

# English 3330W: Introduction to Technical Writing

Fall 2017, Section 29 online (3 Credit Hours)

Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 & 1302.

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**Instructor** Barbara Jones

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**Office** Online by e-mail or text

**Phone** 936-442-0931

**Office Hours** 7:30 – 9:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

*Please note that I work a full-time job at the Texas Department of Public Safety Customer Service Call Center, so I am not available to answer phone calls during the day. I will, however, provide brief responses to texts and short emails during my breaks and lunch. Please identify yourself as a SHSU student as I will have online students at Lone Star Community College who will also be contacting me.*

**Classroom** Blackboard

**Textbook** *Technical Communication, 11<sup>th</sup> edition*, by Mike Markel ISBN: 9781457673375

**Course Goals** This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of technical and professional communication. Throughout the semester, you will work to accomplish these goals:

- Analyze a rhetorical situation and craft the appropriate documentation to meet its constraints.
- Identify the elements of effective technical writing style and apply these elements to a variety of professional documents.
- Design documents that are usable and visually engaging.
- Create, edit, and revise prose to produce professional, polished documents.
- Produce documents as a member of a team.

This course meets the requirements for the Food Science and Nutrition Knowledge Requirements for Dietetics #2.1: opportunities to develop communication skills necessary for entry into pre-professional practice.

**Course Evaluation** Your grade for this course will be determined according to the following:

Major Documents (4)	40%
Formal Project	25%
Participation	15%
Job-Correspondence Portfolio	10%
Final Examination	10%

## Grading Standards

I assign grades on a 100-point scale, which corresponds with the university's letter grades as follows:

Quality of Work	Score	Grade
Excellent work – exceeds all requirements with minimal or no errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would be impressed and would pass the document along to others, as is. A customer would use the document successfully and with ease.	90 – 100	A
Very-good/good work – exceeds/meets most requirements with few significant errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would appreciate your work, but would want you to revise it before passing it along. A customer may notice simple mistakes and draw conclusions about the quality of your company.	80 – 89	B
Fair/adequate work – meets most/some requirements, but with fundamental errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would be disappointed with the document and would want it revised significantly before passing it along. In addition, the supervisor could begin to doubt your ability to complete similar assignments successfully. A customer might wonder whether your company deserves her/his business.	70 – 79	C
Flawed work – meets few requirements; has excessive errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would have another employee re-do the document. A customer would likely abandon the document and resent your company for wasting her/his time.	60 – 69	D
Does not meet the assignment's requirements. In the workplace, your supervisor would assume that you don't care about your job. A customer would withdraw business, find your company's replacement, and/or ask to work with a different representative from your company.	0 – 59	F

## Policies

Please read these policies carefully and keep them in mind as you complete this course.

### Participation

- Students traveling for extracurricular events are responsible for staying up to date and completing assignments on time. Unless I state otherwise in writing, assignments that fall on a student's travel dates are due as scheduled; additionally, students should return from travel having completed scheduled readings and exercises.
- Participate! You are responsible for making thoughtful contributions to discussions and blogs.
- Respect your classmates. We are engaged in higher education, so login ready to learn from your classmates and me. Treat us respectfully and professionally; we will extend the same courtesies to you.

### Religious Holy Days

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.

## Assignments

- Complete scheduled readings and daily assignments before logging in and be prepared to discuss the readings in your blogs.
- Submit assignments on time. Each assignment will have a specific date and time by which you must complete it. If, for any reason, I don't have your assignment by the specified date and time, then your assignment is late. Late assignments will lose 10 points per class-day late. If you must turn in an assignment late, please alert me by email.
- Follow assignment guidelines closely. Any assignment not prepared according to my instructions in format, organization, style, or content could receive a grade of *F*.

## Academic Honesty

- Students at SHSU are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach, so you are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all academic experiences—both in and out of our classroom.
- Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The university and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, or the abuse of resource materials.
- Students who submit plagiarized work for my review will receive a zero for the assignment—even if only a portion of the document violates academic honesty standards. A second offense will result in an *F* for the course.

## Student Disabilities

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 course, then I encourage you to 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](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). I also encourage you to email me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will remain strictly confidential.

**Note:** I can make accommodations only after you've registered with Services for Students with Disabilities and I've received relevant paperwork from that office. For more information about registering for these services see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/procedures-to-request-services.html>

## Overview of Activities

Throughout the semester, you will complete a variety of assignments. I will provide detailed assignment sheets, supporting documents, and due times/dates. These documents will be available via our course's online companion site.

**Note:** The prerequisites for this course are ENGL 1301 and 1302; accordingly, you must have full understanding of basic grammar and writing mechanics before taking this course. Students who lack proficiency in basic grammar and writing mechanics cannot expect to pass this course.

## Readings from Your Text

All students must obtain a copy of the textbook by the first day of class. Your textbook offers a wealth of information regarding theories, genres, methods, and real-world applications of technical writing. I will assign readings that supplement the activities and deliverables for this course. Our assignments will rely on your having already read assigned chapters before you get to class.

## Exercises

I will assign exercises from your text to engage you in the theory and practice of creating effective documents. Although I will not collect them, you would be wise to check your knowledge of these rules as errors can prove costly to your grade.

<b>Workshops</b>	Workshops afford opportunities for experimenting with documentation techniques, collaborating with teammates, providing/receiving feedback, and applying principles covered in our readings and discussions. Throughout the semester, the Academic Enrichment Center will have several workshop sessions, and your attendance and participation are suggested for all of them. Consult their home page for a schedule of these sessions.
<b>Academic Enrichment Center</b>	Visits to the AEC can help you hone your documents and focus ideas as you work closer towards a final draft. You may schedule appointments with a tutor by dropping by the center in the Farrington Building or by calling 936-294-3680. Students who do not attend classes on campus may schedule SKYPE sessions.
<b>Correspondence</b>	E-mail is a part of our daily lives—whether at home, school, or work. This key genre in technical writing must be used effectively, and you will have many instances to practice your daily writing skills via e-mail. Because we are in a technical-writing course, every e-mail that you send to clients, your classmates, or me must demonstrate what you are learning in this advanced writing course. We will focus on principles of effective correspondence early in the semester, and you will practice these principles for the remainder of your professional life.
<b>Assignment Drafts</b>	You should produce drafts and/or mockups of your major documents and the formal project. Drafts are integral to producing effective, professional documents, and they allow me opportunities for helping you improve your documents before you submit them for my final review. If you have specific concerns or questions, please attach these drafts to an email to <a href="mailto:eng_baj@shsu.edu">eng_baj@shsu.edu</a> .
<b>Major Documents</b>	You will complete a series of major documents, which will allow you to practice working with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence</li> <li>• Technical-writing style and document design</li> <li>• Proposals</li> <li>• Instructions</li> <li>• Job correspondence</li> </ul>
<b>Formal Project</b>	Your formal project is a medium-to-large technical document that allows you to apply the principles learned from all major documents. I will provide a detailed description of the formal project early in the semester on October 3, so you will have opportunities to plan and workshop your ideas.
<b>Instructor Evaluations</b>	Toward the end of the semester, students will have the opportunity to evaluate this course and its instructor. These evaluations allow students to rate the efficacy of the instructional methods as well as their perceptions of the course in general. Any information provided by students is anonymous, and instructors do not receive students' evaluations until the following semester.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

The following schedule contains readings and assignments for the semester. **This schedule is subject to change** throughout the semester; please check your email regularly for any announcements.

The following key will help you understand the conventions and abbreviations listed in your course schedule.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
MD	Major Document
Exercise X.Y	Chapter X, Exercise Y (e.g., Exercise 14.3 = Exercise #3 in Chapter 14).

### Week 1

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- August 23** Familiarize yourself with the home page and this syllabus.
- Chapter 1: Introduction to Technical Writing.
  - Read Chapter 1.
- August 25 by 11:59 p.m.**
- Submit *Addendum A*
  - Be aware that you need to submit all assignments through Adobe Acrobat in the Portable Document Format (.pdf) that encapsulates a fixed-layout flat document, including the text, fonts, graphics, and other information needed to display it. See "Tips for Online Courses" under Course Information if you do not know how to create a .pdf.
  - File name: LastName\_FirstName\_AddendumA.pdf

### Week 2

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- August 28**
- Introduce MD 1 that provides an introduction to the course and lets you get to know some of your classmates am
  - Read Chapter 14: Writing Correspondence
  - Watch the video/presentation on writing everyday correspondence presented by Dr. Brian Blackburne, the director of SHSU's technical writing program
- August 29 by 11:59 p.m.**
- Post an introduction in your blog.
- September 1 by 11:59 p.m.**
- Submit an analysis memo about you and two of your classmates' postings.
  - File name: LastName\_FirstName\_AnalysisMemo.pdf

### Week 3

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- September 5** ➤ Module 2 will help us identify and practice effective habits for group writing. This module will establish organizational groundwork for the rest of the semester.
- Read Chapter 4: Writing Collaboratively
  - Read Chapter 17: Informational Reports
  - Read “Background on Working Collaboratively” in this module.
- September 6 by 11:59 p.m.** ➤ Post to Blog 2.
- September 8 by 11:59 p.m.** ➤ Post memo summarizes the information from 2 of your group mates’ postings.
- Complete Activity 1: Choosing a Point of Contact
  - Complete Activity 2: Writing a Team Charter
  - Points of Contact should submit the memo for their group activities.

### Week 4

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- September 11** ➤ Module 3 will aid in analyzing an existing document for evidence of its intended audience, predicting the information necessary in a document based on essential information about the audience, and producing a “virtual mood board
- Read Chapter 5: Analyze Your Audience and Purpose
  - Read Chapter 10: Writing Correct and Effective Sentences
- September 12 by 11:59 p.m.** ➤ Post to Blog 3.
- Point of Contact should create a new thread on a discussion board to consider the commercial.
- September 14 by 11:59 p.m.** ➤ Respond to 2 of your class mates’ blogs.
- September 15 by 11:59 p.m.** ➤ Point of Contact should submit the memo for MD 1, Parts 1 and 2.

### Week 5

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- September 18** ➤ Continue work on Module 3.
- Refer to Chapter 10.
  - Watch Dr. Blackburne’s video presentation on style.
  - Complete the exercises in your text. These exercises are for your practice, so I will not collect them. If necessary, use a discussion board to discuss and to clarify these rules.

## Week 6

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- September 25** ➤ In Module 5, we begin working with document design (Major Document 2).
- Read Chapter 11: Designing Print and Online Documents
  - View the Design PowerPoint.
  - Review the branding and logo documents
- September 26** ➤ Post a reflection on Blog 4.
- Respond to 2 of your groupmates' postings
- September 27** ➤ After the Point of Contact sets up a discussion board, participate in a class-wide Q&A period. MD2 will be due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, October 6.

## Week 7

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- October 2** ➤ In Module 6, you will identify an instructional document that needs to be created, explain a problem that you have identified and propose your solution to the problem.
- Read Chapter 16: Writing Proposals
- October 3** ➤ Post your reflection through Blog 5.
- October 4** ➤ Reflect on 2 classmates' blogs.
- October 6 by 11:59 p.m.** ➤ Submit Major Document 2: Redesigned document that explains the rules for bringing valuables into a hotel room. This is an individual, not a group assignment.

## Week 8

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- October 5 – October 13 11:59 p.m.** ➤ Point of Contact should create a discussion board, "Ideas for the Formal Project." Each group member should post twice and respond to two other groupmates' ideas. Read through all the pages posted in this module to help yourself better understand other types of projects you might propose. The professor will be checking the groups throughout the week to comment on each member's potential ideas. Your postings are due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, October 13.

## Week 9

- October 16** ➤ Continue work on your proposal.

## Week 10

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- October 27** ➤ Submit Major Document 3: Proposal (3-4 pages) Submit Major Document 3: Proposal (3-4 pages)



## Week 11

- October 30**
- Identify principles of effective instructional writing, apply principles of document design and writing style (from previous modules) to the current assignment, produce instructions according to the principles studied in this module, and analyze your peers' instructional writing and provide objective suggestions for improving their documents.
  - Read Chapter 20 (Hint: pay close attention to pages 557-572).
- October 31**
- Post Blog 6
- November 2**
- Reflect on 2 of your classmates' blogs.
  - This assignment will be due by 11:59 p.m. Friday, November 10.
  - Continue work on your Final Project draft

## Week 12

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- November 6**
- Continue work on your Final Project draft
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- November 10  
by 11:59 p.m.**
- Submit MD 6B Instructional Writing
  - Last day to drop the course with a "Q"

## Week 13

- November 17**
- Submit your **draft** of the **Final Project**.

## Week 14

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- November 20**
- For your Job Correspondence Module, you will be able to use job-search tools common to the professionals or your field, to discuss your professional goals and work history to accurate, yet job-compelling ways, and to produce business correspondence according to accepted conventions.
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- November  
20-21**
- Read Chapter 15: Writing Job: Application Material
- November 22-  
November 24**
- Happy Thanksgiving!**

## Week 15

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- November 27**
- For this module, you will complete a job-correspondence packet, which will include these documents: a resume, a cover letter, and a follow-up letter.
- December 3,  
11:59 p.m.**
- Submit your final Job Correspondence packet \*resume, cover letter, & follow-up letter)
- December 3,  
11:59 p.m.**
- Submit your Final Project

## Finals Week

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- December 2,  
12:00 a.m. -**
- Complete your final at any time between these two dates.
- December 5,  
11:59 p.m.**

**Addendum A: Agreement for Working Honestly and Ethically in ENGL 3330**

Please read the following carefully:

This course focuses on developing *your* writing skills; accordingly, I can grade only your original work during the semester. To avoid any confusion over what constitutes "original work," read and consider the following statements. Signal your understanding of each statement by initialing the corresponding blank. If you do not understand a statement, then ask me for clarification before initialing.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I should *never* copy and paste information from outside sources – even if I cite them.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I must create original content (whether text or images) for all assignments.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I may research information via interviews, internet searches, and/or library visits. But I also understand that duplicating text/content from documents that I find from any research method is unacceptable for this class.

\_\_\_\_\_ I promise to seek Dr. Blackburne's guidance if I am unsure about how to treat researched information. Dr. Blackburne will be more than happy to help.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that this course is not an editing course and that I will not be able to simply revise, modify, or reformat existing text(s) for my Major Documents or the Formal Project.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the concept of *plagiarism* and how both SHSU and Dr. Blackburne have used it in describing expectations for my performance in this course.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Dr. Blackburne will require me to submit documents to turnitin.com via the course's Blackboard site.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I submit a document containing *any* amount of plagiarized content, I will receive a zero for that assignment. A second offense will result in an F for the course and academic sanction. I further understand that any resulting grade will be non-negotiable.

I certify that I have read the above statements and that I will comply with them. In addition, I will adhere to the standards of Academic Honesty described both in this syllabus and in the Sam Houston State University Student Guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date