English 2338: Technical Writing

**Instructor**: Ann Sloan, PhD

**Course Information**: Section 2338-002: 12:30-1:50 a.m. TT, 310 Preston Hall

**Office/Hours**: 407 Carlisle Hall; 11-12 a.m. TTh; 2:00-2:30 p.m. TTh; and by appointment

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**Class Raison D’être.** You might think that technical writing is limited to the fields of science and computer technology. It is not. For instance, this syllabus is a technical document. You can think of technical writing as workplace communication. The workplace involves communication between and among professionals. Think of technical writing as a conversation with highly specific aims. Technical writers create documents that use description and explanation in order to persuade or enable readers to take action. Consequently, effective technical writers must have (1) a clear understanding of the subject matter, (2) a thorough awareness of the intended audience(s), and (3) a strong mastery of the required writing forms or genres. We will study these and much more in this class via reading, writing, group work, and lots of practice.

Technical/workplace writing can take many forms, including letters, memos, reports, proposals, presentations, and manuals. Since there are so many forms, it's not possible for students to learn everything they might eventually need for a workplace in this one course. **In particular, this section’s coverage of techniques and styles specific to Internet-based work will be minimal.** Students can, however, gain an appreciation for (and refine skills needed to develop) writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and honest—and those abilities can be used in many different tasks and professional settings.

*Clear* writing is expressed in a manner that is suitable for an intended audience. *Concise* writing says all it has to but not more. *Well-organized* documents are easy to follow because form and logic work together. Facts and figures, sources and statements, interpretations, and conclusions must be meticulously *honest* in order to establish and maintain the author's integrity and authority and to enable readers to accomplish the desired task.

**Course Description:** This class is an introduction to the discourse conventions of technical communication. Students will become familiar with and aware of the major components of technical writing. The class will provide students with the opportunity to analyze and practice the techniques they are studying, including the production of documents such as résumés, technical descriptions, technical instructions, and reports.

**Expected Learning Outcomes.** By the end of ENGL 2338, students should learn:

● The difference between technical writing and essay writing

● What the types of documents produced in a business setting are

● To assess your audience’s needs for a document or a presentation

● To design and produce documents that meet your intended audience’s needs

● To write collaboratively

● To give and receive feedback on others’ work

● To present technical information to a non-technical audience

● To structure documents for maximum clarity and readability

**Required Material**

 *Technical Communication*, 11th edition, by Mike Markel.

**Assignments.** A brief description of the assignments:

 *Technical Description*: A written description of a process suitable for use in a reference work. For instance, you might describe how the human circulation system works, how a musical instrument is made, or how a bridge is designed.

 *Instructions*: Written instructions on how to use a particular device, consisting of at least 20 steps, with illustrations. The device should be different from the one covered in the technical description assignment.

 *Job Application*: You will put together professional resumes and cover letters suitable for a job search.

 *White Paper/Report*: Your team will write a multi-page report on a scenario supplied for you.

 *Exercises/Short papers*: Minor assignments, rough drafts, and peer-review memos critiquing others’ work.

 *Quizzes*: Short tests on reading material.

**Paper Formatting**. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers should be double-spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman typeface, with 1-inch margins on all sides. Pages should be numbered, with the number and your last name in a document header in the upper right corner. In the upper left corner (NOT in the header) of the first page, you should have your name, your instructor’s name, the course name and section, and the date (in MLA style—for example, 1 Jan. 2014).

**Peer Reviews.** Most major assignment will include peer review assignments that will count as short papers. **You will not be able to make up these points if you miss the assignments.**

**Grades**. Your final grade for this course will consist of the following:

Process Description assignment 20%

Job Application assignment 20%

Instructions assignment 20%

White Paper/Report assignment 25%

Exercises/Short papers (avg) 10%

Quizzes (avg) 5%

Grades for work and the course are scaled as follows:

90-100 **A** — Excellent work that fulfills assignment criteria with exceptional skill, quality, style, or sophistication.

80-89 **B** — Good work that meets assignment criteria.

70-79 **C** — Acceptable work that only meets assignment criteria and/or contains notable flaws that should have been remedied in planning, drafting, revising, or conferring with the instructor.

60-69 **D** — Work that has numerous severe flaws or does not meet assignment criteria.

 0-60 **F** — Work that is incomplete or is unsatisfactory due to serious flaws, negligence, or dishonesty.

Grades will be rounded to the next letter at the following point levels: 89.5 will rise to an A, 79.5 will rise to a B, and a 69.5 will rise to a C.

**Keep all papers** until you receive your final grade from the university. You cannot challenge a grade without evidence.

**Grade Grievances**: Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current undergraduate catalog.

**Paper Reuse Policy** – You are not allowed to reuse papers from prior classes in this course. Reusing papers does not demonstrate any advance in knowledge or skill, and so would not be helpful for you in terms of your learning this semester, or for me in terms of assessing this learning. If you feel your situation constitutes a clear or significant exception to this rule, you must discuss this with me prior to the due date of the first draft.

**Turning in Assignments to Blackboard**. All major assignments (DCA, RAE, and SE) in this course will be submitted to Blackboard. I will not accept any assignments via e-mail. **All assignments submitted to Blackboard must be saved as a .doc or .docx file to ensure that I am able to open them on my computer**. It is your responsibility to ensure that all of your work is saved in this way and submitted in the correct format.

I will also require that you submit a paper copy of the major writing assignments to me. I will read the paper copy, make comments on the paper copy, and return it to you. I am old school in this regard.

**Late Enrollment Policy:** Though I realize that at times enrolling in a course after the start date is unavoidable, please be advised that you will be held responsible for the class periods that you have missed even if you were not enrolled in the course. I will not allow you to make up missed opportunities for assignments that occurred before you enrolled. If you enroll in class after the start date, it is your responsibility to contact your peers in order to get caught up on the schedule and any announcements that might have been delivered in your absence. This policy also applies to students who drop and add.

**Late Assignments.** Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date specified. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date specified. I DO NOT accept late work unless you have made previous arrangements with me.

**Participation Policy.** Improvement in writing is a complex process that requires a great deal of practice. Successful college students come to class and participate regularly. Participation includes being in class on time, having all necessary books/materials, and being thoughtfully engaged in activities and discussions. Excused absences include official university activities, military service, and/or religious holidays. Students must inform the instructor in writing at least one week in advance of an excused absence. I will not supply what you miss by email or phone. It is your responsibility to conference with a peer to get this material or make an appointment to see me in person.

**Attendance**. At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I encourage but do not require attendance. However, being absent or late incurs a risk of missing quizzes, which cannot be made up.

**Classroom Behavior.** Class sessions are short and require your full attention. All cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices should be **turned off and put away when entering the classroom**; all earpieces should be removed. Store materials from other classes, reading not related to this class, bulky bags, and other distractions so that you can concentrate on the readings and discussions each day. Bring book(s) and readings (heavily annotated and carefully read) to every class. 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. Instructors are to be addressed appropriately and communicated with professionally. In addition, students are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to an academic setting.

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 asked to leave class and/or referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

**Classroom Visitors:** Only officially registered students are allowed to attend class. Children and adult visitors are not allowed. If you wish to bring a visitor to class, please contact me ahead of time so we can contact the proper administrative office to make the visit official.

**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.*

 It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

You can get in trouble for plagiarism by failing to correctly indicate places where you are making use of the work of another or colluding with another to prepare assignments. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the conventions of citation by which you indicate which ideas are not your own and how your reader can find those sources. Read your textbook and/or handbook for more information on quoting and citing properly to avoid plagiarism. If you still do not understand, ask your instructor. All students caught plagiarizing or cheating will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

**Expectations for Out-of-Class Study:** For every credit hour earned, a student should spend 3 hours per week working outside of class. Hence, a 3-credit course might have a minimum expectation of 9 hours of reading, study, etc.

**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](http://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](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**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. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

### Writing Center. Writing Center. The English Writing Center is located in Room 411 Central Library. Hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays and Noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Students must register and can make appointments online at http://uta.mywconline.com. Face-to-Face and online appointments for undergraduate students are scheduled for 20, 40, or 60 minutes. Writing Center consultants assist with any aspect of academic writing, from understanding an assignment, brainstorming, revising an early draft, to polishing a final draft. However, the Writing Center is not an editing service; consultants will not correct grammar or rewrite assignments during our long sessions. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for more information.

**Academic Resources.** The University of Texas at 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. These resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals to resources for any reason, students may contact the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107 or visit [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources) for more information.

# Library Research Help. UT Arlington Library offers many ways for students to receive help with writing assignments. To access research guides, go to <http://libguides.uta.edu>. Search for the course number in the search box located at the top of the page. The research guides direct students to useful databases, as well as provide information about citation, developing a topic/thesis, and receiving help. Other helpful information may be found at links provided below:

Library Home Page <http://www.uta.edu/library>

Ask A Librarian [http://ask.uta.edu](http://ask.uta.edu/)

**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](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**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>.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room, proceed down either of the stairways in Preston Hall, and exit the immediately adjacent door. 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 handicapped individuals.

**Electronic Communication Policy.** All students must have access to a computer with Internet capabilities. **Students should check e-mail daily for course information and updates.** I will send group emails through Blackboard. I am happy to communicate with students through e-mail. However, I ask that you be wise in your use of this tool. Make sure you have consulted the syllabus for answers before you send me an e-mail. **I do not monitor my e-mail 24 hours a day**; I check it periodically during the school week and occasionally on the weekend. Also, please do not include your student ID number in emails to me.

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University “MavMail” address as the sole official means of communication with students. MavMail is used to remind students of important deadlines, advertise events and activities, and permit the University to conduct official transactions exclusively by electronic means. For example, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are now sent to students through the MavMail system. All students are assigned a MavMail account. ***Students are responsible for checking their MavMail regularly.*** Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/email/>. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active even after they graduate from UT Arlington.

**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/>

**Conferences and Questions:** I have three regularly scheduled office hours each week. These times are reserved for students to drop by or to make an appointment to discuss course assignments, grades, or other class-related concerns. I will be happy to make other appointment times for you if your class schedule conflicts with regular conference times or if I am not available on certain days. **If you receive a grade on an assignment or quiz about which you have questions, please wait twenty-four hours before discussing it with me**. This gives you time to process the assignment comments and to think about how your course work meets the requirements set forth for each assignment.

**Syllabus and Schedule Changes.** During the course of the semester, I may have to alter, add, or abandon certain policies/assignments. Instructors reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. Students will be informed of any changes.

**Course Schedule.** Assignments are due on the day they are listed, as are readings.

**Emergency Phone Numbers**: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911.

For non-emergencies, contact the UTA PD at 817-272-3381.

**Class Calendar**

**Week 1** 8/25

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| Thursday | Introduction/ Course Overview/Syllabus Discussion |

**Week 2** 8/30—9/1

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| Tuesday | **Read**: *TC* Chapter 1: Intro to Technical Communications. |
| Thursday | **Intro**: Process Description assignment.**Read**: *TC* Chapter 3: Writing Technical Documents |

**Week 3** 9/6-9/8

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| Tuesday | **Read**: *TC* Chap. 20: Writing Definitions, Descriptions . . . (563-81) |
| Thursday | **Read**: *TC* Chap. 9: Writing Coherent Documents |

**Week 4** 9/13-9/15

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| Tuesday | Peer review workshop. **Due:** Process Description draft |
| Thursday | **Read**: *TC* Chap. 10: Writing Effective Sentences**Due**: Description peer review memos. |

**Week 5** 9/27-9/29

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| Tuesday | **Intro**: Instructions assignment.**Read**: *TC* Chap. 20: Writing . . . Instructions (581-99)**Due**: **Process Description final version** |
| Thursday | **Read**: *TC* Chap. 5: Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose |

**Week 6** 10/4-10/6

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| Tuesday | **Read**: *TC* Chap. 6: Researching Your Subject |
| Thursday | Peer review workshop. **Due**: Instructions draft. |

**Week 7** 10/11-10/13

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| Tuesday | **Due**: Peer review memos for Instructions draft.**Read:** *TC* Chap. 7: Organizing Your Information. |
| Thursday | **Intro**: Job Application assignment.**Read**: *TC* Chapter 15: Writing Job-Application Materials**Due**: **Instructions final version** |

**Week 8** 10/18-10/20

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| Tuesday | Resumes/cover letters cont’d. |
| Thursday | **Read**: TC Chap. 14: Writing Correspondence |

**Week 9** 10/25-10/27

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| Tuesday | Correspondence cont’d. |
| Thursday | Peer review workshop. **Due**: Job Application draft. |

**Week 10** 11/1-11/3

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| Tuesday | **Due**: Job App peer review memos |
| Thursday | **Due**: Job Application final version.**Intro**: Recommendation Report assignment |

**Week 11** 11/8-11/10

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| Tuesday | **Read**: TC Chap. 4: Writing Collaboratively Rec Report brainstorming |
| Thursday | **Read**: TC Chap. 17: Writing Informational Reports |

**Week 12** 11/15-11/17

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| Tuesday | **Read**: TC Chap. 19: Writing Recommendation Reports |
| Thursday | **Read**: TC Chap. 2: Understanding Legal and Ethical Considerations |

**Week 13** 11/22-11/24

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| Tuesday | **Read**: TC Chap. 8: Communicating Persuasively |
| Thursday | Thanksgiving |

**Week 14** 11/29-12/1

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| Tuesday | **Due**: Recommendation Report draft. |
| Thursday | In-class work on report. |

**Week 15** 12/6

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| Tuesday | **Last day of class**.In-class work/instructor consultation. |

 **Week 16** 12/10-12/16

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|  | **Finals** |

**ENGL 2338 Syllabus Contract**

I have read and understood the syllabus, and I agree to abide by the course policies.

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Print Name Date

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Signature Date

**Permission to Use Student Writing**

Student’s Name

Class Number and Section

Instructor Name

I give my permission for my writing to be used as an example of student work and/or as a teaching tool for future classes. I understand that my name will be removed from my work before it is shared with others.

Student’s signature

UTA ID Date