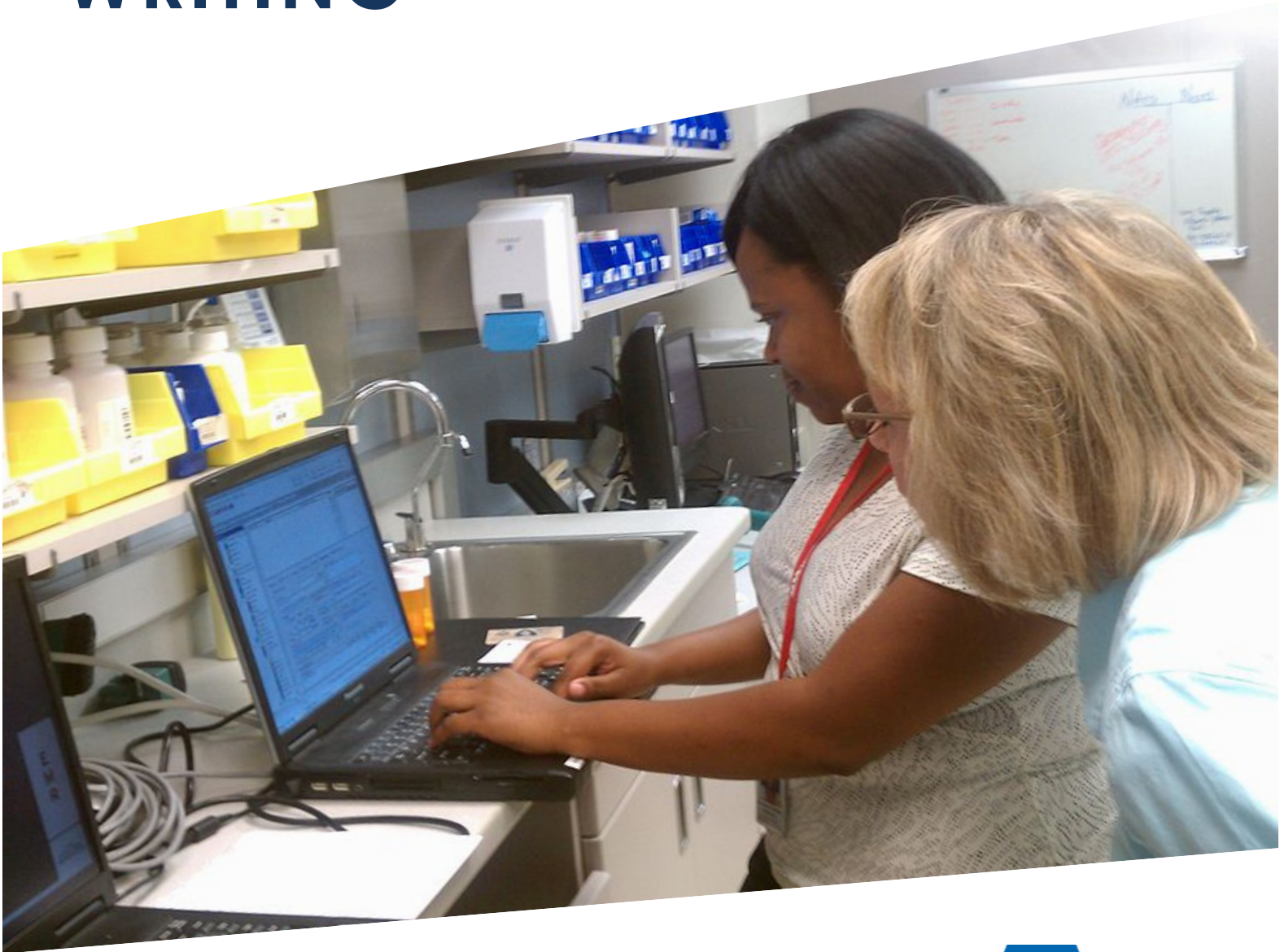# Technical
WRITING

Fall 2015 | 2338-009 | Dr. Estee Beck

Last updated: 8.23.15
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Cover Photo: "Winn Army Community Hospital Pharmacy Stays Online During Power Outage"

Description: Image of a pharmacy, with a countertop to the left of the image, shelves on a wall, with yellow bins in foreground holding pharmacy bottles; in background there are blue bins on shelf wall holding pharmacy bottles. A black woman types information into a laptop to the right of the image, with a white woman appearing to the left side of the other woman, looking at the laptop screen. Image credit information, including historical significance of image, is available at the end of this document.

INFORMATION

Dr. Estee Beck
Carlisle Hall 525
estee.beck@uta.edu

Office Hours:
Tuesday, 2:30-3:30,
Thursday, 11:00-12:00,
or by appointment

Class Information:
ENGL 2338-009-LEC, Regular
PH 310, Tue & Thu 9:30-10:50am

DESCRIPTION

As a pre-professional, learning how to develop appropriate, timely, and persuasive documentation prepares you for the fast-paced demands of an employer, colleagues, and clients. Although any style of writing takes a lifetime to develop, learning the key elements of professional documentation will enhance and shape how people make critical decisions or make changes in habits. This course will expose you to the professional and technical situations you may encounter in a workplace setting and prepare you to perform audience analyses, usability testing, persuasive communication, tailored documentation, and most importantly how to write with clarity, concision, style, and appropriate tone. Prerequisite: ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302

OUTCOMES

- Recall general technical writing characteristics by performing informal and formal audience analyses
- Describe the benefits and constraints of an informational document for an intended audience through informal usability testing
- Demonstrate persuasive communication techniques in technical writing documentation

- Develop abilities to differentiate genre conventions for specialized and general audiences by tailoring professional documents
- Design and revise documentation for clarity, concision, style, and tone from peer review feedback

TEXTBOOK

Required: Mike Markel's *Technical Communication* in the 11th edition.

You do need the 11th edition.

Please note: This book is on course reserve in the Central Library. This means you are responsible for all course assignments since you have access to the book via course reserve.

The image (*Figure 2*) to the right is the book cover for the 11th edition. Set against a black background are the words "Technical" and "Communication" in different typefaces, with technical in sentence case and communication in all caps upper-left justified. In the lower third of the image appears a yellow, gold, and orange design of an electrical current in a small wave formation. Lower right justified is the author's name in a medium purple color.
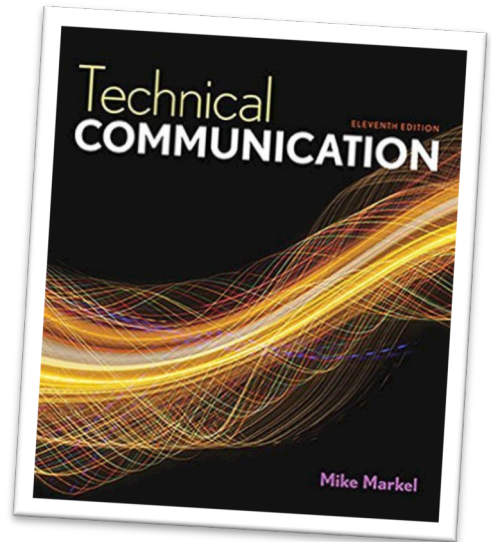
MATERIALS

You will need access to:
A desktop, laptop or tablet, the Internet, UTA Blackboard, MavMail, and a Word processor, preferably Libre Office but Microsoft Office is okay. You will also need the ability to read and save PDF documents.

All assignments will be electronic as will the grading. If you happen to need to print materials for the course, then you'll need access to a printer and/or money for printing.

ATTENDANCE

- Four unexcused absences, upon the fifth the course grade is failure

The University of Texas at Arlington does not have a university-wide attendance policy and leaves matters of attendance to the discretion of the instructor of record. Since this is a 16-week undergraduate level course with in-class workshops, quizzes, and projects, I expect you will attend every class. I do track attendance.

If you have an emergency, hospitalization, work-related scheduling conflict, home-based illness or psychological barrier to attending class, you have a bank of four unexcused absences for the semester with no questions asked. However, upon the fifth absence, which is the equivalent of missing $1/5^{th}$ of scheduled class meetings, the final grade will be recorded as a failure.

There are only two exceptions to this absence policy: any university excused absence (university authorized absence; military service; observance of religious holy days) and any catastrophic event (using more than the four unexcused absences), both to which we must discuss by appointment or via office hours (not immediately before, after or during class time).

Additionally, an excused absence only covers missing class, not any items due during the excused absence, which means you'll need to submit work before, not after, the deadline.

Any lateness (tardy) of ten minutes or more to class will be recorded as an absence. So, please, for your sake and your peers, please don't be late to class.

LATE WORK

- 24 hours in advance = auto extension | within 24 hours = maybe | late with no notice = I will not accept

I do not accept late work without prior communication. If you anticipate that you need an extension, you do need to notify me 24 hours in advance of the deadline via my university email address or in person. I will be happy to grant an extension if you do so. If you email me within 24 hours of the deadline, I will consider the extension request. I may or may not grant the extension; it depends on the circumstances. If you do not communicate that you need an extension, fail to meet a deadline, and attempt to submit work after the deadline, I will not accept your work. It's really simple: I am happy to help you, but please give me notice so we can negotiate an extension that helps you succeed.

EMAIL

- Will respond 1pm-5pm Monday-Thursday & on an as needed basis on Friday

I make it a policy to respond to emails within 24 hours from Monday to Thursday. For this regular term, I will respond to student emails from 1pm – 5pm during the Monday-Thursday, (and on an as needed basis on Friday) workweek. If you send me an email outside of my email hours, please know that I will respond during the next time of email hours. Additionally, if you send an email a half hour/minutes before class begins, chances are I will not have time to read the email before class.

TECH USE

- Yes, you can if you do so responsibly | Cords are safety concerns

I encourage the use of smartphones, texting, and social media use in our class, as long as you do so in a responsible, respectful, and non-distracting manner. However, if you are using these digital tools at the expense of holistically paying attention and engaging in the material, and the use affects your learning and work, we will talk privately about discontinuing usage during class. Additionally, please bring digital devices fully charged as plugging in devices with cords is a safety concern. I will ask you to [re]move any cords that are potential safety hazards to yourself and/or others.

INCLUSIVITY

I support an inclusive learning environment where diversity and difference are respected. In turn, I expect you to respect differences and show resilience in understanding other perspectives, behaviors, practices, and beliefs that may be contrary to your own. If there are moments where inclusivity is not honored, we will discuss the event(s) either as a class and/or privately to learn from each other.

ASSIGNMENT

Audience Analysis (100 pts.)
This project covers how to informally and formally report on the primary and secondary audiences of a specialized and general website. You will work on informal peer observation and discussion on how to analyze audience characteristics and then develop individual formal memos describing and explaining the rhetorical strategies each site uses for their target and secondary audiences.

Résumé & Cover Letter (100 pts. for résumé, 80 pts. for cover letter/180 pts. total)
Using job boards in your profession, you will develop a résumé and cover letter for a specific job advertisement using non-templated materials. You will work

closely with peers in groups exploring sample documents. Additionally, we will talk about the benefits and constraints of using pre-made templates.

Instructions & Usability Testing (100 pts. for each document/200 pts. total)

You will develop step-by-step instructions for a target and secondary audience on how to complete a task. Additionally, you will perform usability testing of the instructions to ensure the instructions are clear and concise.

Process Description (100 pts. for each document/200 pts. total)

This project will help prepare you to develop materials related to describing and writing a process description of a procedure. You will need to demonstrate the difference between instructions and process in this assignment. Additionally, you will perform usability testing of the process description to ensure the instructions are clear, concise, with appropriate style and tone.

Learning Reflection (100 pts. total)

During the final week of the course, you will write a 2-page alphabetic essay on what you've learned from the course. You will assess your own learning and also provide the grade for this project. The only requirement I have is this needs to be two (2) full pages.

Oral Presentation (100 pts. total)

During the final week of the course, you will deliver a 5-minute oral presentation of your process description.

Activity Quizzes (10 pts. each x 6)

The design of this course is a "flipped classroom" or "experiential" learning where I am your guide or facilitator in your learning process. As the instructor of record, I will not prepare formal lectures on the assigned readings. Instead, you will participate in beginning of the class activity quiz, where you will answer five quiz related items about the reading, and then fill in comments on areas from the reading you'd like to discuss during the "lecture" time. I will use your comments to create on-demand lectures of what is of interest to you and/or the class. You may opt out of one (1) quiz with no penalty to your final course grade.

Activity Based Work (10 pts. each x 8)

Throughout the semester, there are activities to complete individually or in teams from the course textbook. These will be graded based on full completion of the activity. You may choose to opt out of one (1) of the activities with no penalty to your final course grade.

Completing all the activity quizzes and activity based work will not increase your grade. If you complete all the quizzes, the lowest score will be dropped.

GRADING

I expect you will track your grades over this fall semester course. This means at any given moment, you should know your course standing. If your performance drops below satisfactory levels, and you do not want to repeat this course or receive an unsatisfactory grade, you must seek guidance from student support services or me.

Additionally, I provide grading rubrics for all content I grade so that you have opportunities to ask clarification questions about how I will assess your work before you submit your work to me. There may be a time when an area of growth presents that is not accounted for in the rubric. While I will not assess you for something that's not in the rubric, I may comment upon those areas of growth.

I will calculate your final course grade based on the following scale:

900 – 1,000 points =	A
800 – 899 points =	B
700 – 799 points =	C
600 – 699 points =	D
599 and below =	F
Five or more absences =	F

For quizzes, I will have these items graded and returned to you during the next class meeting. For all other major course projects, I will have these graded and returned to you in one week.

MAKEUP

I do not offer makeup work.

EXPECTATION

Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional five (5) to ten (10) hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing documents, etc.

DROP POLICY

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/).

ADA ACT

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

TITLE IX

The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

HONOR CODE

Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

MAVMAIL

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

SFS

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student

feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

EMERGENCY

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

SUPPORT

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

SCHEDULE

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. I will give verbal, print, and electronic announcements/updates in class and to the course web spaces of any schedule adjustments in a timely manner.

WEEK 1
FOUNDATIONS

Thurs 8.27.15

Course introduction, including syllabus & schedule review
Lecture on what is technical writing & why it is important for pre-professionals
Writing activity on your relationship with business writing, & what you already know about the course learning outcomes

Next Time
Read chapter 1, p. 2-16 and complete exercise #1 as an individual activity & be prepared to discuss in groups Tuesday

WEEK 2
Ethics

Tues 9.1.15

Activity quiz on chapter 1
Lecture on introduction to technical writing via student responses in quiz
Complete exercise #1 in small groups

Next Time
Read chapter 2, p. 17-40

Thurs 9.3.15

Activity quiz on chapter 2
Lecture on understanding ethical and legal considerations via student responses/quiz
Small teams complete #4, p. 40

Next Time
Read chapter 3, p. 41-56 and complete case 3

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WEEK 3
Audience

Tues 9.8.15
> Activity quiz on chapter 3
> Lecture on writing technical documents via student responses/quiz
> Pair up to complete #2, p. 56
>
> *Next Time*
> Read chapter 5, p. 82-113

Thurs 9.10.15
> Activity quiz on chapter 5
> Lecture on audience analysis & purpose via student responses/quiz
> Teams complete #4, p. 113
> Review Audience Analysis assignment
>
> *Next Time*
> Find the two websites to review
> Begin reading, analyzing, and preliminary writing
> Read "Writing Memos" in chapter 14, p. 372-374
> Read "Writing Grammatically Correct Sentences" in chapter 10, p. 216-223
> Read "Structuring Effective Sentences" in chapter 10, p. 223-230

WEEK 4
Drafting

Tues 9.15.15
> Drafting workshop on audience analysis, includes getting peer & instructor feedback
>
> *Next Time*
> Finish first draft of audience analysis/have a peer & instructor draft available for feedback

Thurs 9.17.15
> Guided peer review of first draft of audience analysis memo for feedback
> Global level instructor feedback on audience analysis memo (organization, style)
>
> Next Time
> Revise first draft into a second draft, submit by Tuesday before class begins

WEEK 5
Job Materials

Tues 9.22.15
> Experience video of what employers want
> Explore job application materials via different websites
> Explore sample job materials (résumé/cover letter) in small teams

Next Time
Read chapter 15, p. 386-418 & complete #1, p. 416

Thurs 9.24.15
Activity quiz on chapter 15
Lecture on writing job application materials via student responses/quiz
Review Résumé & Cover Letter assignment sheet
Individual activity on exploring job boards to find jobs for assignment

Next Time
Work on drafting résumé and cover letter

WEEK 6
Drafting

Tues 9.29.15
Instructor-led discussion on templates vs. no templates
Workshop discussion on drafting résumé and cover letter

Next Time
Work on drafting résumé and cover letter, have first drafts ready for peer & instructor review

Thurs 10.1.15
Guided peer review of first draft of résumé & cover letter for feedback
Global level instructor feedback on résumé & cover letter (organization, style)
Conference sign-up sheet

Next Time
Revise first draft into a second draft, submit by Sunday at midnight.

WEEK 7
Conferences

We will use this week to sign-up for small, ten-minute, conferences to discuss your progress with résumé and cover letter work. Conferences will be held on Monday and Tuesday.

Estee will also be out of the state for an academic conference from October 7-11.

Prepare third draft of résumé and cover letter for submission on Tuesday before class begins

WEEK 8
Instructions

Tues 10.13.15
Demonstration on the importance of clear and concise instructions
Explore sample instructions from a variety of sources

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Explore ineffective instructions in pairs and discuss how to make them effective

Next Time
Read part of chapter 20, p. 551-567
Read part pf chapter 8, p. 171-179, 182-183
Read part of chapter 9, p. 193-213

Thurs 10.15.15
Activity quiz on chapters 8, 9, 20
Lecture on instructions, persuasive communication, cohesive writing via student responses in quiz
Team work on #8, p. 573, using concepts from chapter 8, 9
Review assignment sheet on Instructions

Next Time
Decide on the instructions you want to develop for this assignment

WEEK 9
Instructions

Tues 10.20.15
Instructor writing demonstration—Estee will review how to develop instructions, how to write persuasively, and how to write with concision and clarity with small hands-on demos
Team work on small instruction creation using in-class prompts

Next Time
Begin working on instructions
Read part of chapter 13, p. 345-353

Thurs 10.22.15
No scheduled class meeting
Estee will be out of state at an academic conference, October 20-25

WEEK 10
Instructions & Usability

Tues 10.27.15
Workshop of instructions, continue drafting & soliciting feedback from peers
Instructor-led discussion of designing usability testing

Next Time
Design a brief usability test for your set of instructions

Thurs 10.29.15
Workshop of usability testing among peers

Next Time
Use feedback from usability testing to finish instructions. Submit before class begins Tuesday

WEEK 11
Process Description

Tues 11.3.15
Experience videos of process descriptions
Review materials on process descriptions
Small team discussion on differences between process descriptions & instructions

Next Time
Read part of chapter 20, p. 534-551 & complete #5, p. 573

Thurs 11.5.15
Instructor led demonstration of writing a process description, using concepts from chapters 8, 9, 20
Spend time thinking about the process description you want to write

Next Time
Begin developing the process description

WEEK 12
Process Description

Tues 11.10.15
Individual writing time of the process description, solicit peer & instructor feedback

Next Time
Continue developing the process description

Thurs 11.12.15
Individual writing time of the process description, solicit peer & instructor feedback
Begin develop usability testing protocols for the process description

Next Time
Finish a first draft & develop usability testing protocols

WEEK 13
Process Description

Tues 11.17.15
Usability testing of the process description

Next Time
Prepare a second draft for peer and instructor review

Thurs 11.19.15

    Peer review on clarity, concision, style, tone of process description
    Global level instructor feedback on the same elements
    Next Time
    Finish process description and submit before 11.24.15
    Read chapter 21, p. 577-604

WEEK 14

Tues 11.24.15

    Instructor led discussion on tips & tricks for oral presentations

    Next Time
    Enjoy your break, no assigned work

WEEK 15
Oral Presentations

Tues 12.1.15

    Workshop preparation for oral presentations
    Discussion of the learning reflection
    Sign-up sheet for oral presentations

    Next Time
    Finish your oral presentations
    Work on your learning reflection

Thurs 12.3.15

    Oral presentations

    Next Time
    Work on you learning reflection

WEEK 16
Oral Presentations/Learning Reflection

Tues 12.8.15

    Oral presentations
    Submit your learning reflection by the end of class

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