ENGL 3301.202 (Fall 2017)
Technical and Professional Writing
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:15 p.m.
CCH 207
Dr. Christopher Andrews

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Office: Faculty Center (FC) 285
Phone: 361-825-4124
Office Hours: As listed on Blackboard

I maintain a consistent web presence and am available via email and in person. I will commonly respond to Blackboard or email requests within 24 hours, but you can expect a response within 3 days.

Catalog Description

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.

Required Materials


Required Technologies

- Basic emailing, web browsing, and word processing skills
- A computer with reliable Internet access and a reliable office software suite. TAMUCC provides students with access to Office 365; visit it.tamucc.edu/Office365/Office365.html
- Access to Blackboard, TAMUCC’s Learning Management System (LMS), bb9.tamucc.edu/webapps/login/. Visit iol.tamucc.edu/techreq.html to determine computer requirements for using Blackboard

About the Course

Technical and professional communicators work alone and with others to prepare documents and presentations that communicate information within business, government, industry, and the scientific community—really, any workplace setting. Technical communicators respond to a problem, whether that is in providing instructions to users of a technology, writing a workplace report, making recommendations to improve a process, presenting information on a Web page, or reporting on scientific findings. In some industries and companies, “tech writer” is a particular job title or even an entire department of job titles, while in others such writing is just one part of the work that everyone does. Because of the wide proliferation of writing and publishing technologies in recent decades, nearly every professional is or can be (or has to be) a technical writer.

This course is designed to help you learn to
1. analyze communication contexts in terms of audiences, purposes, and situations,
2. create professional documents that solve problems and improve situations,
3. analyze and apply the ethical responsibilities involved in professional and technical writing,
4. use methods for audience analysis and participatory design, and
5. write and design multimodal documents that audiences and stakeholders find effective, convincing, and usable.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Create documents (written/visual/multimodal) by using effective and appropriate rhetorical methods and strategies in writing
2. Create documents (written/visual/multimodal) by choosing and using appropriate strategies in a variety of genres
3. Create documents (written/visual/multimodal) by locating, selecting, assessing, and analyzing information sources, both print and digital, and integrate and document sources appropriately

Graded Activities

Complete descriptions, requirements, evaluation criteria, and rubrics are available on Blackboard.

**Major Project 1: Writing in Your Field Reference Sheet**  
20% of final grade; due Dec 12

You will survey the kinds of writing individuals in your intended career do and arrange the information in a table. You will provide a short description of each different kind of writing, identify typical audiences and purposes, and classify the kinds of writing, matching the items to the chapters in our textbook and resources online via hyperlinks. This chart will be the basis of our next piece of writing, the Research Report, and a go-to resource once you are in the workplace.

**Major Project 2: Writing in Your Field Research Report**  
30% of final grade; due Dec 12

This report begins with the documents you described in the Reference Sheet you created for Project 1. To complete this research report, choose three significantly different documents from your reference sheet, locate real examples of those documents, and complete a more in-depth analysis of each document's generic and rhetorical features. Write up a report that describes the important purposes, audiences, genres, styles, and other specialized aspects of writing in the field you choose, describing them to someone outside or unfamiliar with that field.

**Blackboard Discussions & Homework Activities**  
30% of final grade; due each week before class

Explore and practice methods, strategies, and principles of technical communication. Generally these activities will consist of reading, working an exercise or working through a case based on that reading, and responding to the work of your classmates.

**Chapter Quizzes**  
10% of final grade; two quizzes each week for the first five weeks of the course

Show your mastery of material from the textbook through reading quizzes based on each chapter. Practice quizzes are available at the publisher's website.

**Drafts & Peer Review**  
10% of final grade; 4 formal peer review sessions

Work through multi-phase drafting and review processes with outside readers. Peer review is an opportunity to learn from and with your classmates, rather than just a chance to yell at someone else for using semicolons incorrectly. We will use these sessions to review and work with each other's documents in a supportive and collaborative environment, as well as to get feedback from your instructor.

* Due dates are tentative.
# Course Schedule

A detailed weekly schedule is available on Blackboard.
Post homework exercises to Blackboard **before** class on the day assigned.
Blackboard chapter quizzes are due by 11:59 pm on Fridays (2 per week)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 29, 31</td>
<td>Intro to the course</td>
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| 2    | Sept 5, 7 | Discuss Chapter 1 & 2
         |          | Exercise: p. 13, #2 due on Bb                    |
         |          | Discuss Chapter 7                                |
         |          | Exercise: p. 35, #3 due on Bb                     |
         |          | Ch 1&2 quizzes due by Friday on Bb                 |
| 3    | Sept 12, 14 | Discuss Chapter 3                                |
         |          | Exercise p. 55 #2 due on Bb                        |
         |          | Discuss Chapter 5                                 |
         |          | Exercise p. 77, #3 due on Bb                        |
         |          | Ch 3&4 quizzes due by Friday on Bb                  |
| 4    | Sept 19, 21 | Discuss Chapter 4                                |
         |          | Exercise p. 109, #4 due on Bb                      |
         |          | Discuss Chapter 6                                 |
         |          | Exercise p. 146, #4 due on Bb                       |
         |          | Ch 5&6 quizzes due by Friday on Bb                   |
| 5    | Sept 26, 28 | Discuss Chapter                                  |
         |          | Exercise p. 232, #1 due on Bb                        |
         |          | Discuss Chapter 8                                 |
         |          | Exercise p. 176, #5 due on Bb                        |
         |          | Ch 7&8 quizzes due by Friday on Bb                    |
| 6    | Oct 3, 5  | Discuss Chapter 9                                 |
         |          | Exercise p. 272, #1 due on Bb                        |
         |          | Discuss Chapter 10                                |
         |          | Exercise p. 307, #2 due on Bb                         |
         |          | Ch 9&10 quizzes due by Friday on Bb                    |
| 7    | Oct 10, 12 | What is Technical Communication, Again?            |
| 8    | Oct 17, 19 | Document Design
         |          | Active/Passive Voice & Parallelism                      |
| 9    | Oct 24, 26 | Rhetorical Situations & Genres                             |
| 10   | Oct 31, Nov 2 | Major Project: Writing in your Field Reference Sheet due |
| 11   | Nov 7, 9  | Ethics, Visuals & Graphics                          |
| 12   | Nov 14, 16 | Information Architecture: Headings, Paragraphs, and Sections |
| 13   | Nov 21    | Discuss Heming & Bremer article                     |
| 14   | Nov 28, 30 | Audience & Specificity                              |
| 15   | Dec 5     | Progress Report                                    |
| 16   | Dec 12    | Major Project: Writing in your Field Research Report due |

* Due dates are tentative
Course Conduct

In general, our class meetings will be a mixture of lecture, discussion, and computer time or small-group activity. My ultimate goal is praxis; putting our collective knowledge into action, usually in individual and workshop-style activities (inventing, composing, revising, reviewing, or otherwise doing and making) and large- or small-group roundtable discussions. This means that it is vital that you come to class each day prepared to work and prepared to interact with myself and your colleagues in ways that contribute to our learning goals.

Come to class meetings prepared: Along with writing materials for note-taking and in-class activities, bring your textbooks and other required materials to class each day having read and taken notes on all texts assigned on the course schedule. I expect that you will read assigned chapters or articles prior to class; this will ensure your ability to contribute to discussions and other activities.

In discussion, remember to listen as well as speak. Pay attention to whomever is speaking in discussion and refrain from working on material for other classes. Participate when it is your turn to speak; share your opinion, expertise, or question, and respect the opinions and experiences of others.

Do not use the classroom computers to complete work for other classes during class time.

Understand late work and revision policies: Post assignments on time. Many of us have jobs, children, athletic and extracurricular activities, and volunteer responsibilities, along with Netflix, fishing poles, and other interests. As with most things in life, having a regular schedule for getting things done will be incredibly useful. As a father of three young children who have been known to randomly wake up with fevers the morning something important is happening on campus, I am understanding of occasional late work, but it is up to you to prioritize learning activities in this class.

- Habitual late homework (beyond three times) will receive 10% point reductions
- Late work for major projects will earn a 10% reduction in grade
- I will not accept major projects more than 5 calendar days late
- The last day to submit work will be posted in Blackboard

I am on your side in most things, but you are responsible for you: 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. 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.

I accept revisions on major projects, provided that you meet formally with me to discuss feedback on your project, a revision agenda, and a timeline for completion. You can find the complete revise and resubmit policy on Blackboard.

Practice professional communication in email: Email is among the more important professional genres we use today, and I expect you will use your university email account for this course. As the class is a professional writing course, I expect that you will practice what we’re learning. We will explore this further in the course, but professional email includes a meaningful subject line and a complete inquiry, and uses language appropriate for the writer’s context.

- Unprofessional emails will result in non-response.
- I will email announcements and information via blackboard to your islander.tamucc.edu email account. You may set up email forwarding if you wish, but you are responsible for checking email. Missing emails is not an excuse for missed work or announcements.
- I will commonly respond to Blackboard or email requests within 24 hours, but you can expect a response within 3 days. I generally do not answer emails over the weekend.

Learn to use our technology: As you might rightly assume, a course titled “Technical and Professional Writing” is entirely imbricated with technology: the class is about technology, it meets in a computer lab, and it works because of, as a result of, and in dialogue with technology. This means a handful of things:

- **Tech happens.** Difficulty with your computer or technology is not an acceptable excuse for late work, whether those are reading responses or one of our major projects. Practice agency by backing up your work, ensuring your technology is updated within your means and the expectations of coursework, and saving early & often.

- **You should learn something new about digital technology.** While I do not expect you to become an expert in HTML5 in fifteen weeks, for example, I do expect you to push beyond your current technical knowledge. The days of separating technical knowledge from literacy knowledge are long past. Ultimately, you are responsible for your command of technology as well as course content. I will help you do this and
provide resources to support you, but if you are having difficulty it is your responsibility to a) ask for help and b) look for tutorials and supplementary material that work for you (this is but one small example of an important idea, a “rhetoric of personal agency,” which we’ll talk about during the term).

- **Learn from failure.** A spirit of inquiry and experiment is just as important as particular technical skills in this course. "Showing up" with broken or malfunctioning work is far better than showing up with an excuse, and sometimes we can learn more from your broken webtext than some slick Squarespace module. Your honest effort is more interesting to me than perfect work.

- **Manage your distraction machine.** I do not have a cell phone or laptop policy for managing personal technology in the classroom. Mobile devices are powerful writing devices and can be useful personal research tools—and I will occasionally ask you to use them as such. Some students need their mobile device to augment their hearing or note-taking, and other students may have child care or emergency responsibilities that will necessitate discreet use of cell phones. I expect that you will participate and be present in class, but your attention is ultimately your responsibility and your screen is your business. Importantly, be sensitive to how your technology use may distract other students in the room.

I expect a lot out of you—but I also have high expectations for myself. I promise that I will

- Be on time and prepared for discussion.
- Read everything that I’ve asked you to read.
- Do what I can to make the material interesting and class engaging.
- Provide prompt, helpful feedback to your written work.
- Be flexible and willing to make changes as the need arises.

### Course Policies

**Attendance:** The discussions and work we will undertake during class time are critical to your success in the course. I fully expect you to come to class for every class meeting. I also have three young children and realize that life invades school. Things occasionally happen that may keep you from coming. I will excuse absences for illness, for personal emergency, and for University-related business as defined by the current Student Handbook, provided you furnish some documentation. You are responsible for making arrangements for make-up work for excused absences.

If you miss two classes, your final grade will be penalized. If you miss four or more classes without reasonable explanation, you run the risk of failing the course.

Two tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** 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.

**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, Room #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 at (361) 825-5816.

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf).

For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

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.