ENGL 2338: Technical Writing

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Class Meetings
Mondays & Wednesdays
11:00 a.m. 310 PH
Fridays via Blackboard

Technical Communication (2015) Mike Markel (11th ed.)
Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's

Technical Writing

In an information society, your ability to communicate effectively will be a big factor in determining your career success. This course is designed to prepare you for the writing---related communication tasks in your job. In this course, you will learn strategies for writing clear and concise technical documents, explore principles of good document design, and learn how to use visuals in documents. You will study common types of technical and professional writing: memo, resume, job application letter, instructions, and technical descriptions. As you complete each assignment, you will practice how to define your audience and purpose, determine appropriate document format and writing style, and improve the clarity and organization of your document.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand technical writing as an essential skill for your career.
2. Describe the characteristics of your target audiences and write in a way that meets their information needs.
3. Improve your writing style and write in concise and clear language.
4. Observe and follow appropriate generic conventions for common technical and professional documents.
5. Design audience-centered documents that help readers easily locate, understand, and retain information.

Assignment Overview

To complete this course, you will submit three major writing projects, post to weekly discussion forums, participate in peer reviews of major assignments and complete various homework assignments. Each major assignment is designed to give you practical experience in specific areas of technical writing. Detailed descriptions of each major assignment will be posted in Blackboard.

Project 1: Audience Analysis Assignment. This assignment asks you to design 3 different documents, each addressed to a different audience.

Project 2: Instructions. This assignment asks you to write a set of instructions on how to complete a specific task. You must write your instructions to a specific target audience.

Project 3: Final Project. This assignment will test your understanding of the main course concepts and objectives and determine how well you can apply them.

Weekly Discussion Forums. In addition to our class discussions, you will be required to participate in graded online discussions. Participation in online discussions involves two distinct activities: an initial response to a posted question (worth 50 points) and at least two subsequent comments on classmates' responses (worth 25 points each).

Exercises. You will be required to complete a number of in-class and out-of-class exercises.

Grade Distribution

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows:

Assignment 1: Audience Analysis	15%
Assignment 2: Instructions	15%
Assignment 3: Final Project	20%
Peer Reviews (Posting Drafts and Reviewing Drafts)	15%
Weekly Discussion Forums	10%
Exercises	10%
Homework & In-Class Activities	15%
Total	100%

All activities will receive a numerical grade of 0–100. You will receive a score of 0 for any work not submitted. Your final grade in the course will be a letter grade. Letter grade equivalents for numerical grades are as follows:

> A= 90–100%
> B= 80–89%
> C= 70–79%
> D= 60–69%
> F= 50–59%

Tips for Success in this Course
- Download a copy of the syllabus; read it in its entirety; keep a copy handy throughout the semester
- Download the course calendar and keep a copy of it handy (assignments/due dates are subject to change. Changes will be announced ahead of time, in class. It is your responsibility to keep your schedule updated)
- Before you attempt to complete any of the assignments, make sure you have read and understood the assignment instructions and any readings associated with the assignment (Failure to do so is the primary reason students are not successful)
- Review all the resources available to you in the course
- Attend class meetings regularly and come prepared for the day's activities.
- Check your UTA email daily. Email is my primary means of communicating with you outside of the classroom. Use your *only* UTA email when communicating with me or with your classmates.

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Class Rules and Protocols
Submission policy
- You must complete all assignments by the due dates. **No late work is accepted in this course except in the most unusual circumstances.** (Should you have an **emergency** and need to turn in work late, contact me. I *may* decide to allow you to submit your work late with a daily point deduction [10 points per day]. Any work that is turned in 5 days past the due date will not be accepted.).
- You must submit your assignments by uploading them on Blackboard. I will not accept work over email.
- Pay attention when submitting assignments and make sure you submit through the correct submission portal. Assignments submitted to the wrong location in Blackboard will not receive credit. Contact me if you have any questions about your submissions.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work or ideas as your own, **whether it's intentional or not.** Copying or paraphrasing passages from another writer's work without acknowledging that you've done so is plagiarism. Allowing another writer to write any part of your assignment is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. If your instructor suspects you of plagiarism, your instructor will get in touch with you and share her suspicions with you. You will have the opportunity to accept or deny responsibility for the charges, and if you deny responsibility for the alleged plagiarism, you will have your case tried by the Office of Student Conduct. Whether you accept or deny responsibility, your instructor will file a report with the Office of Student Conduct. Should you accept responsibility for plagiarism or be found responsible by Student Conduct, **the academic penalty for plagiarism in this course is a zero on the assignment.** The Office of Student Conduct will implement further penalties.

Academic Integrity

All students enrolled in this course 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.

Instructors 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.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center, Room 411 in the Central Library, offers guidance to UT‑Arlington students on writing assignments. Appointments are for 45 minutes. Students must register with the Writing Center before making appointments and should bring a printed copy of their assignment sheet, any instructor or peer comments, and their draft to the appointment. You may register and schedule appointments and find many other valuable resources and information online at http://www.uta.edu/owl.

Please note that Writing Center consultants assist students with writing development, from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas or revising an early draft, to polishing a final document. However, the Writing Center is not a document editing service; consultants will not identify or correct every grammar or spelling error, nor will they rewrite student assignments. They focus on improving writing skills and helping students become better editors of their own writing, which includes learning to identify and correct their own grammar, punctuation and editing errors.

In addition to one-on-one consultations, the Writing Center will offer grammar workshops periodically throughout the semester. During these workshops students will focus on identifying and correcting one of the most common grammar errors and then will participate in a Consultant---led revising and editing session. For more information on these sessions, please see the Writing Center calendar at http://www.uta.edu/owl.

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.

Americans with Disabilities 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.

Student Support Services
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.

Electronic Communication

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.

Student Feedback Survey

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a 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.

Attendance

While UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Classroom Behavior

Students are expected to participate respectfully in class, to listen to other class members, and to comment appropriately. I also expect consideration and courtesy from students. Professors are to be addressed appropriately and communicated with professionally.

> According to *Student Conduct and Discipline*, "students are prohibited from engaging in or attempting to engage in conduct, either alone or in concert with others, that is intended to obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with, or that in fact obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any instructional, educational, research, administrative, or public performance or other activity authorized to be conducted in or on a University facility. Obstruction or disruption includes, but is not limited to, any act that interrupts, modifies, or damages utility service or equipment, communication service or equipment, or computer equipment, software, or networks" (UTA Handbook or Operating Procedures, Ch. 2, Sec. 2-202). Students who do not respect the guidelines listed above or who disrupt other students' learning may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Title IX Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit* www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **free** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email IDEAS@uta.edu or call (817) 272-6593.