TECM 3000
Teaching Technical Communication in High School

Instructor	Dr. Lisa Jackson
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Office Hours	By appointment

Texts & Materials

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*, seventh edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. ISBN 0312601433

O'Brien, Elizabeth. *Sentence Diagramming Exercises: An Introduction to Sentence Diagramming,* 2012. ISBN 1475194374

Flash drive or other memory saving device

Course Objectives

Whether you intend to become a classroom teacher or not, approaching your subject from a teacher's viewpoint increases your mastery and gives you a more holistic, global view of your audience and the ways in which they perceive your topic.

Good teachers have a plan, they understand their topic implicitly, and they appreciate the things their students find challenging to master. The techniques we'll learn in this class work equally well in a classroom or in a corporate setting, since training corporate employees or colleagues is merely another form of teaching.

In this class, we will work past intuitive skill towards true mastery of writing technique. As part of your preparation, you will complete the same types of assignments your students would complete. We will therefore learn
- To understand the basic concepts of technical writing
- To recognize and to correct errors in written English mechanics, usage, and grammar
- To use various layout and design elements effectively
- To view documents from the reader's perspective, and to keep this in mind as we revise and redesign
- To learn to write and to edit as a member of a team

- To write assignments appropriate for high school students taking a technical writing course
- To discuss effective pedagogical techniques and classroom management skills
- To assess documents for their use in a technical writing course
- To plan effective classroom activities and lessons
- To understand how technical writing fulfills the standards set forth in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) rubric

Your
Semester Grade

You will execute the following assignments:

Individual Assignments

- **Diagramming Exercises and Daily Work: 10%**
  As individuals, students complete a number of sentence diagramming exercises aimed at helping them achieve mastery of mechanics, usage, and grammar. Diagramming exercises are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. We will go over each sentence diagram during class. If you must be absent, you are responsible for turning in your homework as scheduled. **I do not accept late work for any reason. You must keep up with the due dates for sentence diagramming homework.**

  Students will also work as teams on in-class writing assignments aimed at helping them to practice the principles we discuss during lectures. Additionally, you must come to class prepared to take notes, to participate in class discussions, to take reading quizzes, and to participate in in-class writing exercises.

- **Participation: 5%**
  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, which impacts my willingness to help you in terms of letters of recommendation and other future professional support.

- **Midterm Exam: 15%**
  As individuals, students demonstrate that they have mastered technical writing concepts, mechanics, usage, and grammar basics essential to competent classroom teachers.

Group Assignments

- **M.U.G. Shots Presentation & Activity: 10%**
  Mechanics, Usage, Grammar (M.U.G.) Shots presentations make student teams the in-class "experts" on an assigned area of English mechanics, usage, or grammar. You and your student team will create and present a 25-30 minute audio-visual presentation on your assigned area.

- **Proposal: 10%**
  As members of a team, students write a proposal requesting the addition of a technical writing course to their school's curriculum.

- **Lab Report Project: 10%**
  As members of a team, students conduct a series of basic scientific experiments and then record and analyze their findings in a lab report.

- **Instructions Project: 10%**
  Students rewrite and redesign a poorly executed set of instructions to learn the basics of well-written instructions and effective design and layout techniques.

- **Lesson Plan Manual & Presentation: 30%**
  As a team, students plan and write a series of lessons and activities appropriate for high school students taking a technical writing course. The team will also present a 10-15 minute audio-visual presentation of their lesson plan manual.

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.

Open Door Policy

I welcome and encourage you to visit me whenever you wish to discuss a paper or an issue 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, the days, and time you attend class in your e-mail. I try to read my e-mail frequently and will send you a prompt reply.

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.

Neither the university nor I recognize temporary illness or personal emergencies as excused absences. If you are ill, please stay at home; send me an e-mail at Ljackson@unt.edu to notify me that you will miss class. You may miss class up to three times for illness or personal emergencies. Use your allotted absences wisely. For more information on the university's policy on temporary illness, go to: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/temporary_illness

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.

UNT's 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.

Classroom Correspondence— BlackBoard & Text Messages Via Remind.com

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.edu to forward your messages to your primary account. To access MyUNT.edu, go to:
https://my.unt.edu/

I will also use BlackBoard to post copies of the course syllabus, assignments sheets for major technical documents, copies of Technical Communication Lab (TC Lab) orientations, course materials, and miscellaneous announcements. You are responsible for regularly checking on this type of information. To access BlackBoard, go to:
https://learn.unt.edu/

You may want to sign up for Remind.com, which allows me to send you text messages about this course. To receive text messages about class assignments and announcements via Remind.com, you should
- Use any mobile device
- Send the text **@tecm3000** to 81010
- Receive a confirmation text that you're enrolled
- Complete your enrollment by responding with your name

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

If you prefer, you may also sign up for e-mail notices from Remind.com. To do so, simply open your e-mail account and send a blank message to **tecm3000@mail.remind.com**

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.

**UNT Eagle Alerts
& Inclement Weather
Notifications**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an emergency. Eagle Alert allows UNT administrators to quickly contact campus community members by phone about emergency situations affecting the safety and well-being of people on and around the UNT campus. The system sends voice messages to the phones, including cell phones, of all active faculty, staff, and students. The system also can send text messages to cell phones if you grant the system permission to do so beforehand. **I strongly urge you to sign up for these notifications.**

Eagle Alert is only used in critical situations including:

- severe weather with imminent dangerous conditions affecting campus, such as tornado warnings
- campus closings due to inclement weather
- health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence

If the university is closed for more than one day, you should check the UNT website for the latest information. The university will continue providing updated information on Facebook and Twitter, to campus telephone operators, and to the news media. For more information on the UNT Eagle Alert system, go to:
http://www.unt.edu/eaglealert/

UNT Website
http://www.unt.edu

UNT Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/northtexas

UNT Twitter
https://twitter.com/untnews

**Technical
Communication
Computer Lab
(TC Lab) &
Color Printing**

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 have several orientations in the TC Lab. You must attend these orientations because the TC Lab tutors do not give individual tutoring sessions.

The highly-trained TC Lab tutors are here to help you if you have computer issues while you are working in the TC Lab.

You may print as many copies of black and white documents for your technical communication class as you like. Later in the semester, you will receive a color copy card. This card entitles you to print four multiple-page documents in color. The card is only good for this semester, and it is only good for assignments for this course. If you lose your color copy card, you will not be issued a new card. Please mark your color copy card with your name and e-mail address, and place it in safe location like your wallet.

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.

Do not hack, surf the net, send/read personal e-mails, or complete work for other courses during class time. **Students who use the computers during class for anything unrelated to this course will receive a zero for class participation for the semester.**

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.

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, or bind it in a manner appropriate for the assignment

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."

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, I 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.

For more information on disability accommodation, go to:
https://disability.unt.edu/

UNT's Policy on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty

The University of North Texas considers plagiarism as the use of another's thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student's intent, including but not limited to:

- the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation
- the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials

You will be dismissed with an "F" in this course if

- You turn in a piece of writing all or part of which you have plagiarized
- You use unauthorized assistance of any kind in taking quizzes, tests, or in completing assignments
- You submit materials you have written for another class or for current or previous employment

I reserve the right to consider further action within the context of university guidelines.

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

**Classroom
Civility**

I expect you to conduct yourself as adults who practice the utmost civility to me, to the TC Lab staff, and to your fellow classmates.

Do not read or send texts during class. Do not work on assignments for other courses or conduct personal business 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 I deem 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. For more information on the university's policies on student conduct, go to: https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

**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. For more information on the SETE, go to: http://sete.unt.edu/

Schedule of Readings, Activities, and Assignments

Week 1

August 25	What we'll do in class:	Attendance Policy, Texts, Syllabus Understanding TEKS Goals & Guidelines Building a Document Archive
August 27	What we'll do in class:	Analyzing Your Audience Audience Analysis Exercise

Week 2

Sept. 1	What we'll do in class:	Eliminating Passive Voice Writing Persuasive Proposals
Sept. 3	What we'll do in class:	Discussion of M.U.G. Shot Presentations Giving Effective Presentations In-class writing workshop

Week 3

Sept. 8	What we'll do in class:	Designing Documents Organizing Information Organizing Information Exercise
Sept. 10	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Mastering Comma Usage Basic Sentence Diagramming O'Brien, pages 7-14 Complete all exercises, pages 7-14

Week 4

Sept. 15	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Modifiers & Prepositional Phrases O'Brien, Chapters 2 & 3 Complete all exercises, pages 15-21 **M.U.G. Shot Presentation #1:** Misplaced Modifiers & Dangling Modifiers
Sept. 17	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Coordinating Conjunctions & Interjections O'Brien, Chapters 4 & 5 Complete all exercises, pages 22-29 **M.U.G. Shot Presentation #2:** Understanding Prepositional Phrases **Major Document 1:** **Proposal** **Due at beginning of class**

Week 5

Sept. 22	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Types of Verbs O'Brien, Chapters 6 & 7 Complete all exercises, pages 30-39 **M.U.G. Shot Presentation #3:** Eliminating Negative Language
Sept. 24	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Adverb Clauses & Adjective Clauses O'Brien, Chapters 8 & 9 Complete all exercises, pages 40-46 **M.U.G. Shot Presentation #4:** Using Numbers & Hyphens

Week 6

Sept. 29	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Noun Clauses O'Brien, Chapter 10 Complete all exercises, pages 47-49 **M.U.G. Shot Presentation #5:** Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement & Reflexive Pronouns
Oct. 1	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Verbal Phrases O'Brien, Chapter 11 Complete all exercises, pages 50-55 **M.U.G. Shot Presentation #6:** Parallel Structure & Informative Headings

Week 7

Oct. 6	What we'll do in class: What's due:	Diagramming Everything Complete all exercises on page 56 **M.U.G. Shot Presentation #7:** Common Usage Mistakes
Oct. 8	What we'll do in class:	**Midterm Exam**

Week 8

Oct. 13	What we'll do in class:	Introduction of Lesson Plan Manual Writing Effective Lesson Plans Manual Orientation
Oct. 15	What we'll do in class:	Writing Lab Reports In-class writing workshop

Week 9

Oct. 20	What we'll do in class:	Taking Notes & Effective Study Habits Conducting Basic Research
Oct. 22	What we'll do in class:	Writing Instructions In-class writing workshop

Week 10

Oct. 27	What we'll do in class	In-class writing workshop
Oct. 29	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop

Week 11

Nov. 3	What we'll do in class:	Writing Résumés Letters of Intent & Application Letters
Nov. 5	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop **Major Document 2: Lab Report Project Due at end of class**

Week 12

Nov. 10	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop
Nov. 12	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop **Major Document 3: Instructions Project Due at end of class**

Week 13

Nov. 17	What we'll do in class:	Teaching Forum
Nov. 19	What we'll do in class	In-class writing workshop Teaching Plan Presentations

Week 14

Nov. 24	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop Teaching Plan Presentations
Nov. 26	What we'll do in class:	**Thanksgiving Holiday** **No class**

Week 15

Dec. 1	What's due:	**Major Document 4:** **Lesson Plan Manual** **Due at beginning of class**
Dec. 3	What we'll do in class:	**Reading Day** **No class**

Week 16

You must arrive at the beginning of the final exam period. Your final exam consists of

- Receiving your graded manual project
- Downloading classroom materials for your permanent files

To view the complete final exam schedule, go to:
http://registrar.unt.edu/exams/final-exam-schedule

Your Section	Your Regular Class Time	Your Final Exam Is On
3000.001	TR 2:00-3:20 P.M.	Thursday, December 10 from 10:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M.

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