ENGL 3301.W01 (Spring 2020)
Technical and Professional Writing (Online)

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Office Hours: MW 11:00 am-12 noon & 1:00-2:00 pm; TR 11:00-12 noon

This online course is partially or entirely delivered within the TAMUCC Blackboard system.
Read the “Online Learning Information” section of this syllabus, also available on Blackboard, for more information about Online Learning at TAMUCC and in this course.

This is an online course; please email me to schedule other WebEx meeting times.

I maintain a consistent web presence and am available via email, WebEx, 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 offers students free 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

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 to achieve specific purposes with specific audiences
3. Create documents (written/visual/multimodal) by locating, selecting, assessing, and analyzing information sources, both print and digital, and integrate and document sources appropriately
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 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.

Graded Activities
Complete descriptions, requirements, evaluation criteria, and rubrics are available on Blackboard. I will use the grading scale as described in the University Catalog.

Major Project 1: Writing in Your Field Visualization
20% of final grade
You will survey the kinds of real, working writing individuals in your intended career do and arrange the information for visual reference. 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 visualization 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
Choose three documents from your reference sheet, locate real, working examples of those documents, and complete a more in-depth analysis of each document’s genre and rhetorical features. Your report will describe and draw conclusions about 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 & other Application Activities
30% of final grade
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 working collaboratively with your classmates.
**Chapter Quizzes**

10% of final grade

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

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.

**Course Schedule**

A detailed weekly schedule is available on Blackboard. Due dates listed on this schedule are tentative; I will provide you with written changes via Blackboard announcements and email if necessary.

Multiple exercises and discussion activities are due each week; you must post homework exercises by 5:00 pm on the day they are due (Normally Tuesdays and Thursdays). 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>Jan 21-24</td>
<td>Discuss Chapter 1 (What is PTW)</td>
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<td>Discuss Chapter 2 (Audience and Purpose)</td>
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<td>Ch 1 and 2 quizzes due by Friday on Bb</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 28-31</td>
<td>Discuss Chapter 3 (Ethics)</td>
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<td>Discuss Chapter 7 (Correspondence)</td>
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<td>Ch 3, and 7 quizzes due by Friday on Bb</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 4-7</td>
<td>Discuss Chapter 5 (Document Design)</td>
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<td>Discuss Chapter 8 (Reports)</td>
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<td>Ch 5 and 8 quizzes due by Friday on Bb</td>
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<td>Do part of Power Search course</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 11-14</td>
<td>Discuss Chapter 4 (Style)</td>
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<td>Discuss Chapter 9 (Proposals/Progress Reports)</td>
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<td>Ch 4 and 9 quizzes due by Friday on Bb</td>
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<td>Do second part of Power Search course</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 18-21</td>
<td>Discuss Chapter 6 (Visuals)</td>
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<td>Discuss Chapter 10 (Manuals)</td>
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<td>Ch 6 and 10 quizzes due by Friday on Bb</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 25-28</td>
<td>Midterm Recap: What is Technical Communication, Again?</td>
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<td>Friday week 7 is the last day to submit late ETC activities and quizzes</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>March 3-6</td>
<td>Document design workshop and deep dive</td>
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<td>Draft review for Project 1</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 17-20</td>
<td>Deep focus: Active/Passive Voice &amp; Parallelism</td>
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<td>Major Project 1 due</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>March 24-27</td>
<td>Style and readability: Word choice in technical communication</td>
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<td>Begin Project 2 analysis</td>
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<td>March 31-Apr 3</td>
<td>Audience: Needs and Values Analyzing Style Due</td>
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<td>Apr 7-10</td>
<td>Rhetorical Situations &amp; Genres Early draft review for project 2</td>
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<td>Apr 14-17</td>
<td>Deep dive on reports, progress reports, and professional reporting</td>
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<td>Apr 21-24</td>
<td>Information Architecture: Headings, Paragraphs, and Sections 1st Draft Due</td>
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<td>Apr 28-May 1</td>
<td>Workshop and draft review for Project 2</td>
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<td>May 5-7</td>
<td>Workshop and draft review for Project 2 2nd Draft Due</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
<td>Major Project 2 due</td>
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* Due dates are tentative

**Course Conduct (OL)**

Students will practice respect and responsibility as a part of this learning community. Some things you can do to exhibit an attitude of respect and responsibility:

**Engage with your classmates and instructor**

In an online course, interacting with your classmates is just as valuable as interacting with the instructor. For us, discussions and chats are primary modes of learning as well as communication with fellow students. Take advantage of discussions and participate in discussion channels in a timely manner. Add your opinions to/participate in the discussions, but do so respectfully.

Work extra hard to get to know other classmates—they are going through the same material you are. An online class does not have to be an isolating experience. Reach out in Blackboard posts or via email to support each other. If you have good info/tips on what is working for you, on resources, or other ideas, please share with the group so we can help each other out.

Participate fully in discussions and use the Troubleshooting forum to ask questions and get help. The class will become its own community of practice, and you will be amazed at how good of a resource your colleagues can be.

*FERPA Privacy note: I won’t use any forum other than your university email to ask or talk about grades. Grade discussions are private and should occur with your instructor only.*

**Keep up with and “attend” the class**

There is no synchronous attendance component for this course—posting assignments and exercises as well as participating in discussions on the regular, posted schedule is “attending” class. For purposes of reporting non-attendance to the University during grade reporting, I will use the last day you submitted work and not the last time you logged onto Blackboard.
In an online class, people inevitably ask me, “What can I do to get ahead?” There are a few parts to this answer:

ENGL 3301 is a regular college course and not a correspondence course and isn’t designed for you to complete assignments entirely at your own pace. Part of my reasoning is about you: you’ll learn as much from each other as you will from me, and I run a highly interactive course. Part of my reasoning is selfish: I have scheduled coursework in such a way that I have time to read and respond to your work individually, rather than receive a bunch of everything all at once and have to sit and respond to forum posts until my eye sockets burn out.

On early work: You may post assignments early; know that some activities will require you to revisit and reply to others’ work. Do not forget to return at the right time and complete these discussions. If you begin assignments early, do so understanding that I’ve organized and scaffolded our weekly activities so that they will help prepare you to complete and be successful on major projects. If you get too far ahead on those, you may end up heading in the wrong direction because you haven’t yet completed a key discussion activity or had a chance to benefit from peer review.

**Understand late work and revision policies**

Post assignments on time. I am understanding of occasional late work, but this should not be habitual. It is up to you to prioritize learning activities in this class.

- Habitual late exercises and discussions (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 late work will be posted in Blackboard

I am on your side, 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 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.
- 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.

**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, you will complete it via technology, and it works because of, as a result of, and in dialogue with technology. This means a handful of things:

Difficulty with your computer or technology is not an acceptable excuse for late work, whether those are reading responses or major projects. Practice agency by backing up your work, practicing good file management habits, ensuring your technology is updated within your means and the expectations of coursework, and saving early and often.

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.

**Course Policies**

**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 at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Civility**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**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.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10, 2020, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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.C2.03, 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 Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.

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.
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.
Online Learning Information

Find more information about Online Learning at http://iol.tamucc.edu

Log in to Blackboard Learn at http://bb9.tamucc.edu

Online courses give you a great deal of flexibility, but also require computing, communication, and organization skills that may not be emphasized in face-to-face courses. Online courses emphasize active learning and regular contact with your instructor and other students.

To get started well:
- Check Blackboard or your course website early and often
- Read the course syllabus
- Purchase and locate all reading material
- Print out syllabus and calendars
- Enter major dates and deadlines into your calendar

Strategies for success:
- Practice self-motivation and self-discipline
- Read assigned material and take notes: outline, summarize, and create relationships between ideas
- Keep a record of your progress
- Make plans, set goals, and monitor your successes

Make sure you give yourself adequate time to succeed. For a 3 credit hour course, prepare to allot 6-12 hours of time per week to study and take notes on readings, participate in discussion forums, and work on projects. This is somewhat intensified in summer courses.

Required Skills and Tools
- Basic computer skills
- Basic word processing skills
- Basic emailing skills
- Way to save work; either personal computer, portable storage, or cloud storage.
- MS Word is suggested, but not required. TAMUCC provides free access to Office 365 to all students. Visit http://iol.tamucc.edu for details.

Required Interactions
Online courses require careful, active communication. You should:
- Check Bb or your course website regularly (at least 3 times per week)
- Check Islander email daily
- Participate in online discussions
- Interact with other students as well as your instructor

Where can I get support?
- Help with Blackboard: Either the student Help Desk on the 2nd floor of CCH (825-2825) or at the IOL website: http://iol.tamucc.edu/
- University IT Services: Help Desk or the IT Services website: http://it.tamucc.edu/
- New users: To claim your Island ID, visit http://password.tamucc.edu.