English 3330W: Introduction to Technical Writing
Spring 2018, Sections 18 online (3 Credit Hours)
Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 & 1302.

Instructor	Barbara Jones
E-mail	eng_baj@shsu.edu
Office	Online by e-mail or text
Text	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, 11th 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.
- Cooperate in group work situations

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 @ 10% each)	40%
Formal Project	25%
Discussion Board 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 polices 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 the group through your responses on the discussion boards.
- 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 on the discussion board. • Submit assignments on time. Each assignment will have a specific date and time by which you must complete it. If, for any reason, I do not 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 failing grade.
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). 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 have registered with Services for Students with Disabilities and I have received relevant paperwork from that office. For more information about registering for these services see the following link: 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 a module begins.
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.

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, 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.
Academic Enrichment Center	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.
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.
Caveats	The webpage for the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "caveat" as "an explanation to prevent misinterpretation" or "a cautionary detail to be considered when evaluating, interpreting, or doing something." Dr. Brian Blackburne designed this course; Barbara Jones is your instructor. Ms. Jones has added her own observations that will appear as **Caveats,** which she hopes will increase understanding and answer questions. She has also added examples of outstanding submissions from last semester.
Assignment Drafts	You may produce drafts and/or mockups of your major documents and the formal project. Drafts may prove 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 eng_baj@shsu.edu. I would also strongly suggest that you consult with a tutor in the Academic Enrichment Center. Be certain to take a copy of the prompt with you.

Major Documents	You will complete a series of major documents, which will allow you to practice working with the following: • Correspondence • Technical-writing style and document design • Proposals • Instructions • Job correspondence
Group Work	Most of these assignments involve group work. You will only participate in discussion board activities, the document design, the instructions, and the job portfolio as an individual. Your success in this course will depend on your participation in groups. Therefore, I present my first caveat on the Pink Slip.
Pink Slip Caveat	The business world, no matter the field, involves interaction with an individual or individuals at one time or another. As a result, other employees rely on you to a degree for the resolution of a problem or development of an idea. If, however, you do not meet that responsibility often enough in your job performance, management most probably will issue you a "pink slip," which means that you are fired. You must then find another position. We will play that game in this course. If you do not participate in group work, the point of contact for that assignment will notify me, and I will drop you from the group. You will also post a "0" for that project. You must then "interview" to join another group. The point-of-contact for the next assignment will notify me that they have "hired" you, and I will place you in the new group.
Formal Project	Your formal project is a medium-to-large technical document that allows your group to apply the principles learned from all major documents. I will provide a detailed description of the formal project early in the semester (see February 5) so you will have opportunities to plan and workshop your ideas.
Grade Check	Check your Grades to determine whether all the assignments have been graded and posted. As noted previously, all assignments should have been submitted on time. Each assignment had a specific date and time by which you should have completed it. If, for any reason, I did not have your assignment by the specified date and time, then I counted your assignment as late. I also deducted 10 points per class-day late, but I did not accept any assignments submitted longer than five days after the due date. If you turned in an assignment late, you should have alerted me by email.
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 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.

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

Week 1 Note:	*in MODULE 1*

January 24-26

Familiarize yourself with the home page and this syllabus.

➢ Read Chapter 1: Introduction to Technical Writing.

Caveat: Take note of the following points in this chapter:
1. "**Collaborating with people** is at the heart of the process" in technical communication (Markel 5).
2. A technical document "is produced **collaboratively**" (Markel 7).
3. "Because technical communication usually calls for **collaboration**, successful communicators . . . **work effectively in teams**" (Markel 10).
4. "Successful communicators **seek out opinions from others**" (Markel 10).
5. "A 2012 survey by Millennial Branding . . . showed that 98 percent of those companies named communication skills as extremely important for new employees. The next two most important characteristics . . . a positive attitude (97 percent) and **teamwork skills** (92 percent)" (Markel 11).
6. *Job Outlook 2013*, a report produced by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, found that communication skills, **teamwork skills**, and problem-solving skills top the list of skills and qualities that employers seek. (See item two in the Skill or Ability chart on page 12).

My point? Your ability to work in a team will prove critical to your success in this course.

January 30 by 1:59 p.m.

➢ Submit Addendum A as an Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) document. This is a non-credit, but required, item. Adobe Acrobat, the Portable Document Format (.pdf), 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.

➢ **NOTE**: Submit into the drop box under the following File name:

LastName_FirstName_AddendumA.pdf

Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.

Caveat: I ask that you submit this addendum as a .pdf file as you need to know how to use Adobe Acrobat. Be aware, however, that for the graded assignments, you need to submit through Microsoft Word or in the Rich Text Format (rtf). If you have a Mac, please use the latter as I do not have the drivers to open your documents. The MLA or RTF formats will allow me to provide you with greater feedback. -BJ

January 29

> **Assignment 1 & 2** provide an overview of the course, an opportunity to introduce yourself to the group, and, through their postings, a way to get to know them.

> Read Chapter 1: Introduction to Technical Communication, Chapter 3: Writing Technical Documents, and 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

January 30 by 11:59 p.m.

For **Assignment 1**, introduce yourself on Discussion Board 1 so that your group members may come to know who you are. include details like your classification, major, and interests, as these details may generate ideas for a topic selection for the Final Project. Include your reaction to the information covered in Chapters 1, 3, and 14

Caveat: Remember that your participation in these discussions comprises 15% of your final semester grade. In *every* discussion you post,
    (1) cite a page from the reading assignment,
    (2) refer to a web address where further information on the topic may be found, and
    (3) pose a question.
From now on I will remind you to cite, to refer, to question by using the acronym CRQ. -BJ

February 1 by 11:59 p.m.

> For **Assignment 2,** draft an analysis memo in its appropriate format, with guidance from the chapter, and submit it in **Microsoft Word** about your own introduction and reactions to two of your classmates' postings that responded to that introduction. See page 374 in your textbook titled "Organizing a Memo." Always be certain to include your name and date on the document.

Caveat: This assignment is an individual project. While not a graded assignment, the professor considers participation essential. -BJ

> Submit into the drop box under the following File name:
      LastName_FirstName_Memo1.doc
Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.

February 5	Complete Activity 1: Choose a Point of Contact through the Discussion Board 2 Complete Activity 2: Write a Team Charter through the Discussion Board 2.

> Once you establish a Point of Contact, he or she should submit a memo that summarizes your group's activities. This memo should note the name of that Point of Contact, the nickname for the group, the names of the team members, and the ground rules established for successful interaction.

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GroupNumber_GroupName_Charter.doc
Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.

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> **CAVEAT:** The group may rotate the responsibilities as Point of Contact from member to member as we move through the assignments. In other words, each group member should be the Point of Contact for at least one stage of a project or each project. -BJ

Final Project Preview	**CAVEAT:** While it is still early in the semester, preview Module 6 to learn of the 10-15 page Formal Project (25% of your semester grade) that your group will begin to compile after Spring Break. The Major Documents that you will submit before Spring Break lead up to this undertaking. I inform you of this now so you may be thinking of topic ideas. -BJ

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February 12	➤ Major Document 1, Parts 1 & 2 (10% of your final semester grade) 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
February 13 by 11:59 p.m.	➤ Your Point of Contact should create a thread on the Discussion Board 3 for members of the group to evaluate the audience in the Kia commercial, and to post their individual reactions on this site (Part 1). Your group will then restructure the commercial to reach a different audience (Part 2). Remember, CRQ.
February 15 11:59 p.m.	➤ Respond to two of your classmates' ideas.
February 23 by 11:59 p.m.	➤ Your Point of Contact should submit the memo in behalf of the group for **MD 1, Part 1** (the evaluation), and **MD 1, Part 2** (new appeal for the same product to a difference audience). Submit into the drop box in Microsoft Word under the following file name: GroupNumber_GroupName_MD1-Parts1&2.doc *Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.*

February 20

> ➢ Refer to Chapter 10.
> ➢ Watch Dr. Blackburne's video presentation on style.
>> ➢ **Caveat:** _Note my PowerPoints on comma usage_
> ➢ 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.

Caveat: Did you know that F7 on your keyboard is a spelling and grammar check? You also might want to try the website Grammarly.com. Do not always trust the grammar check as variations occur. Consider these alerts as warnings, and make your decision based on your use. -BJ

February 26
Read Chapters. 11 & 12 and view the Design PowerPoint.
> ➢ View the Design PowerPoint.
> ➢ Review the branding and logo documents.

**February 27
by 11:59 p.m.**
Post to the Discussion Board 4 (CRQ).

**March 1 by
11:59 p.m.**
Respond to two of your groupmates' postings.

**March 9 by
11:59 p.m.**
Complete Major Document 2 (MD 2). Redesign the document included in this assignment. It should warn hotel guests about the protection of their personal valuables during their visit. Assume it will be posted inside the room's entry.

> This is an individual, not a group, assignment.

Submit into the drop box in Microsoft Word under the following File name:
> LastName_FirstName_Document_Redesign.doc
> _Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction._

S P R I N G   B R E A K
March 12 - 16, 2018

April 2
Last day to drop the course with a "Q."

**March 19 –
April 6**
> ➢ For the Final Project, a major endeavor of 10-15 pages for 25% of your semester grade, your group will explain a problem, propose a solution to that problem, and identify an instructional document that needs to be created (an individual assignment that you will take to the group for possible inclusion in the project).

➢ Read Chapter 16.

March 20 by 11:59 p.m.	➢ The Point of Contact should create Discussion Board 5, "Ideas for the Formal Project." (CRQ)

March 22 by 11:59 p.m.	➢ Each group member should post suggestions and then 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 Proposals are due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, April 6.

Major Document 3: an exercise in writing a proposal.

What will the proposal contain?

Your proposal must contain the conventional elements of a proposal as discussed in chapter 16 of your text. Some of the elements you include in your proposal will vary from those other students include, but as a minimum, your proposal must contain the following:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Problem Definition
- Solution
- Work Plan
- Detailed Outline of the Proposed Document
- Conclusion

The proposal will likely be about 3–4 pages long. Remember, this document is different from the Formal Project, which will be the longer ten to fifteen-page document.

April 2

Last day to drop the course with a "Q."

April 6 by 11:59 p.m.

➢ The Point of Contact should submit the Proposal under the following file name:

GroupNumber_GroupName_Proposal.com
Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.

Weeks 11 & 12   *in* **Module 6**

➢ 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. See pages 548-54 and 564-7 in your textbook.

➢ This is an individual project.

> Read Chapter 20 (Hint: pay close attention to pages 557-572).

April 10 by **11:59 p.m.**	Complete Discussion Board 6 posting.
April 12 by **11:59 p.m.**	Respond to two of your groupmates' comments.
April 20 by **11:59 p.m.**	Submit into the drop box in Microsoft Word under the following file name.

<div align="center">

LastName_FirstName_Instructions.doc
Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.

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Continue work on your Final Project.

Week 13

April 27 by **11:59 p.m.**	> Submit your **Final Project** into the drop box in Microsoft Word under the following file name:

<div align="center">

GroupNumber_GroupName_FormalProject.doc
Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.

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Week 14   **Job Application Portfolio**

April 30	➢ 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. ➢ Read Chapter 15: Writing Job: Application Material ➢ 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. This is an individual assignment.
May 4 11:59 p.m.	➢ Submit your final Job Correspondence packet (resume, cover letter, & follow-up letter) > Submit into the drop box in Microsoft Word under this file name:

<div align="center">

FirstName_LastName_JobApplicationPortfolio.doc
Failure to submit correctly will draw a one-point deduction.

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Week 15   **Finals Week**

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Complete your final at any time between 12:01 a.m.,
Saturday, **May 5**, and 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, **May 8**.

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