English 3330W: Introduction to Technical Writing

Spring 2018, Sections 23 & 24. Online. (3 Credit Hours)
Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 & 1302.

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Classroom	Blackboard.shsu.edu

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

Course Goals

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

- Create, edit, and revise prose to produce professional, polished documents.
- Learn to analyze a rhetorical situation and craft the appropriate documentation to meet its needs.
- Design documents to be visually engaging and usable.
- Search for and report information.
- Learn the elements of effective technical writing style and incorporate these elements into a variety of professional documents.
- Work and write as a member of a team.

Course Evaluation

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

Major Documents (5)	50%
Formal Project	20%
Reading Discussion Posts (7)	20%
Weekly Assignments/ Group Participation	10%

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.	90 – 100	**A**
Very-good/good work – exceeds/meets most requirements with few significant errors.	80 – 89	**B**
Fair/adequate work – meets most/some requirements, but with fundamental errors.	70 – 79	**C**
Flawed work – meets few requirements; has excessive errors.	60 – 69	**D**
Does not meet the assignment's requirements.	0 – 59	**F**

Policies

Please keep the following policies in mind as you compete this course:

Attendance

- Keep up with online obligations and assignments. You cannot perform well in this course unless you contribute to online activities and complete all assignments.
- Participate! You are responsible for making thoughtful contributions to your blogs, discussion postings, and other class activities. Simply logging on every day or posting something when prompted does not guarantee a good grade.
- Respect your classmates. We are in a learning environment, so please keep an open mind to learning from me as well as your classmates. Treat us respectfully and professionally; we will extend the same courtesies to you.

Assignments

- Make sure that you're comfortable with writing grammatically correct prose. This course does not focus on principles of basic grammar and punctuation. If you need improvement in this area, please seek help outside of class at the SHSU Writing Center.
- Complete scheduled readings and daily assignments before participating in activities, and be prepared to discuss readings substantively.
- Turn in your assignments on time. Each assignment will have a specific date and time by which you must complete it. For discussions, blogs, or other postings that rely on timely participation, I will not award points for late work. Other assignments (such as Major Documents or the Formal Project) will lose 10 points per day late.
- 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 the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf

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.
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.

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 within our course's Modules section.

The prerequisites for this course are ENGL 1301 and 1302; accordingly, you must have full understanding of basic grammar and writing mechanics. 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. Your textbook offers a wealth of information regarding theories, genres, methods, and real-world applications of technical writing. I will assign weekly 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 complete any activities.
Discussion Posts	You will participate in seven (7) professional discussions in which you will post reflections and information that you have gathered or observed through your readings and our course interactions. These posts will create a learning community, a place to exchange information about readings, research, and experiences. Posts should include new findings and insights from your readings with the aim of building our learning community in the same way that researchers publish their findings to expand knowledge and build their community. You will read and comment on your classmates' posts; likewise, your classmates will comment on the information and ideas that you post. These reading discussion boards are different than the group discussions, Q&A discussion boards, and discussion boards used for peer reviews and other assignments.
Exercises	I may assign exercises from your text that engage you in the theory and practice of creating effective documents.
Team Collaboration	Even though some students dislike group projects, working in teams is an important part of professional life. You will be asked to collaborate with group/team members this semester to discuss ideas and create and submit assignments. Timely participation in group discussions is important, and you will be assigned a participation grade each time you are asked to participate. Adding your input immediately before an assignment is due when others have been working for days is not timely, and you may receive a participation grade of zero.

Weekly Assignments	In addition to exercises, peer reviews, and group discussions, you will be assigned other learning activities throughout the semester designed to help you understand and apply or share information. Peer reviews, team/group discussion participation, and any other assignments—excluding major documents, your formal project, and reading discussion posts—will count as part of your weekly assignment grade.
Correspondence	Correspondence, whether through e-mail or discussion postings, is a part of our daily lives—at home, school, and work. Because we are in a technical-writing course, every e-mail that you send to your classmates or me must demonstrate what you are learning in this advanced writing course. Similarly, postings on discussion boards must conform to accepted standards of professional writing. 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 you to revise your documents before you submit them for final review.
Workshops	Peer review workshops provide you with opportunities for collaborating with classmates, providing feedback, and applying principles covered in our readings and discussions. Throughout the semester, we will have several workshop sessions, and participation is required for all of them. Peer reviews will count as part of your weekly assignments grade.
Major Documents	You will complete a series of major documents, which will allow you to practice working with the following: • Audience Analysis • Document design project • Job Portfolio • Project Proposal • Formal Project Task Mock-up
Formal Project	Your formal project is a medium-to-large technical document that allows you to apply the principles learned from the other major documents. I will provide a detailed description of the formal project early in the semester.
Instructor Evaluations	Toward the end of the semester, all 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 provides an overview of the topics that we will cover and the general pace for readings/assignments. Because our course will be organized by learning modules in Blackboard, full assignment details will be provided within each module. Please note that all dates are approximate and subject to change. Assignments are due at 11:59 pm on the due date.

Dates	Topic	Chapter Readings in Markel	Activities
Weeks 1 & 2 Jan. 17–28	Module 1: Class Introductions and Business Correspondence	1, 3, & 14	• Discussion 1 (Post due Tues. 1/23; responses due Thur. 1/25) • Team Introductions (Due Wed. 1/24) • Analysis memo (Due Sun. 1/28)
Week 3 Jan. 29–Feb. 4	Module 2: Collaborative Writing	4 & 17	• Group Discussions (Start posting by Mon. 1/29) • Discussion 2 (Post due Tues. 1/30; responses due Thur. 2/1) • Team Charters (Due Sun. 2/4)
Week 4 Feb. 5–11	Module 3: Audience Awareness	5	• Group Discussions (Start posting/ coordinating team writing by Mon. 2/5) • Discussion 3 (Post due Tues. 2/6; responses due Thur. 2/8) • MD 1 (Part 1 due Fri. 2/9; Part 2 due Sun. 2/11)
Week 5 Feb. 12–18	Module 4: Technical Writing Style	9 &10	• Style Exercises • Group Discussions
Weeks 6 & 7 Feb 19–March 4	Module 5: Document Design	11 & 12	• Discussion 4 (Post due Tues. 2/20; responses due Thur. 2/22) • MD 2 Draft (Due Sun. 2/25) • Upload draft to MD2 Workshop Forum by Mon. 2/26 • MD 2 Peer Review (Due Wed. 2/28) • MD 2 Final (Due Sun. 3/4)
Weeks 8 & 9 March 5–Mar. 25	Module 6: Job Portfolio	15	• Discussion 5 (Post due Tues. 3/6; responses due Thur. 3/8) • Job Ad Analysis (Due Fri. 3/9) • MD 3 Draft (Due Sun. 3/18) • Upload draft to MD3 Workshop Forum by Mon. 3/19 • MD 3 Peer Review (Due Wed. 3/21) • MD 3 Final (Due Sun. 3/25)
Weeks 10 & 11 Mar. 26–Apr. 8	Module 7: Formal Project Proposals	16	• Discussion 6 (Post due Tues. 3/27; responses due Thur. 3/29) • MD 4 Draft (Due Sun. 4/1) • Upload draft to MD4 Workshop Forum by Mon. 4/2 • MD 4 Peer Review (Due Wed. 4/4) • MD 4 (Due Sun. 4/8)

| Weeks 12 & 13 Apr. 9–22 | Module 8: Instructional Writing | 20 | • Group Discussions
• Discussion 7 (Post due Tues. 4/10; responses due Thur. 4/12)
• MD 5 Draft (Due Sun. 4/15)
• Upload draft to MD5 Workshop Forum by Mon. 4/16
• MD 5 Peer Review (Due Tues. 4/18)
• MD 5 (Due Sun. 4/22) |
| Weeks 14 & 15 Apr. 23-May 6 | Module 9: Formal Project | | • Formal Project (Due Sun. 5/6) |