English 3301.W01 Technical and Professional Writing

Summer I 2014

Contact Information:
Instructor: Frances Johnson
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Phone: 361.825.2876

Office Hours:
- M: 12-2 pm (f2f/phone/Blackboard Chat)
- W: 2-4pm (f2f/phone/Blackboard Chat);
- F: Online via Blackboard Chat 5-6pm

Course Description:
In this course you will be involved in various writing projects that allow you (1) to identify writing projects and (2) to respond to the writing needs of those projects.

The course theme is: What are the needs of Corpus Christi? The course has four major assignments designed to help you establish a need and propose a chapter of a manual addressing this need in the South Texas area. This can be a serious topic such as diabetes, hunger, pet overpopulation, hurricane survival, or imaginative such as surviving the zombie apocalypse. During a long semester, we would actually prototype, test, and complete the manual. For the short summer session, we will stop at the chapter proposals.

If you keep up with the work, even though it may be difficult at times, you will probably see a big difference at the end of the class and have a much different attitude toward writing.

Course Purpose:
English 3301 is an introductory technical writing course designed to help students gain practical experience in finding and interpreting information and writing reports and documents for specialized audiences in the professional world. Typing ability is a prerequisite for this course. Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 and 1302.

Student Learning Objectives:
Upon completion, student will be able to

- identify a need or problem by describing the factors involved,
- explain a viable solution to a need or problem in a department, the larger university, or the community,
- create a document that reflects an effective interweaving of purpose and audience.
What are 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Technical Communication Skills?
A 21st century technical communicator creates documents that communicate effectively, persuasively, and concisely. Specifically, the technical communicator:

- solves problems to help achieve an organization’s goals
- addresses a particular user/purpose/task
- acquires, evaluates, and applies core knowledge and designs content
- integrates cultural and ethical considerations
- promotes collaboration
- incorporates appropriate combination(s) of text or graphics
- uses appropriate tools/media technology

Online Statements:

**Description of lessons/modules**
Lessons/modules will include work in peer review of drafts, group discussions and presentations.

**Technical support information/link**
The Island Online (IOL) [https://iol.tamucc.edu](https://iol.tamucc.edu)

**Technical requirements for course**

**Computer requirements**
IOL runs on a web based application called Blackboard through a web browser. If your computer can successfully run Microsoft Internet Explorer or any of its alternatives, then you will be able to use IOL. Please note that your web browser must be configured properly to work with IOL by installing Sun Java Runtime Environment, ensuring Javascript, pop-up blockers, and cookies settings are properly configured. To check if your web browser is compatible with IOL you can do a browser check-up by visiting the IOL site at [https://iol.tamucc.edu/](https://iol.tamucc.edu/). You may also check a list of IOL compatible browsers.

**Delivery of instructor feedback**
Instructor response to online requests usually occurs within a 24 hour period, but you can expect a response within 3 days.

**Student login expectations**
Students will be required to login a minimum of once per day on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. It is recommended that students check daily for updates.

**Specific login instructions**
Blackboard Login [https://bb9.tamucc.edu/webapps/login/](https://bb9.tamucc.edu/webapps/login/)

**Faculty availability to support students**
Instructor maintains a consistent web presence and is available to meet online in the Blackboard synchronous environment or via phone meetings for students who need more help.
Types of required interactions

**Email**
- Always include a subject line.
- Remember without facial expressions some comments may be taken the wrong way. Be careful in wording your posts.
- Use standard fonts.
- Do not send large attachments without permission.
- Special formatting such as centering, audio messages, tables, html, etc. should be avoided unless necessary to the message.
- Respect the privacy of other class members

**Discussion Forum**
- Review the discussion threads thoroughly before entering the discussion
- Try to maintain threads by using the “Reply” button rather than starting a new topic
- Do not make insulting or inflammatory statements to other members of the discussion group
- Be patient and read the comments of other members thoroughly before adding your remarks
- Be positive and constructive in group discussions
- Respond in a thoughtful and timely manner

**Blog**
- Introduce yourself to the other learners in the blog session
- Be polite and do not use derogatory statements
- Be concise in responding to others in the blog session
- Be prepared to participate in the blog session at the scheduled time
- Be constructive in your comments and suggestions
Graded Activities:
Complete descriptions, requirements, evaluation criteria, and rubrics are available on BlackBoard. Remember, this is a short course. Each day is almost a week’s time in a full 15 week semester.

- **25% Weekly Activities** – Notice that this one area is 25% of your total grade. This is because this is an online class. Since we will not meet face-to-face, where most of the traditional class interaction takes place, our main source of class interaction will be in the Discussion Forum and Blog. I expect students will practice respect and responsibility as a part of this learning community. If you participate in discussions you will receive full credit. These activities consist of reading, working an exercise from the Tebeaux and Dragg text, and responding to other’s work (discussion). Any work not included in the other graded activities will be included in this category.

- **10% Chapter Quizzes** – There will be a quiz form the *Essentials of Technical Communication*. The questions are taken directly from the student resources page at: [http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199890781/student/](http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199890781/student/). This will allow you to take practice quizzes.

- **10% Research Memo** – Since our course theme is *What are the needs of Corpus Christi?*, the course must begin with everyone choosing an area where there is a need in Corpus Christi. This can be a serious topic such as diabetes, hunger, pet overpopulation, hurricane survival, or imaginative such as surviving the zombie apocalypse. (Must have a Project Cover Sheet Attached)

- **20% Observation Report** – One important technical communication skill is the accurate and unbiased reporting of information. To learn about this skill, you will observe a situation that is somehow related to the topic of your proposed research for your chapter proposal and then compose a formal written report. For those students choosing to do a topic concerning the zombie apocalypse, you will need to contact me. (Must have a Project Cover Sheet Attached)

- **10% Annotated Bibliography** – For almost all technical writing situations, the technical writer must have background information on the topic. In some instances, this comes through working with a Subject Matter Expert (SME), such as a software engineer. To propose a chapter for our manual, you must become a limited SME. You will do this by doing some research on your topic and writing an annotated/summarized bibliography. (Must have a Project Cover Sheet Attached)

- **25% Chapter Proposal** – All of the work done in the class leads up to writing a formal proposal for a chapter in the *What are the needs of Corpus Christi?* manual. This document is where you will show off your acquired skills in technical writing. The proposal will provide a summary or overview of the proposed chapter, demographic on the targeted area, explain the gap or need for the chapter, provided an outline of the chapter’s contents, and a works consulted page. (Must have a Project Cover Sheet Attached)

Texts/Supplies
- WORD processing capabilities (if you do not have WORD, all files must be
- Way to save work: personal computer, jump drive, or Cloud (Dropbox, etc.)
- Working knowledge of BlackBoard

**Tentative Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Major Project *</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 2-6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introductory Blog&lt;br&gt;Chapter Readings, Exercises, quizzes. All original work/postings due by 5pm on day due; response due by 11:59 pm on day due. <strong>Assignments (different) will be due on 6/3 and 6/5. All work may be submitted early.</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to technical writing. Establishing memo writing conventions, and research topic.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>June 9-13</td>
<td>Research Memo due on Blackboard&lt;br&gt;June 12th by 11:59 pm</td>
<td>Chapter Readings, Exercises, quizzes. All original work/postings due by 5pm on day due; response due by 11:59 pm on day due. <strong>Assignments (different) will be due on 6/10 and 6/12. All work may be submitted early.</strong></td>
<td>Report writing, Introduction to Observation Report Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>June 16-20</td>
<td>Observation Report due on Blackboard on June 19th by 11:59 pm</td>
<td>Chapter Readings, Exercises, quizzes. All original work/postings due by 5pm on day due; response due by 11:59 pm on day due. <strong>Assignments (different) will be due on 6/17 and 6/19. All work may be submitted early.</strong></td>
<td>Peer-review. Introduction to Annotated Bibliography Assignments / Technology of Citation Generators</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>June 23-27</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography due June 26th on BlackBoard by 11:59 pm</td>
<td>Chapter Readings, Exercises, quizzes. All original work/postings due by 5pm on day due; response due by 11:59 pm on day due. <strong>Assignments (different) will be due on 6/24 and 6/26. All work may be submitted early.</strong></td>
<td>Peer-review. Introduction to Chapter Proposal Assignment. Audience / Purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>June 30 – July 3</td>
<td>Chapter Proposal due on July 3rd on BlackBoard by 11:59 pm</td>
<td>Chapter Readings, Exercises, quizzes. All original work/postings due by 5pm on day due; response due by 11:59 pm on day due. <strong>Assignments (different) will be due on 7/1 and 7/3. All work may be submitted early.</strong></td>
<td>Peer-review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All due dates are tentative*

**Course Conduct:**
Students will practice respect and responsibility as a part of this learning community. Here are some things you can do to exhibit an attitude of respect and responsibility:

- Post assignments on time. Early is even better. Late work will earn a 10% reduction in grade.
• Work extra hard to get to know other classmates.
• Reach out through email or Blackboard posts to support each other. If you have good info/tips on what is working for you/resource ideas, please share with the group so we can help each other out.
• Respect other classmates by watching what you say.
• Add your opinions to/participate in the discussions.
• Check the assignments every week. Don’t wait until the last minute.
• Be helpful to other students
• Don’t get behind. If you get behind in an online course it is harder to get back on track than it is in a traditional course.
• Stay focused and stay connected.
• Keep up with your assignments and your grades. It is not the teacher’s responsibility to tell you what you have or haven’t turned in. Your grades will be available in Blackboard so all you have to do is regularly check to make sure you have grades posted for all work.
• **Academic Plagiarism:** University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in first offense; no credit for assignment; subsequent offenses failure of class.
• In general terms, students are expected to "demonstrate a high level of maturity, self-direction and ability to manage their own affairs" and to "conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty." Instances of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with Texas A&M University---Corpus Christi General Academic Policies and Regulations as listed in the current catalog.

**Required Statements:**

• **Notice to Students with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

• **Reminder to English Majors:** As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

• **Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

• **Grade Appeal Process:** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class
syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

- **Statement of Academic Continuity:** In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.