technical and workplace documents by applying appropriate modes of rhetorical composition, integrating visuals with text, and presenting information in an oral format (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility); to work in groups to produce and critically evaluate documents (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility); to use critical-thinking skills and exhibit technical proficiency in the invention and composition processes (Critical Thinking and Communication Skills); to understand ethical considerations in technical and professional writing (Critical Thinking, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility); to 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); and to 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).

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<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How Specifically Addressed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis; evaluation and synthesis of information</td>
<td>Assignments 4–5, 7–9; classroom discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>Effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication</td>
<td>Assignments 1–10, classroom discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>Connecting choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>30 Nov discussion of ethical issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Considering different points of view and working effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal</td>
<td>Group Multimedia Presentation</td>
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**Brightspace/D2L:** SFA uses Brightspace (D2L) as its course management system. Class handouts, reading links, assignment sheets, and important documents such as this syllabus will be posted under the **Content** menu. We may use the **Discussion Boards** (under **Course Tools**) and other Brightspace features.
Assignments will be submitted electronically to Dropboxes (also under Course Tools). Grades will be kept in the Gradebook, which you should consult throughout the semester. Watch for News items.


**Course Requirements:** Technical and scientific writing courses at SFA use a set of program standards to ensure that students across all sections are held to similar standards. Please consult the Standards-Based Grading Outline Checklist (in the “Syllabus and Assignments” folder) to track your progress towards at least a C in this class. **You have to complete each of the numbered assignments in the table below to get a C or better in this class. You also have to have a C or better in the gradebook (i.e., by points) to get a C or better.**

You will be submitting the following key assignments this semester, detailed instructions for each of which will be provided. All assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate Dropbox by 9:30 am (class time) of the date due. Documents must be MS Word or PDF unless otherwise noted. The Group Multimedia Presentation needs to be submitted to the Dropbox only by one group member; it will be viewed by the entire class.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introductory E-mail</td>
<td>31 Aug</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Job Letter and Résumé/CV</td>
<td>14 and 21 Sep</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>3. “How To” Exercise</td>
<td>23 Sep</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>4. “Translation” (Paraphrase)</td>
<td>7 and 14 Oct</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>5. Usability Evaluation</td>
<td>21 Oct</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Group Multimedia Presentation</td>
<td>28 Oct</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Abstract</td>
<td>9 Nov</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>18 Nov</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Final Exam</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation/Misc</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>100</td>
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Your running points will be available on D2L (http://d2l.sfasu.edu); the final course grade will depend entirely on the points earned: 1000-900=A, 899-800=B, 799-700=C, 699-600=D, fewer than 600=F. No individual bonus points arrangements will be made; 25 “bonus points” are built in.

**General Grading Expectations:** In high school or elsewhere, you may have received high marks simply for completing assignments. In college—at least in college as I see it—simply completing assignments earns one average marks at best. **As** indicate exceptionally high performance in every element of an assignment, from content to expression. **Bs** indicate good performance in both areas. **Cs** indicate acceptable performance, but there were some issues of content and/or expression. **Ds** indicate minimal achievement, with significant issues of content and/or expression. **Fs** mean that the requirements of the assignment were not met. (Note also that, especially in a technical writing context, expression can be just as important as content, so your writing needs to be very well edited.)

**Asynchronous Sessions:** Due to the fact that the fall semester at SFA is shorter by one week than the spring, there are two “asynchronous modules” built into this fall course (and there should be such
material built into *every* fall course). I will open these modules in D2L, and you can then complete them whenever you want during the relevant weeks. The points will be included in the “Misc” grade.

**Attendance:** The official attendance policy for SFA (UP 6.7) includes the following: “Students are expected to attend all classes, laboratories, and other class-related activities on a regular and punctual basis. Attendance policies will be stated in the course syllabus. [. . .] Whether absences are excused or unexcused by the instructor, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Students with accepted excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences equaling no more than 15% of the scheduled course meeting time for the term, depending on the nature of the missed work.”

Here is what that policy means in this class:

1. **Attendance/participation/daily work points** are earned by being present on a given day, either physically or via Zoom (according to group), and by participating in that day’s activities. If you are absent and wish to make up a day’s points, you will need to email me within one week for instructions as to how to make up that day’s points. If I cannot verify the presence of a Zoom student at any point during the session, the student may be marked absent and the day’s points forfeited. If a student is attending off-group without prior clearance, the student may be marked absent as well.

2. **Late assignments** will only be accepted with a legitimate excuse, and lateness will reduce the grade proportionally.

3. No more than four absences can be excused, and no absence will necessarily be excused.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:** 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, UP 10.4). 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 available to help SFA students succeed.

**Academic Integrity (UP 4.1):** Academic integrity is the 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. 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.

**Withheld 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.

Title IX: SFA strives to provide an educational and work environment that affirms the rights and dignity of each individual. It is the policy of the university, in accordance with federal and state law, to prohibit unlawful gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner and dating violence, and stalking. Please be aware that all SFA employees (other than those designated as confidential resources in Section 4.5 and Section 6 of the Sex- and Gender-Based Discrimination, Violence, Harassment, and Misconduct Policy [UP 2.13]) are required to report any information obtained about potential policy violation such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or sexual violence or other related misconduct as outlined in Policy 2.13, the faculty member must share that information with the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources at www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care.

Mental Health Statement: SFA values student mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support student health and wellness:

Crisis Resources: Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

On-campus Resources: SFA Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building, 936-468-2401

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202, 936-468-1041

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.

The Academic Assistance and Resource Center: The AARC offers free writing tutoring, which is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. It also offers online writing tutoring services and workshops about writing-related topics. For more information, go to http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc, visit the center on the first floor of the Steen Library, or call 936-468-4108.

Weekly Schedule
(Remember: group A F2F Tuesday, group B F2F Thursday)

24 Aug Introduction to Course
26 Aug  CGTC chp 6: E-mail and Workplace Communication
31 Aug  **Introductory E-mail due.** CGTC chp 1: Audience, Purpose, Genre, and Medium
2 Sep   Memos and Letters (chp 6 continued)
7 Sep   Résumés and CVs
9 Sep   Technical Issues in Food Writing
14 Sep  **Job Letter and Résumé due in Dropbox.** CGTC chp 4: Writing Technical Prose
16 Sep  Writing Instructions
21 Sep  **Corrected Letter and Résumé due in Dropbox.** Writing More Instructions
23 Sep  **“How To” Exercise due in Dropbox.** Textual/Rhetorical Analysis
28 Sep  CGTC chp 3: Researching Technical Subjects
30 Sep  Research
5 Oct   CGTC chp 5: Visual Technical Communication
7 Oct   **“Translation” due in Dropbox.** More on Visualizations
12 Oct  CGTC chps 9–10: Presenting Technical Information Online and Orally
14 Oct  **Corrected “Translation” due in Dropbox.** Evaluating Usability
19 Oct  In-class Group Consultations
21 Oct  **Usability Evaluation due in Dropbox.** Group Consultations
26 Oct  Style Guides
28 Oct  **Group Multimedia Presentations**

*Asynchronous Module on Reports This Week
2 Nov   CGTC chp 7: Reports
4 Nov   CGTC chp 8: Reporting Technical Information

*Asynchronous Module on Law or Chemistry or Sports This Week
9 Nov   **Abstract due in Dropbox**
11 Nov  Coffee Drink Pitch Exercise
16 Nov  Bibliographic Styles
18 Nov  **Annotated Bibliography due in Dropbox**

Thanksgiving
30 Nov  CGTC chp 2: Ethical Issues
2 Dec   **Proposal/Recommendation Report due in Dropbox**

Final Exam