English 4330W: Writing in the Professions

Fall 2017, Section 01. Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. (3 Credit Hours)
Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 & 1302; 2331 or 2342; and 3330.

Instructor	Dr. Brian D. Blackburne
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Office	Evans Complex (EVC), #314
Phone	936-294-3359
Office Hours	• Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30–1:30 p.m. • By appointment
Classroom	Evans Complex (EVC) 360
Texts	• *Technical Communication, 11th edition*, by Mike Markel. ISBN: 9781457673375 • Additional readings, which I will provide

Course Goals

This course provides advanced training in technical and professional writing/communication; additionally, this course is an *Academic Community Engagement* (ACE) course. While completing projects in this ACE course, you will spend at least 9 hours applying what you're learning while interacting with local organizations and businesses. Best of all, through this community engagement, you will gain real-world skills and leave this course as a practiced technical communicator. Throughout the semester, you will work to accomplish these goals:

• Apply accepted standards of technical communication to a variety of professional situations.
• Design, draft, and publish *polished* documents that are rhetorically appropriate for specified situations.
• Work and write as a member of a team.
• Engage with clients to meet their documentation needs.

Course Evaluation

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

• WWO Discussion	12%
• Audience/Document Analysis	12%
• Document Design	12%
• Feasibility Study	12%
• Professional Portfolio	12%
• Formal Project	25%
• Attendance & Participation	15%

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 polices carefully and keep them in mind as you complete this course.

Attendance

- Attend class regularly. If you miss class, you are responsible for the assignments and topics that we cover; accordingly, find a buddy in this class and exchange contact information so that you can stay up to date if you are absent. I'm happy to answer questions after you've spoken with your classmates about what you missed.
- Consider your schedule; regular attendance is essential to do well in this course. If you miss 3 or more class meetings, you will lose 20 points from your participation grade per additional absence (starting with the third absence). This policy applies to all students—including those involved in extracurricular activities.
- Plan for travel dates. 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! In addition to attending class regularly, you are responsible for making thoughtful contributions to discussions and in-class activities.
- Respect your classmates. We are engaged in higher education, so come to class ready to learn from your classmates and me. Treat us respectfully and professionally; we will extend the same courtesies to you.

Mobile Phones & Devices	• Before class starts, kindly turn off your mobile phone or put it in "do not disturb" mode; more importantly, put it away with other personal devices (headphones, Bluetooth headsets, iPods, etc.). If you use your phone/device during class, then I will mark you absent. Deductions from your participation grade will be made regardless of why you're marked absent.
	• If you have an unusual situation that requires your being accessible by phone (e.g., ill child or significant other), then please notify me of the situation before class starts and choose a seat near the door. If you must leave the room to take an emergency call, discretely leave the room and re-enter when you'll make minimal disruption to the class. If you have an ongoing emergency or work situation that requires your regularly receiving calls during class, then you will want to choose a section of this course that better fits with your personal schedule.
	• In keeping with University Policy, I must issue a grade of zero to any student who uses or displays a mobile phone (or other personal electronic device) during an exam—even if the device is turned off.
	• In the event of a campus emergency, I am the designated contact for our classroom. I will receive a call and text message from campus authorities with relevant information.
Assignments	• Complete scheduled readings and daily assignments before coming to class, and arrive prepared to talk about the readings.
	• 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 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 submit your document (in person) after class or during scheduled office hours.
	• When preparing hard copies of assignments, use a laser printer. This class focuses on professional writing, and ink-jet printers are not acceptable for professional-quality documentation.
	• 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 class, 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). I also encourage you to talk with 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
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, United States Tax Code.
Classroom Visitors	Only registered students may come into our classroom. Student visitations or audits are not permitted.

Overview of Activities

	Throughout the semester, you will complete a variety of assignments—both in and out of the classroom. I will provide detailed assignment sheets, supporting documents, and due times/dates. These documents will also be available via our course's online companion site. **Note:** The prerequisites for this course are ENGL 1301 and 1302; 2331 or 2342; and 3330. You must have full understanding of basic grammar and mechanics—as well as advanced research and writing abilities before taking this course. Students who lack proficiency in these areas 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 and class discussions will rely on your having already read assigned chapters before you get to class.
Exercises	I will assign exercises from your text and provide handouts in class to engage you in the theory and practice of creating effective documents. All exercises should be typed, printed with a laser printer, and brought to class on their due dates. I might collect exercises as part of your participation grade.
Workshops	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, we will have several workshop sessions, and your attendance and participation are required for all of them. I will provide specific instructions for completing each workshop.

Peer Review	Peer review, whether in class or online, can help you hone your documents and focus ideas as you work closer towards a final draft. I will help you identify and practice constructive peer-review techniques, and I will give you notice of dates on which we will conduct peer-review sessions.
Correspondence	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.
Assignment Drafts	You will 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.
Major Documents	You will complete a series of graded documents, which will allow you to practice working with the following: • Correspondence • Technical-writing style and document design • Formal reports • Presentations
Formal Project	Your formal project is a documentation project 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, so you will have opportunities to plan and workshop your ideas.
Instructor Evaluations	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 Activities

The following schedule is tentative and is subject to change throughout the semester; please keep up with in-class activities and announcements.

Date	Topic	Activities
August 27	Course Introduction	• Discuss Professional Writing and the Course
September 5	Rhetorical Analysis	• Reading**:** Bitzer (handout) • Introduce MD 1
September 7	Rhetorical Analysis	• Workshop MD 1 • Reading: Bitzer
September 12	Rhetorical Analysis	• Reading: Ch. 11 • Using PDFs • Workshop: MD 1
September 14	Rhetorical Analysis	• Reading: *Technical Communicator as Author* • **MD 1 Due**
September 19	Document Design	• Design Talks (everyone will present a topic) • Reading: *Teaching Text Design* • Workshop: Design
September 21	Document Design	•
September 26	Design	• Reading: Ch. 8 & 17
September 28	Design/Proposals	• Reading: Review collaborative writing, Ch. 1 • Introduce MD 2 • **Meet with IPC Clients at 2:00 (off site)**
October 3	Design/Proposals	• Reading: Ch. 10 • Introduce MD 3 • WWO: Shiny • **Meet with URS Clients at 2:30 (in class)**
October 5	Design/Proposals **Online Work Day**	• Reading: Ch. 15 • **MD 2 due** by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 2
October 10	Design	• Reading: Ch. 7 • Mockups/drafts for MD 3 due at the beginning of class • WWO: Nathan
October 12	Design WWO-Catchup Day!	• Reading: Ch. 4 • WWO • Workshop MD 3
October 17	Design	• In-class usability testing • Full drafts of MD 3 due at the beginning of class • WWO
October 19	Instructions **Online Work Day**	• **MD 3 due** by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 20 (via Blackboard)
October 24	Instructions **Online Work Day**	• Reading: Ch. 12 • Workshop Instructions
October 26	Instructions	• Reading Ch. 13 • Workshop Instructions • WWO

Date	Topic	Activities
October 31	Oral Presentations	• Reading: Ch. 21 • Workshop Oral Presentations • WWO • Introduce MD 4
November 2	Instructions	• Workshop Instructions
November 7	Progress Reports	• WWO • **Progress Report due by the end of class**
November 9	Formal Project	• WWO • Workshop: TBA
November 14	**Online Work Day**	• Workshop: Formal Project
November 16	Formal Project	• WWO • **Progress Report due by the end of class**
November 21	Formal Project	• Workshop: TBA
November 23	Formal Project	• WWO • Workshop: TBA
November 28	**Online Work Day**	• **Progress Report due (in Blackboard) by 5:00 p.m.**
November 30	Thanksgiving Break	• Thanksgiving Break
December 1	Formal Project	• **Formal Project due at the beginning of class**