

## TECM 2700 Introduction to Technical Writing

**Instructor** Dr. L.G. Jackson  
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**Office Hours** By appointment

**Text & Materials** Sims, Brenda. *Technical Communication in the Information Age*. Kendall Hunt Publishers, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4652-0242-0

Flash drive or other memory saving device

### Course Objectives

In this course you will learn

- To learn to write clearly, concisely, and correctly
- To develop good writing skills to use in business and industry
- To learn and practice writing various technical documents common in business and industry
- To learn to use word-processing to create effective technical documents
- To learn to write as a member of a team

### Your Semester Grade

Major Technical Documents:

**Case Study** **15%**

*Description: Students respond to an in-class writing prompt designed to test the student's knowledge of technical style and design. This assignment functions as the mid-term style exam.*

**Feasibility Study** **10%**

*Description: Students work as a group to compare three options, such as the best place to purchase gas within a 5 mile radius of the UNT campus.*

**Proposal** **20%**

*Description: In this individual assignment, the student proposes the topic for his or her manual project.*

**Instructions Project 10%**

*Description: In this group project, students rewrite and redesign a document to include numbered steps and labeled graphics.*

**Progress Report 5%**

*Description: In this individual assignment written during class, the student responds to a directive about reporting the progress he or she has made towards completing the manual project.*

**Manual Project 30%**

*Description: The manual project, an individual project, is a multiple page instruction manual, written for a specific audience.*

**Daily Work, Participation, Online Portfolio 10%**

*Description: Students complete a variety of exercises and document re-design projects during class time to practice the principles discussed in class. Participation is evaluated on a sliding scale of the student's attendance & professionalism. The online portfolio is a webpage that contains all of the student's work for the semester.*

**Daily Work**

Each day, we will work on something that related to completing the formal assignments. You must come to class prepared to take notes and to participate in class discussions. You should also prepare for unannounced reading quizzes, in-class writing and completion of homework assignments.

Except where otherwise noted, homework assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you must miss class, you must turn in any work that is due – as scheduled.

**I do not accept late work for any reason.**

## Participation

A small, yet significant portion of your grade will depend upon your participation in class discussions, as well as my estimation of your progress in the course. Think of our classroom as your workplace, and conduct yourself with the same professionalism with which you would treat a job. Arrive on time, prepared to work. Actively demonstrate that you understand professional behavior. Keep in mind that I assess your participation each class day.

## In-class Writing Workshops

We will spend a significant amount of class time working on course assignments. Good students use this time to complete group and individual projects, and they benefit from working with the instructor on their assignments. Use this time wisely.

## Group Work

As you work towards entering the workplace, you need to develop and sharpen your collaboration skills. Therefore, you will complete several assignments as members of a group. Your attendance at group meetings, whether the group meets inside or outside of class, impacts your grade for this course.

Save all group work on the public drive in the Technical Communication Lab (TC Lab). Show proper respect and courtesy to your group by arriving promptly for class – especially on the day your group assignment is due.

If you miss more than one group meeting – whether your group meets inside or outside of class – the highest grade you can receive on a group assignment is 75% of the group's grade. This includes in-class writing workshop days. **Students who miss class on the day a group project is due will make a zero for the assignment.** Additional deductions as outlined in your group's statement of work may also apply.

Keep in mind that I assess your participation as a group member each day you and your group work in class. I reserve the right to give a zero on group assignments to students who cannot perform as members of a group.

## **Absence Policy**

**I both expect and demand regular and punctual attendance.**

Good students attend class. That says it all. You will be counted absent if you are more than ten minutes late for class. Although I will take attendance on a daily basis, you are responsible for keeping up with the number of absences you incur.

**Students who are late two or more times will make a zero in participation for the semester. Students who miss class three or more times will fail the course. No exceptions.**

Whether you are in class or not, you remain responsible for all assignments made and policies announced each day. If you must miss class, you must still turn in any work that is due – as scheduled.

## **Criteria for Excused Absences**

The only excused absences recognized by the University of North Texas are those wherein a student is representing the university in an official capacity. You must bring me appropriate documentation to have your absence excused. Athletes and other students who will miss class for an official university activity must advise me in writing at least 48 hours in advance of the absence.

Neither the university nor the instructor recognizes illness or personal emergencies as excused absences. Use your allotted absences wisely.

## **Late Papers**

**I do not accept late papers for any reason.** Except where otherwise specifically noted, papers are due at the beginning of the class period, on the assigned dates.

## Format Requirements

As you prepare your assignments, make sure you

- Print the assignment on a laser printer
- Make the assignment look neat and visually appealing
- Proofread carefully so the assignment is absolutely free from spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors
- Staple the assignment once in the upper left-hand corner

This is not a suggestion – it is a mandate! Use spell check. Proofread. Do not hand write anything on your papers. Any assignment not prepared specifically according to instructions in format, organization, and/or style will receive an "F."

## Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty

"The term 'plagiarism' includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials"

*(UNT 2013 –2014 Undergraduate Catalog).*

If you turn in a piece of writing all or part of which you have plagiarized, you will be dismissed with an "F" in the course. If you use unauthorized assistance of any kind in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, you will be dismissed with an "F" in the course. Further action within the context of university guidelines may be considered. **Be aware that plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty are grounds for expulsion from the university.**

For more information on the university's policy on this topic, go to: <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>

## Computer Lab

As a technical communication student, you may use the Technical Communication Computer Lab (TC Lab) in the Auditorium Building, room 307. The TC Lab has IBM-compatible computers for you to use. These computers have the latest version of Microsoft® Office, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, as well as Adobe® software including InDesign and Photoshop. We will attend several orientations and conduct several in-class writing workshops in the TC Lab.

The TC Lab is open

Monday – Thursday 8:00 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.

Friday 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

## Computer Etiquette

While we will be using the computers in the classroom to complete both homework assignments and papers, I expect you to use good computer etiquette during class time.

Turn off your monitor during class unless I direct you to do otherwise. **Students who use the computers during class for anything unrelated to this course will receive a zero for class participation for the semester.**

Do not hack, surf the net, send/read personal e-mails, or complete work for other courses during class time. Failure to adhere to these rules will result in dismissal from the classroom, and will count as an absence and/or a zero on any daily work for that class day.

## **Essential Competencies**

Essential competencies for this course include the ability:

- To attend class regularly and punctually
- To read and follow the course syllabus
- To have a basic understanding of English grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- To read and analyze technical documents
- To write clear, concise, and visually appropriate technical prose for the intended readers in response to various types of assignments
- To discuss, both in class and in small groups, technical documents
- To use a personal computer with various word processing, e-mail, and graphics software applications

## **Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, the instructor will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, you must advise me of your needs in writing no later than the end of the second week of class.

## Open Door Policy

I welcome and encourage you to visit me whenever you wish to discuss a paper or a problem as it relates to this class. If you need to contact me outside of class, e-mail me (**LJackson@unt.edu**).

Please put your first and last name, as well as the course number including the day and time you attend class in your e-mail. I try to read my e-mail frequently and will send you a prompt reply.

## Classroom Correspondence— BlackBoard & Text Messages

Occasionally I may need to communicate with you and your classmates. I will use your university e-mail address for this purpose. If you do not use your university e-mail as your primary e-mail account, you will need to change your e-mail settings in MyUNT to forward your messages to your primary account.

I will also use BlackBoard to post copies of the course syllabus, assignments sheets for major technical documents, and miscellaneous announcements. You are responsible for checking on this type of information.

You may want to sign up for Remind101.com, which allows me to send you text messages about this course. To receive text messages about class assignments and announcements via Remind101.com, you should

- Use any mobile device
- Send the text @tecm to 920.645.2166
- Receive a confirmation text that you're enrolled

Neither your phone number nor mine will ever be displayed. These texts are for classroom purposes only. You cannot text me from this number.

You should consider exchanging e-mail addresses or other contact information with one of your classmates so that you may contact them to get notes or assignments you may have missed.

## **Classroom Civility**

I expect you to conduct yourself as adults who practice the utmost civility to the instructor, to the TC Lab staff, and to your fellow classmates. Use appropriate discretion in using electronic devices during class time.

**Do not read or send texts during class. Students who do so will automatically receive a zero in class participation for the semester.**

As colleagues engaged in mutual inquiry about a common goal – becoming more effective technical writers – we shall extend to one another professional courtesies such as:

- Attending all meetings and arriving on time
- Preparing work by the date expected
- Respecting and learning from differences of opinion and experience
- Accepting responsibility to help the group and individuals within the class to achieve their goals

Failure to extend these courtesies will affect my evaluation of your work.

Any behavior that the instructor deems as uncivil and/or inappropriate in any way will result in an "F" in the course and/or your permanent dismissal from the classroom. I reserve the right to pursue further action within the context of university guidelines.

## **Student Evaluation of Teacher Effectiveness (SETE)**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

## Schedule of Readings, Activities, and Assignments

### Week 1

Jan. 14	What we'll do in class:	Attendance Policy, Texts, Syllabus
Jan. 16	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Writing for Your Readers Writing Lab Orientation Sims, Chapter 2

### Week 2

Jan. 21	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Writing Easy-to-Read Documents Sims, Chapter 7 Chapter 7: Exercises 1-5
Jan. 23	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Using Reader-Focused Language Sims, Chapter 8 Chapter 8: Exercises 1-11

### Week 3

Jan. 28	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Organizing Information Maintaining Parallel Structure Writing Reader-Oriented Headings Sims, Chapter 6
Jan. 30	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Designing Documents Graphics Orientation Sims, Chapter 10

### Week 4

Feb. 4	What we'll do in class:	Designing Documents, continued In-class writing assignment: Lyme Disease Document (You will write this in class)
Feb. 6	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Reader-Focused Letters, Memos, and E-mail Sims, Chapter 12

**Week 5**

Feb. 11	What we'll do in class: What to read:	In-class writing workshop Collaborating in the Workplace Sims, Chapter 3
Feb. 13	What we'll do in class: What's due:	Practice Case Study (You will write this in class. It's a dry-run of your first graded assignment and counts as a daily grade.) Due at end of class

**Week 6**

Feb. 18	What we'll do in class: What's due:	Complete Lyme Disease Document Redesign Due at end of class
Feb. 20	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing assignment <b>Major Document I: Case Study (You will write this in class) Due at end of class</b>

**Week 7**

Feb. 25	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Writing Feasibility Studies Sims, Chapter 15
Feb. 27	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop

**Week 8**

March 4	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop
March 6	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document II: Feasibility Study Due at end of class</b>

**Spring Break--March 10 through March 14****Week 9**

March 18	What we'll do in class What to read:	Writing Persuasive Proposals Introduction of Manual Project Sims, Chapter 16
March 20	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Instructions & Manuals Brochure Orientation Sims, Chapter 18

**Week 10**

March 25	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop
March 27	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document III: Proposal Due at beginning of class</b>

**Week 11**

April 1	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document IV: Instructions Project Due at end of class</b>
April 3	What we'll do in class:	Preparing Front & End Matter Manual Orientation

**Week 12**

April 8	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Writing Progress Reports Online Portfolio Orientation Saving Files as PDFs Sims, Chapter 14
April 10	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document V: Progress Report – Written in class Due at end of class</b>

**Week 13**

April 15	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Writing Résumés & Cover Letters Sims, Chapter 13
April 17	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop

**Week 14**

April 22	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop
April 24	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop

**Week 15**

April 29	What's due:	<b>Manual Project Due at beginning of class</b>
May 1	What we'll do in class:	<b>Reading Day No class</b>

**Week 16**

Your final exam will consist of

- Receiving your graded manual project
- Presenting your online portfolio to the instructor
- Saving PDF copies of all of your work for the semester on the instructor's hard drive in the computer lab. You will receive instructions for completing this task during the final exam period

<b>Your Section</b>	<b>Your Regular Class Time</b>	<b>Your Final Exam Is On</b>
2700.009	TR 3:30—5:00 P.M.	Tuesday, May 6 from 1:30—3:30 P.M.