ENGL 3301. W02 Technical and Professional Writing
Fall 2019

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 t.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

Student Learning Outcomes

By engaging in the course activities, students will
(1) identify a need or problem by describing the factors involved
(2) generate a viable solution to the need or problem
(3) create a document that reflects an effective interweaving of purpose and audience.

Course Conduct (Online or 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 formal attendance for this course—posting assignments and exercises as well as participating in discussions on the regular, posted schedule is “attending” class (see the “Engage” section above). For purposes of reporting University attendance, 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; 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 25% point reductions
- Late work for major projects will earn a 25% 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.

Peer Review. Professional writing means always having someone (usually a supervisor or co-worker) read, evaluate, and assess your work before it "goes out." As a regular part of the class, you will submit drafts to class of what you have written, and your classmates will review it for you. "Draft" means "as good as you can make it," not a few lines thrown together. If you do not have a draft posted for peer review when it is assigned, that portion of the assignment will be docked a ten percent penalty of your portfolio’s final grade.

Grading

Major Project 1: Writing in Your Field Reference Sheet

20% of final grade;
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;
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
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](http://example.com).

**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.

All of your major work will be submitted via Blackboard. Although the class won't be completely paperless, posting your work online will save paper, will save you money by limiting the amount you need to print, and will also insure your work is readily available to you wherever on the planet you happen to be.

**10%** will be based on professional responsibility; for each portfolio, if all of your work is submitted on time, including rough drafts, peer review, and in daily work, you will earn 2½ points. If these are not completed on time, you will not earn these points.

**15%** will come from your in-class writing and your abstract reflections about reading.

**Citations:** I prefer that you use MLA format when documenting or citing material; however, if your academic "home discipline" uses another, I will accept that provided you let me know what it is and can "point" me to some style guidelines for that format. (I am familiar enough with APA and Chicago that I don't need a style sheet for either).

**Writing Center.** The Writing Center, part of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi’s Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA), provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. Writing center consultants are trained to work with writers one-on-one to help them find ideas, organize their thoughts, cite sources, and succeed at all aspects of the writing task. The writing center works closely with faculty across campus to understand the writing projects they assign and to help students meet the expectations of those assignments. The writing center is located in the
Academic Honesty

I will follow the policy that appears in the university catalogue. Plagiarism, which is “the presentation of work of another as one's own work” is only one form of academic dishonesty, which also includes falsification (the intentional alteration of information), fabrication (the intentional invention of information), multiple submission (using the same material for two separate assignments or courses without permission from the instructors), and abuse of academic materials (the intentional destruction of resource materials). Sometimes students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example) because they are unaware of the standards that apply. If you are unsure of how to document or properly use information, please check with me WELL BEFORE THE PAPER IS DUE. Also, know that I have some heavy-duty anti-plagiarism web applications, so you'll probably get caught. If you have questions or doubts about what constitutes a breach of integrity, a violation of policies or a proper citation, it is important that you consult with me. The SMALLEST penalty you will get if you are caught is a zero on the project; you could, potentially fail the course, and, if you have plagiarized in other classes, you may face disciplinary action by the university.

I only feel it fair to notice that this issue is something the university is "Hot and Bothered" about right now, and that, if we suspect something, we are now REQUIRED to notify the administration. This isn't something we can keep "in house" any more.

Worse, you may have to eat haggis.

All of this can be avoided simply by doing your own work to the best of your ability.

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.

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. November 8th is the last day to drop a class.

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

**Students with Disabilities**

**Notice to Students with Disabilities:** Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in CCH, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Reminder to English Majors**

As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4352 for students in the Writing Studies Track, ENGL 4351 for students in the Literary Studies Track), 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.
Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):

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. Blackboard chapter quizzes are due by 11:59 pm on Fridays (2 per week)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 26-30</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>Sept 2-6</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>Sept 9-13</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>Sept 16-20</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>Sept 23-27</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>Sep 30 - Oct 4</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>Oct 7-11</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>Oct 14-18</td>
<td>Deep focus: Active/Passive Voice &amp; Parallelism</td>
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<td><strong>Major Project 1 due</strong></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 21-25</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>10</td>
<td>Oct 28-Nov 1</td>
<td>Audience: Needs and Values</td>
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<td>Analyzing Style Due</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 4-8</td>
<td>Rhetorical Situations &amp; Genres</td>
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<td>Outline Draft Due</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 11-15</td>
<td>Deep dive on reports, progress reports, and professional reporting</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 18-22</td>
<td>Information Architecture: Headings, Paragraphs, and Sections</td>
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<td>1st Draft Due</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Dec 2-4</td>
<td>Workshop and draft review for Project 2</td>
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15  Project 2 will be due in Blackboard by noon on December 12th.

| FINAL  | Dec 10 | Major Project 2 due          |

* Due dates are tentative

**In Conclusion**

This should be a worthwhile and even enjoyable class. You can count on me to make class as interesting and as stimulating as possible. Finally, I am here to help you, but I cannot do so unless you let me know when you need help. Communicate.