

English 3330W: Introduction to Technical Writing

Fall 2017, Section 17. Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:50 p.m. (3 Credit Hours)

Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 & 1302.

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Office Hours

- Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.
- By appointment

Classroom Evans Complex (EVC) 360

Textbook *Technical Communication*, 11th edition, by Mike Markel. ISBN: 9781457673375

Course Description This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of technical 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 helping improve the quality of life for people around the world. Best of all, through this community engagement, you will gain real-world skills and potentially leave this course as a published technical communicator.

Course Goals 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)	50%
Formal Project	22%
Participation	15%
Job-Correspondence Portfolio	10%
ACE Reflection	3%

Grading Standards

I assign grades on a 100-point scale, which corresponds with the University's letter grades as follows. See the table below for details.

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 your 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
Fails to meet requirements: The document does not do what it promises; it is ungrammatical; and/or it is sloppily produced. In the workplace, your supervisor would assume that you don't care about your job and deal with you accordingly. A customer would withdraw business, find your company's replacement, 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.

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.
- Consider your schedule; regular, punctual 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. If you are late, wait until after class to submit any documents that are due.
- 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 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; 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 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, colluding, plagiarizing, or abusing 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; 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 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.

<i>Correspondence</i>	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.
<i>Assignment Drafts</i>	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.
<i>Major Documents</i>	<p>You will complete a series of major documents, which will allow you to practice working with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence • Technical-writing style and document design • Proposals • Instructions • Job correspondence
<i>Formal Project</i>	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, so you will have opportunities to plan and workshop your ideas.
<i>ACE Reflection</i>	At the conclusion of your ACE project, you will write a brief, graded reflection about your experience in this service-learning course. I will provide details about the reflection during the last two weeks of the semester.
<i>Instructor Evaluations</i>	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, assignments, and in-class activities for the semester. Please complete the readings and exercises for a given date before you come to class. **This schedule is subject to change** throughout the semester; please keep up with in-class activities and announcements.

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

Abbreviation	Meaning
MD	Major Document
Exercise X.Y	Chapter X, Exercise Y (e.g., Exercise 14.3 = Exercise #3 in Chapter 14).
	Online work day; no meeting in the classroom (though you're free to work in the classroom during our scheduled time)


Week 1

January 18	What we'll do in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduce the Course ➤ Discuss Technical & Professional Writing ➤ Introduce Grammar Checkup
	What to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chapter 1 (read sometime this week)
	What's due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nothing

Week 2

January 23	What we'll do in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss the Grammar Checkup ➤ Discuss Ethics and Technical Writing
	What to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chapters 2 & 3
	What's due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Addendum A from the Syllabus ➤ Grammar Checkup
January 25	What we'll do in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss Audience and Correspondence
	What to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chapters 5 & 14
	What's due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Exercise 14.3 or 14.4 (choose only one)

Week 3

January 30	What we'll do in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss Organization ➤ Introduce MD 1 ➤ Workshop: MD 1
	What to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chapter 7
	What's due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nothing
February 1 	What we'll do online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Workshop: MD 1
	What to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nothing
	What's due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Part 1 of MD 1 due in Blackboard by 5:00 p.m.