

ENGL 3330.09 “Introduction to Technical Writing”

**Fall 2017; 3 credit hrs; writing enhanced; CRN# 83918
Evans 315; MWF 13:00-13:50**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course, according to the Sam Houston State University catalog description (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/english/minor-technical-professional-writing/>), introduces students to “the special problems of technical literature and technical report writing.” Students will study and practice formal and informal writing in professional settings, with the focus on “the design and content of written communications in business, industry, and government.”

Drawing on rhetorical theory as its foundation, this course helps students to understand the unique features of writing in professional settings and teaches them to analyze situations in order to create effective communication. Students will create documents in a variety of workplace genres, including employment documents, correspondence, and formal technical reports. Students will be expected to work on individual and team projects in class and are encouraged to design writing projects reflective of their own disciplines’ practices.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to

- analyze rhetorical components of writing situations,
- research, design, create, and prepare informal and formal documents suitable for the workplace,
- balance visual and verbal elements of communication in documents,
- search for and report information,
- work as part of a team and present a formal oral report,
- edit documents for accuracy and precision,
- respond effectively to others’ writing, and
- follow instructions (written and oral) in a setting that simulates workplace.

PREREQUISITES: ENGL 1301 and 1302

REQUIRED TEXT:

- Tebeaux, Elizabeth, and Sam Dragga. 2015. *The Essentials of Technical Communication*. 3rd edition. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199379996. (Make sure you obtain the book during the first week of classes.)

RECOMMENDED* TEXTS:

- Cochrane, James. 2004. *Between You and I: A Little Book of Bad English*. Naperville: Sourcebooks. (Any edition is acceptable.)
- O'Conner, Patricia T. *Woe is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*. 2009. New York: Riverhead Books. (Any edition is acceptable.)
- Truss, Lynne. 2003. *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. New York: Penguin. (Any edition is acceptable.)

*If you read one of the recommended books and write a 5-page reaction to it, you are eligible for up to 3 percent extra credit of your course grade. The 5-page reaction paper is due on December 1 (last class day), by the end of class.

REQUIREMENTS/ATTENDANCE:

Class Policies

Attendance

Departmental policy states that you may miss up to three classes without penalty. After your third absence, any additional absence may result in the loss of 5 points from your final course grade. Thus, every two absences beyond the initial three may result in your final grade being lowered by one full letter. Many studies have shown a direct link between class attendance and higher grades, so it is in your best interest to come to class and participate in the day's activities.

You may enter the classroom a few minutes late if you do it quietly and unobtrusively. If you arrive after attendance has been taken, it is your responsibility to tell me after class is over so that you can be counted tardy rather than absent (3 tardies equal 1 absence). I will keep the official record of attendance in the form of sign-up sheets, but students are responsible for making sure their attendance is properly recorded. Attendance in the classroom assumes that students will be prepared with drafts (or whatever material is required) and will actively participate in the day's activities. Traffic during class is to be avoided. Should you need to leave during class for an important appointment, please notify me before class starts.

Should an emergency arise (such as a serious illness or death in the family), please report your absences through the Dean of Students. His office will gather all the required paperwork and make sure all your professors are made aware of the circumstances.

If you are unable to attend a class, you must make sure you are prepared for the session when you return. Much of what you need to know to be prepared will be on the calendar, but unanticipated events can occur during classes that may change the calendar. Contact a classmate to see what unanticipated assignments or discussions you might have missed; this will help ensure that you are not surprised when the class is doing something for which you aren't prepared.

Individual and group responsibility

During the semester you will be working in teams whose responsibility will be to read and provide constructive criticism on each member's written work and create an oral report as a team. Because your input is essential to the success of the entire team, your participation, including attendance, is essential. Failure to work as part of the collaborative team will mean you do not have the proper background to do the assignment and no grade can be earned for that assignment.

If you are to bring a draft of an assignment to a class session, make sure you are clear about its purpose and have that draft with you. Do not come to class without access to the needed materials, including the book, your drafts, and supplementary materials you might be using for your project. You must have prepared the proper materials by deadline in order to be able to participate and get the full benefit of the class interaction. Failure to work as part of a classroom cooperative will jeopardize your individual grade.

Assignments

Because writing is a process and involves various stages, students are expected to work through projects in a step-by-step fashion.

Plagiarism in any of its forms will result in automatic zero for the assignment. Second offense will result in a failing grade for the course. You should be especially careful when using the Web for your research. Technology allows for easy "borrowing" of ideas and information. However, all intellectual property must be respected. You will be expected to follow proper citation format. We will discuss proper citation format in class and discuss alternate ways (based on disciplines) of citing material. Feel free to ask questions so that we can discuss this fully and so that you will have no doubt about expectations.

Cell phones and other technology

Please turn off all electronic devices when you arrive in class and put them away. Should your phone ring during class, you must pick up the call; the class will then proceed to analyze your phone conversation for its rhetorical aspects.

Internet use

Using a phone or computer during class for other than class assignments is not acceptable. If you access Facebook or any other site not affiliated with our coursework during class, you will be asked to leave the classroom. Do not check e-mail, surf, or engage in any activity with the electronic devices while the instructor is lecturing or while you are working on an assignment. If

you need to access the Internet or your e-mail for the assignment, be sure you receive permission before accessing the sites.

Late work

No late work will be accepted for any reason. If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to turn in assignments and be prepared for the next class session. If you are going to miss class, you must still turn in your assignment on time. Being absent or late does not change the due date/time for any assignment. Failure to follow this standard policy will result in a zero for that assignment.

Study Tips

Come to see the instructor immediately when you have questions. Utilize the services of the SAM Center and the Academic Success Center.

EVALUATION (specific instructions for all assignments will be provided separately; turn in all assignments typed):

Assignments (4 x 5 points)	20%
Résumé	10%
Job application	10%
Recommendation report proposal	10%
Recommendation report	20%
Team oral presentation	10%
In-class final	20%
Extra credit (5-page reaction paper)	3%

GRADING: 90-100 (A)
 80-89 (B)
 70-79 (C)
 60-69 (D)
 0-59 (F)

GRADING CRITERIA:

Grade	Meaning	Potential Impact in the Workplace
A (90-100 points)	An “A” document is excellent work. The audience analysis is insightful, the topic precise, the organization clear and logical. The document contains sufficient detail; the information is accurate, timely, clear, and comprehensive. The writing is excellent: good use of advance organizers, well-developed paragraphs, graceful and concise sentences, and precise word choice. The document is complemented by appropriate, clear, correct, and honest graphics. The design is clear, attractive, and professional.	Your supervisor would be impressed and would pass the document along to his or her supervisors, without revision.
B (80-89 points)	A “B” document is good work. It has almost all the virtues of the “A” document, but at least one element is missing, and perhaps more. For instance, persistent spelling errors will reduce an A document to a B. Unprofessional design, ineffective paragraphing, awkward sentences—any of these problems could account for the grade of B.	Your supervisor would appreciate your work, but would want to have the document revised before passing it along.
C (70-79 points)	A “C” document is satisfactory work. Although the document satisfies the requirements of the assignment, it is significantly flawed. Usually, two, three, or more problems make it difficult to read or to understand, or prevent it from fulfilling its purpose. For instance, a proposal that lacks a project calendar and a list of works cited would receive a C despite excellent writing.	Your supervisor would be somewhat disappointed with the document and would want it revised significantly before passing it along. In addition, the supervisor would begin to doubt your ability to complete similar assignments successfully.
D (60-69 points)	A “D” document is unsatisfactory. Although some aspects of the document might be well done, there are numerous or significant problems with its conception or execution.	Your supervisor would have another employee re-do the document. In addition, your supervisor would question your basic competence and suitability for your position. Performance evaluations would reflect this doubt.
F (0-59 points)	An “F” document is failing work. It is submitted after the deadline, it does not respond to the assignment, it is extremely difficult to read, or it is unprofessional in appearance or writing quality.	Your supervisor would likely draw the conclusion that you do not care about the quality of your work.

SYLLABUS (The syllabus is subject to change.)

Date	Reading/Topic (<i>T&D=Tebeaux and Dragga</i>)	Notes/Assignments due
W 8/23	Introduction to the course. Distribution of the syllabus. Introductions.	
F 8/25	T&D Ch 1: Characteristics of Writing at Work	
M 8/28	T&D Ch 2: Writing for Your Readers	Assignment 1 due (formal introduction) (5% of grade)
W 8/30	T&D Ch 3: Writing Ethically	
F 9/1	T&D Ch 4: Achieving Readable Style (The Paragraph; Basic Principles of Effective Style); Appendix A	
M 9/4	<i>Labor Day/No class</i>	
W 9/6	T&D Ch 4: Achieving Readable Style (Keys to Building Effective Sentences); Word and Style Choice	
F 9/8	Cont.	
M 9/11	T&D Ch 5: Designing Documents (pp. 85-97); Appendix B	Assignment 2 due (5% of grade)
W 9/13	Cont.	
F 9/15	T&D Ch 5: Designing Documents (pp. 98-108)	
M 9/18	Cont.	
W 9/20	T&D Ch 6: Designing Illustrations	
F 9/22	TBA	
M 9/25	T&D Ch 5: Cont.	
W 9/27	T&D Ch 7: E-mails, Texts, Memos, Letters	Assignment 3 due (5% of grade)
F 9/29	Cont.	
M 10/2	T&D Ch 8: Technical Reports (pp.181-208)	
W 10/4	Cont.	
F 10/6	T&D Ch 8: Technical Reports (pp. 209-231)	Assignment 4 due (5% of grade)
M 10/9	Cont.	
W 10/11	T&D Ch 9: Proposals and Progress Reports (pp. 233-254)	

F 10/13	Cont.	
M 10/16	T&D Ch 9: Proposals and Progress Reports (pp. 255-271)	
W 10/18	Cont.	
F 10/20	T&D Ch 10: Instructions, Procedures, Policies (pp. 274-302)	Recommendation report proposal due (10% of grade)
M 10/23	Cont.	
W 10/25	Cont.	
F 10/27	T&D Ch 10: Instructions, Procedures, Policies (pp. 303-308)	
M 10/30	T&D Ch 12: Résumés	
W 11/1	Peer review	Draft of résumé due
F 11/3	T&D Ch 10: Job applications	Résumé due (10% of grade)
M 11/6	Cont.	
W 11/8	Peer review	Draft of job application due
F 11/10	T&D Ch 11: Oral Reports (pp. 309-332)	Job application due (10% of grade)
M 11/13	Guest workshop by Josie Toth from Workforce Solutions: "Interviewing for a job"	
W 11/15	T&D Ch 11: Oral Reports (pp. 333-335)	
F 11/17	Work on oral reports in teams	
M 11/20	Work on oral reports in teams	
W 11/22	<i>Thanksgiving/No class</i>	
F 11/24	<i>Thanksgiving/No class</i>	
M 11/27	Team Oral Reports / Session I	Presentation of teams' oral reports with a powerpoint (10% of grade)
W 11/29	Team Oral Reports / Session II	Presentation of teams' oral reports with a powerpoint (10% of grade)
F 12/1	Team Oral Reports / Session III	Presentation of teams' oral reports with a powerpoint (10% of grade) Recommendation report project due (20% of grade) Extra credit due (up to 3% of grade)
W 12/6, 14:30-16:30	In-class final examination	Chapters 1-12, appendices A-C, handouts, exercises (20% of grade)

Grades will be filed by Monday, December 11, by 12:00 p.m.

Also, nota bene:

Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then you are encouraged to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with the instructor about how she can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see Academic Policy Statement 811006: <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>.

Religious Holidays. Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom. Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

Instructor Evaluations. Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation toward the end of the semester.

Classroom Rules of Conduct. The University's Code of Student Conduct and Discipline can be found in the Student Guidelines: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/2016-2018%20Student%20Guidelines.pdf>.