



English 3359: Technical Writing

Fall 2013 Course Syllabus

(MW 1:30-2:50 p.m.)
UGLC232

Instructor and Course Information

Instructor: Mr. Craig Wynne

E-mail: cwynne@utep.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 3-4 p.m. in the University Writing Center or online by appointment (please set this up at least 24 hours in advance)

Course Description

This online course introduces you to technical writing principles, methods, and genres needed to communicate your professional knowledge to others. We will study technical writing from a *rhetorical* and *design* perspective. That is, we will examine how technical writers strategically construct user-knowledge through discourse and multimodal design. The "technical" components of our course will come from open-source or commercial computer software that you research, analyze, and use for your final presentation, which you will conduct during finals week.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will

- Practice technical writing principles, methods, and genres
- Think rhetorically and meta-cognitively
- Analyze and design technical documents for different audiences
- Conduct primary and secondary research
- Sharpen your writing and revising technique
- Work collaboratively in teams

Required Texts and Software

We will use the following text this term:

- *Technical Communication Today*. Richard Johnson-Sheehan. 4th ed. Longman, 2011.

Storage and Backup

This course depends on computer-mediated writing. Most of the work you will do requires interfacing with technology. Therefore, save and back-up digital assignments frequently.

Course Assessment and Calculation of Final Grades

The course grade is determined using a total points-system. To determine your average, add up the total points you earned on the assignments completed to that point, and divide this by the total number of points possible for those assignments. For example, if you earned 300 points out of a total of 400 points for the assignments, your grade would be a 75%.

Grading criteria for each assignment will be presented in assignment handouts posted in the "Assignments" folder.

A tentative grading schedule follows but may be adjusted. Students must earn a "C" (1750 points) to pass the course.

Assignments	Point Value
• Class Participation	300 points
• Job Application Portfolio	400 points

• Team Proposal	200 points
• Team Instructional Documentation	300 points
• Team Analytical Report	400 points
• Team Presentation	300 points
• Team Member Participation Assessment	200 points
• Reader-Response Journals (ten out of 11 at 40 points each– due to Blackboard every Sunday at 9 p.m.)	400 points
Total Points:	2500 points

I will be using a web-based program called Engrade to keep track of your grades as they occur. You will receive access to this by the end of Week Three. It is your responsibility to log onto Engrade. Please do not ask me "What is my grade for the course so far?" My response will be "Go to your Engrade." At the end of the semester, please do not ask me, "Why did I receive this grade?" My response will be "Go to your Engrade." Set up a time with me if you're having trouble logging on. If you think I entered a grade incorrectly or made a mistake, it is your responsibility to inform me right away so I can investigate the situation and correct it, if necessary.

Attendance

Daily attendance (physical and mental) is essential to your ability to succeed in this class. If you miss more than two weeks' worth of classes (four sessions), you will automatically fail the course, regardless of your progress on major assignments – no exceptions! I start class at exactly 1:30 (by the classroom clock), regardless of how many students are in attendance that day. If you are more than ten minutes late, you are counted as absent for the day. **I do not drop students; if you wish to withdraw, you need to do this yourself.** The only exception is that if you do not attend any classes for the first two weeks, you will be dropped. If you think regular attendance and punctuality will be a problem, you may wish to consider another section of this course.

Conversely, if you show up on time for EVERY class, you will receive an extra 125 points toward your final grade (this amounts to a half letter and could mean the difference between a B and an A).

Assignment Descriptions

This course requires that you complete the following assignments. Refer to the course calendar for due dates.

Class Participation

Class participation will be assessed on a daily basis. Each of you will start off with the full 300 points for class participation. You can lose points for the following:

- Late arrival (up to 10 minutes after the beginning of class): 10 points
- Late arrival (10 minutes or more after the beginning of class): 10 points and an absence on your record
- Engaging in off-task behavior (texting, being on Facebook or non-course related websites, sleeping, doing work for other classes): 10 points
- Other evidence of not being engaged with the class (saying "I don't know" to a question or an evasive response that shows not having been following the material): 10 points
- Engaging in behavior that disrupts the learning of the class (talking while another is speaking): 20 points, dismissal from the class session, and an absence on your record for the first occurrence; 50 points, dismissal from the class session, another absence on your record, and a referral to the Dean for the second occurrence
- Outright refusal to follow directions and other behavior that directly respects the instructor or a classmate: 50 points, dismissal from the class session, an absence on your record, and a referral to the Dean

This will be documented on Engrade. If you see anything less than "300" under the "Class Participation" category and are unsure of why, it is your responsibility to contact me. If you have lost all 300 points from this category, points will continue to be deducted from your total grade.

Reader-Response Journals

Each week, you will write a response (250 words minimum) to the readings in the textbook, most of which will consist of textbook exercises. They should: 1) cover all of the readings; 2) demonstrate that you've read and comprehended the

Craig Wynne 9/4/13 6:42 PM

Comment [1]: I assign journals in order to help my students make meaningful connections with the text. These journals are focused, as the journal topics I assign are from the textbook. These topics are contextualized in that they help students think about their own experiences with relation to the topics at hand.

material in the text; and 3) consist of your own thoughts and reactions to the text. They should NOT: 1) be a mere summary or regurgitation of the material in the text. I want YOUR thoughts on what you're reading! There are a total of eleven, ten of which you will complete. If you wish to complete all eleven, you will receive an extra forty points added to your total course grade. These will be due to my e-mail every Sunday at 9 p.m. and will not be accepted late.

Job Application Portfolio

This portfolio will include a posting for a job position for which you qualify now or will qualify in the future; an analysis of the organization, job position, and audience for the application; a cover letter; and a resume.

Team Proposal

In teams you will choose an open-source or a commercial computer software that you'd like to research, learn, write about, and present on.

Once you research and choose this computer software, your team will write a proposal, following guidelines in a handout posted online, explaining why your team has chosen the software and providing a timeline for completing the work. Teams will be assigned by the middle of Week Three at the latest.

Instructional Document

Once you choose a computer software, your team will be required to create a set of instructions that shows others how to use one of its advanced features. You will need to follow the guidelines provided to you in the course handout posted online.

Analytical Report

In teams, you will write an analytical report that analyzes the software as a system. You will need to follow the guidelines provided to you in the course handout.

Team Presentation

You will present your team analytical report to your classmates during finals week. You will need to follow the guidelines provided to you in the course handout.

Team Member Participation Grade

Because you will be working in teams, you will assess each other's participation and work ethic using a form I provide to you. This document will be e-mailed to me by 9 p.m. on December 11, the date of the presentation.

Submitting Assignments

Submit assignments electronically to my e-mail (cwynne@utep.edu).

Use Microsoft WORD for all documents, and use a .doc, .docx, or .rtf format. Students who submit assignments in other formats (e.g. .lnk, used with UTEP's *MySpace*, or .wps, used with *WORKS*) will receive a zero for the assignment. I cannot open or read these formats.

Late Work/Missed Assignments

Late work is not accepted and missed assignments, and discussion board posts cannot be made up. Make sure you check the spelling of my e-mail address before you send it; the assignment not going through due to misspelling of my name is not a valid excuse for missing work.

Netiquette

Since there will be some online posting in the course, it is important that you familiarize yourselves with netiquette – or online etiquette. Please review the "The Core Rules of Netiquette" by Virginia Shea at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/>. Briefly summarized, these include the following:

- [Rule 1: Remember the Human](#)
- [Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life](#)
- [Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace](#)
- [Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth](#)
- [Rule 5: Make yourself look good online](#)
- [Rule 6: Share expert knowledge](#)
- [Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control](#)

- [Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy](#)
- [Rule 9: Don't abuse your power](#)
- [Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes](#)

Communication (Online and F2F)

You may email me at any time to ask a question or to discuss course material. Please e-mail me at my UTEP address, which is at the top. When you e-mail me, please write it in the following format:

Dear Mr. Wynne:

Write the content of your e-mail here. Make sure you've proofread for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Do not use IM language ("2" for "to," "u" for "you," etc.).

**Sincerely,
Your Name**

If your e-mail does not follow this format, I will respond with "Please resend in the prescribed format." In addition, please do not ask a question that can be answered by looking at the syllabus or an assignment sheet, nor should you ask a question about an assignment within 24 hours of the due date. I will not respond if your e-mail falls under one of those criteria either. You need to prepare and to follow directions.

I will always respond to your e-mails within 24 hours, except on weekends. If you e-mail me and then see me in class, please do not ask me, "Did you get my e-mail?" My response will either be "I haven't checked it since you sent it" (this applies if you sent it right before class) or "Yes, did you get my response?" if some time has passed. If you have not received a response from me within 24 hours, please follow up.

I am always happy to talk to you after class about any issues you are having with the course material or if you want to discuss something more in-depth. Before class is generally not the best time to speak to me, as I'm setting up the materials for the session. The best time to speak with me is during my office hours. If the scheduled time is not convenient, we can set up a time to meet.

Additionally, we will not be using Blackboard this semester. Rather, we will use a course Wiki page, where assignments will be posted and announcements will be made. You will more than likely need to learn new technologies throughout your career. The use of the Wiki will provide you with an opportunity to do this. The page is <http://english3359fall2013wynne.pbworks.com/w/page/68461628/FrontPage>.

Writing Assistance

The University Writing Center (UWC) offers additional writing assistance, including free face-to-face and online tutoring. The UWC is located in the library, Room 227. You can reach the UWC by calling (915) 747-5112 or by emailing <http://academics.utep.edu/writingcenter>.

Technology Assistance

If you have difficulty with e-mail, please call the HelpDesk, located in the Library Room 300, at the numbers specified below:

- For on-campus assistance, call 747-4357.
- For off-campus assistance, call 747-5257.

The HelpDesk provides assistance during the following times and days:

- Monday-Friday 7AM-8PM
- Saturdays 9AM-1PM
- Sundays 12PM - 4PM

You can also e-mail the HelpDesk at helpdesk@utep.edu

If you have difficulty with the Wiki page, please e-mail support@pbworks.com.

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Comment [2]: Another reason I use the Wiki is that students will more than likely be required to learn new technologies when they enter the workforce. As most of them have not had experience with Wikis, this will be an opportunity for them to establish a new comfort zone with an unfamiliar technological platform.

Accommodations for Disabilities

In this class, "disability" refers to any physical, mental, or emotional condition which will prevent you from completing the work on time or to the required standards and will require that I make accommodations for you.

If you have a disability that requires accommodations, contact the Disabled Student Services Office, which will provide you with the proper paperwork. Then, e-mail me as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. You can contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services Office at

Web: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

Phone: (915) 747-5148

E-Mail: cass@utep.edu

I cannot (and will not) make accommodations for you without the required paperwork from the Disabled Student Services Office.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any kind is unacceptable. According to UTEP policy, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, and collusion.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using another person's ideas or words without giving them proper credit. Plagiarism always occurs when students use the "copy" function on computer programs and then "paste" information from one or multiple sites into Word documents without citing sources properly or putting the information in quotation marks. Plagiarism also occurs when students quote, paraphrase, or summarize another person's work without giving correct citation. Plagiarism occurs whether the work is taken from a book, an article, a website, a reader's guide, another student's paper, or any other source. An entire essay is considered fraudulent even if only a single sentence is plagiarized.

Cheating

Cheating is

- Possessing and/or using unauthorized materials (books, notes, etc.) during a test
- Copying from the paper of another student
- Engaging in communication (written, oral, electronic etc.) with other students during a test
- Falsifying research data
- Using papers written for other courses in this course

Collusion

Collusion is collaborating with others for the purpose of engaging in academic dishonesty.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

There are many ways to avoid academic dishonesty:

- Ask me or a writing center tutor for help.
- Cite properly (For guidance, go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>)
- Avoid procrastination.
- Develop your own ideas.
- Refuse to help students who engage in academic dishonesty.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

If you are suspected of academic dishonesty, I will report you to the Dean of Students. The Dean will conduct an investigation and determine appropriate sanctions. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include a failing grade for the assignment, failing the class, or receiving disciplinary probation and expulsion.

Course Schedule

A tentative reading and assignment schedule follows, but it may be adjusted as needed. Complete all readings and writing assignments (RRJs, discussion board postings) by the Sunday after the assigned week. For example, RRJ 1 will be due Sunday, September 1 at 9 p.m.

Abbreviations:

TCT – *Technical Communication Today*, 4th edition

RD – Draft

FC – Final copy

RRJ – Reader-Response Journal

Week One – August 26 & 28

Topic: Introduction to Technical Communication

TCT Reading: Chapter 1

Due: RRJ 1 (TCT – page 17, exercise 3)

Week Two – September 4 (No class September 2, Labor Day)

Topic: Purpose and Audience

TCT Reading: Chapter 2 (RRJ 2)

Assignment Due: RRJ 2 (TCT – page 38, exercise 3)

Week Three – September 9 & 11

Topic: The Job Search

TCT Reading: Chapter 11 (RRJ 3 – complete the “Bio” assignment on page 348)

Assignment Due: RD of Job Application Portfolio due to peer groups 9/15 at 9 p.m./RRJ 3

Week Four – September 16 & 18

Topic: No class this week – Peer review Job Application Portfolios – Mr. Wynne in Writing Center during scheduled class time for individual conferencing (optional, not required)

TCT Reading: None

Assignment Due: Comments due on partners’ Job Application Portfolio drafts by 9/18 at 9 p.m./FC of Job Application Portfolios due to Blackboard by 9/22 at 9 p.m.

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Comment [3]: Having conference time in lieu of class offers students an opportunity to receive individualized help on their writing, and it allows me the opportunity to work with them as individual writers and to develop relationships with them as individuals. Making the conferences optional offers students the opportunity to practice their decision-making skills.

Week Five – September 23 & 25

Topic: Proposals and Persuasion

TCT Reading: Chapter 8 & 13

Assignment Due: RRJ 4 (Complete the “Write” assignment on page 232. You won’t present, but make it about 100 words.)

Week Six – September 30 & October 2

Topic: Working Collaboratively and Ethically

TCT Reading: Chapter 3 & 4 (RRJ 5 – Complete page 91, Exercise 2 – Just find one example of advertising.)

Assignment Due: RRJ 5

Week Seven – October 7 & 9

Topic: Technical Style

TCT Reading: Chapter 17 (RRJ 6 – Complete page 478, exercise 2)

Due: RRJ 6

Week Eight – October 14 & 16

Topic: Understanding Visual Design

Topic: Chapter 18 & 19 (RRJ 7 – Complete page 516, exercise 1)

Assignment Due: RRJ 7

Week Nine – October 21 & 23

Topic: Revising and Editing

TCT Reading: Chapter 20, page 552-565, Appendix A1-A18 (RRJ 8 – page 571, exercise 3 – It can be a paragraph, not a memo.)

Assignment Due: RRJ 8/Team Proposal D1 due to partnered group 10/27 at 9 p.m

Week Ten – October 28 & October 30

Topic: No class this week - Peer review Team Proposals – Mr. Wynne in Writing Center during scheduled class time for individual conferencing

TCT Reading: None

Assignment Due: Comments on partnered groups' Team Proposals due to group by 10/30 at 9 p.m.; Team Proposal FC due to Blackboard 11/3 at 9 p.m.

Week Eleven – November 4 & 6

Topic: Instructional Documentation

TCT Reading: Chapter 7 (RRJ 9 - Using the principles highlighted in the chapter, write a short set of instructions on how to do something. It can be anything – making pasta, building a doghouse, anything.))

Assignment Due: RRJ 9/Instructional Documentation RD due to partnered group 11/10 at 9 p.m.

Week Twelve – November 11 & 13

Topic: No class this week - Peer review Instructional Documentation – Mr. Wynne in Writing Center during scheduled class time for individual conferencing

TCT Reading: None

Assignment: Comments on partnered groups' Instructional Documentation due to partners by 11/13 at 9 p.m.; Instructional Documentation FC due to Blackboard 11/17 at 9 p.m.

Week Thirteen – November 18 & 20

Topic: Analytical Reports; Researching and Managing Information

TCT Reading: Chapter 8, 14, 15, Appendix A24-34 (RRJ 10 - RRJ 10 – Open topic – Just write about anything that stood out to you in the reading.)

Assignment Due: RRJ 10

Week Fourteen – November 25 & 27

Topic: Presentations

TCT Reading: Chapter 21 (RRJ 11 - Using the principles discussed in the chapter, evaluate a presentation you attended. What made it effective or ineffective?)

Assignment Due: RRJ 11; Analytical Report RD due to partnered groups 12/1 at 9 p.m.

Week Fifteen – December 2 & 4

Topic: No class - Peer review Analytical Reports – Mr. Wynne in University Writing Center (UWC) during scheduled class time for individual conferencing

TCT Reading: None

Assignment Due: Comments on partnered groups' Analytical Report due to partnered groups 12/4 at 9 p.m.; Analytical Report FC due to Blackboard 12/8 at 9 p.m.

Week Sixteen – December 11 from 4:00-6:45 p.m.

Assignment Due: In-class group presentations