



Technical COMMUNICATION

Spring 2017 | 3373-001 | Dr. Estee Beck

Cover Photo: “MacBook Pro and Paper”

Description: Image of MacBook Pro on the left side, with a paper pad to the right of the laptop on a wood-grain desk.

COURSE INFORMATION

Estee Beck, PhD (You may call me Estee or Dr. Beck)
Carlisle Hall 525
estee.beck@uta.edu
<http://esteebeck.github.io>
<https://mentis.uta.edu/explore/profile/estee-beck>

Office Hours:

T, Th 2:00-3:00 or by appointment (including virtual)

Class Information:

ENGL 3373-001-LEC, Regular
PH 310, 3:30-4:50pm
<http://techcomm3373.slack.com>

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 copyedit professional documents, develop job materials, write proposal reports, and perform persuasive communication. Prerequisite: ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302

OUTCOMES

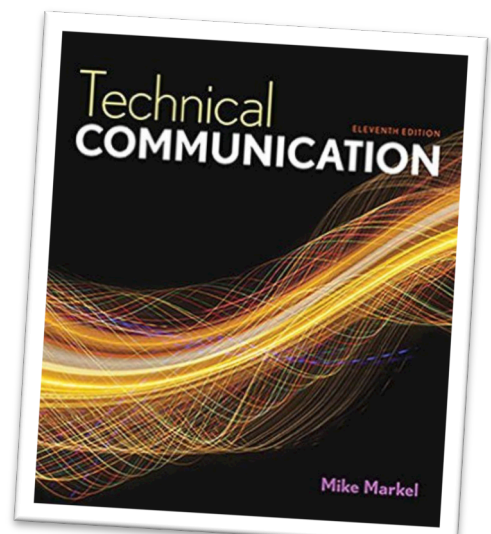
- Recall general technical writing characteristics by developing technical documentation
- Describe the benefits and constraints of an informational document for an intended audience
- Demonstrate persuasive communication techniques in technical writing documentation
- Develop abilities to differentiate 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:

Amy Eisohn's *The Copyeditor's Handbook* in the 3rd edition.

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



Please note: The Markel 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, Slack, MavMail, and a Word processor. You will also need the ability to read and save PDF documents. You may also need Google Hangouts or Skype or Google Drive.

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.

ASSIGNMENTS

Copyediting Test (100 pts.)

This test will examine your ability to copyedit grammar and punctuation in a professional/technical document. This test also helps prepare you for the detail-oriented precision needed for the next major assignment in the course. [major assignment]

Résumé & Cover Letter (100 pts. for each document/200 pts. total)

Using job boards in your profession, you will develop a résumé and cover letter for a specific job advertisement using non-template materials. This project prepares you for precision in technical documentation as well as document design. [major assignment]

Proposal Document (100 pts. for first draft and final draft/200 pts. total)

In this collaboratively written project, your team will develop a professionally styled proposal for a team-based project. The proposal will include research, document organizational strategies, graphics, definitions, and descriptions along with other general characteristics of a formal report. Since it’s collaboratively written, each person will need to document her/his work in relation to other people’s contributions within the project. [major assignment]

Oral Presentation (100 pts. for each team)

In this collaboratively prepared presentation, your team will deliver an oral presentation with digital presentation software. Not everyone will have a speaking role in this team project, but each member should have an equal contribution of work load for the final project. Since it’s collaboratively presented, each person will need to document her/his work in relation to other people’s contributions within the project. [major assignment]

Quizzes (25 pts. each x 8/200 pts. total)

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.

Activity Based Work (10 pts. each x 16/160 pts. total)

Throughout the semester, there are recorded (on the course schedule) activities to complete individually or in teams. These will be graded on how well you or your team interprets and completes the activity.

Non-announced activity work (10 pts. each x 4/40 pts. total)

Throughout the semester, there will be non-announced activity work, which may or may not fall on days with previously scheduled activities). These will be graded on how well you complete the activity.

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 [major assignment] 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

course policies

ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS

- Six unexcused absences, subsequent absences result in reduction of final course grade by 50 points for each additional absence
- Any tardiness (10 minutes or more) to class results in a recorded absence
- Excused absence only covers missing class, not items due during class

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 six unexcused absences for the semester with no questions asked. However, upon the seventh absence, which is the equivalent of missing two weeks and one day of scheduled class meetings, your final course grade will result in a 50-point deduction for each additional absence. For example, student “x” has a final course grade of 836 points and missed 8 classes; the final course grade for student “x” would be 736 points.

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.

If approved late work is submitted after grading, the turn around time for grading will be approximately one month.

EMAIL

- Will respond Tuesday and Thursday during office hours, and until 4pm on Monday and Wednesday

I make it a policy to respond to student emails within 24 hours from Monday to Friday. For this regular term, I will respond to student email T,Th during office hours and until 4pm on MW. 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.

Due to FERPA and the nature of being a public employee, I do not respond to any emails that contain direct reference to student educational records, e.g., grades. If you do want to discuss your grade, please email me to request a meeting or just stop in during office hours.

Additionally, I only respond to student emails that use UTA's official email.

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.

EXTRA CREDIT AND MAKEUP WORK

I do not offer extra credit. I also do not offer makeup work.

EXPECTATIONS

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://www.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.

STUDENT 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.

COURSE 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.

For this course, it is your responsibility to keep track of what's expected in class, and what we're working on next time and in the upcoming weeks. This means you need to review the schedule routinely, including multiple times a week.

WEEK 1

FOUNDATIONS

tue 1.17.17

Lecture: What is technical communication?
Activity #1: Define technical communication in small groups
Activity: Overview of Slack
Handout: Course syllabus and calendar

Next Time

Read: Syllabus & course calendar and prepare for quiz
Read: Chapter 1 of Technical Communication

thu 1.19.17

Quiz #1: Syllabus and course calendar
Lecture: On measures of excellence & skills/qualities of great workplace
Activity #2: Exercise #1 on page 16 in small groups of three

Next Time

Read: Preface and Chapter 1 of The Copyeditor's Handbook
Work: Prepare two questions for guest speaker, & submit via Slack DM to Dr. Beck by Monday at 5pm.

WEEK 2

Copyediting

tue 1.24.17

Speaker: Online guest speaker, TBD
Quiz #2: Chapter 1 of The Copyeditor's Handbook
Discuss: Chapter 1 points to keep in notes

Next Time

Read: Chapter 2 and 3 of The Copyeditor's Handbook

thu 1.26.17

Quiz #3: Chapters 2 and 3 of The Copyeditor's Handbook
Activity #3: Basic procedures of copyediting with documents
Discuss: Chapters 2 and 3 points to keep in notes

Next Time

Read: Chapter 14: The Copyeditor's Handbook
Work: Complete class handout that applies content of Chapter 14, due during class next Tuesday

WEEK 3

Editorial Style

tue 1.31.17

Lecture: Principles of Grammar
Activity #4: Small group work on principles of grammar with exercise sheet

Next Time

Read: Chapter 4: The Copyeditor's Handbook
Work: Complete class handout that applies content of Chapter 4, due during class Thursday

thu 2.2.17

Lecture: Principles of Punctuation
Activity #5: Small group work on principles of punctuation with exercise

Next Time

Study: Copyeditor's Test on Chapters 1–3; 4; 14
Definitions 1–3; Application 4; 14

WEEK 4

Editorial Testing

tue 2.7.17

Review: Review of material, discussion of testing, study groups

Next Time

Study: Copyeditor's Test on Chapters 1–3; 4; 14
Definitions 1–3; Application 4; 14

thu 2.9.17

Test: Copyeditor's Test: Part I, Definitions—chapters 1–3
Copyeditor's Test: Part II, Applications—chapters 4; 14

Next Time

Read: Chapter 15, pages 397–410: Technical Communication

WEEK 5

Résumé

tue 2.14.17

Discussion: Effective vs. non-effective résumés

Next Time

Read: Chapter 9, pages 204–212 and Chapter 10, pages 223–228; 230–241: Technical Communication

Submit: An existing résumés via private Slack DM to Dr. Beck before class begins Thursday

thu 2.16.17

Lecture: Writing effective and persuasive sentences for cover letters

Activity #6: Editing for effective and persuasive sentences

Next Time

Read: Chapter 11, pages 249–254, 260–261; Chapter 14, pages 363–371; Chapter 15, pages 386–396, 411–415 from Technical Communication

Work: —Complete the self-inventory on page 391
—Identify up to three (3) jobs through a job board/network that you have eligibility to apply for currently
—Write a memo (see pages 372–374) with the results of the self-inventory and the three (3) jobs with links to the job listing and submit via private Slack DM to Dr. Beck before class begins Tuesday

WEEK 6

Cover Letter & Job Materials

tue 2.21.17

Lecture: On writing effective cover letters

Activity #7: Identification of effective and non-effective cover letters

Next Time

Work: Begin developing a revised resume and cover letter

thu 2.23.17

Workshop: Continue developing a revised resume and cover letter
Dr. Beck will help identify the type of resume to develop

Next Time

Work: Finish the first draft of the revised resume and cover letter
Follow class announcement regarding peer review documents

WEEK 7

Review of Cover Letter and Resume

tue 2.28.17

Activity #8: Peer review of cover letters
Instructor: Dr. Beck will provide 2-minute copyedits of each résumés

Next Time

Work: Revise résumés and cover letters
Optional: Submit cover letter to Dr. Beck by Tuesday at 5pm for feedback

thu 3.2.17

Activity #9: Copyediting of job materials
Instructor: Dr. Beck will provide 2-minute copyedits of cover letters

Next Time

Finish: The job materials packet and submit via private DM to Dr. Beck on Slack before class begins Tuesday.
Read: Chapter 3 in Technical Communication

WEEK 8

Audience

tue 3.7.17

Lecture: Identification of audience and purpose in documentation
Activity #10: Paired work on identifying audience and purpose from a website
Use audience and purpose check sheet

Next Time

Work: Prepare for quiz on chapter 3 in Technical Communication
Work: Prepare for speech report on activity #10

thu 3.9.17

Activity #11: Pairs report (speech) on identifying audience and purpose
Discuss: Team speed dating

Next Time

Work: Finish memo of exercise #4. Send a team Slack DM to Dr. Beck with final memo before class begins Tuesday.
Read: Chapter 4 in Technical Communication
Assess your work habits/prepare interview questions for collaborators

WEEK 10

Collaboration

tue 3.21.17

Activity #12: Collaboration speed dating

Next Time

Review: Review the final course assignment raw materials

thu 3.23.17

Discussion: Assignment of teams, and review of final course assignment

Speaker: Guest speaker, TBA

Next Time

Review: Review the final course assignment raw materials

Read: Chapter 6 in Technical Communication

WEEK 11

Research

tue 3.28.17

Quiz #4: Chapter 6 in Technical Communication

Discussion: Of research needed to conduct for the team project

Team time: For small team planning of the research for team project

Next Time

Conduct: Conduct out of class research for the team project

Activity #13: Show research results to Dr. Beck (progress check-in)

thu 3.30.17

Team time: Team project research review

Next Time

Read: Chapter 16 in Technical Communication

WEEK 12

Proposal

tue 4.4.17

Quiz #5: Chapter 16 in Technical Communication

Lecture: On effective proposals

Team time: Discussion about planning proposal for team project

Next Time

Read: Chapter 7 in Technical Communication

thu 4.6.17

Quiz #6: Chapter 7 in Technical Communication
Lecture: Organizing information in proposals and technical documents
Team time: Discussion of information organization

Next Time

Work: Begin assembly of the proposal
Read: Chapter 20, pages 533–551

WEEK 13

Writing Technical Proposal

tue 4.11.17

Quiz #7: Chapter 20, pages 533–551
Activity #14: Writing technical proposal during class/team time

Next Time

Continue: Developing the proposal

thu 4.13.17

Activity #15: Writing technical proposal during class/team time

Next Time

Finish: Finish the first draft of the proposal, submit to Dr. Beck before class begins next Tuesday

WEEK 14

Peer Review & Oral Presentations

tue 4.18.17

Due: First draft of proposal due to Dr. Beck & to class for peer review
Activity #16: Peer group review of the first drafts of the proposal documents

Next Time

Read: Chapter 21 in Technical Communication

thu 4.20.17

Return: Dr. Beck will return the proposal documents to each team
Quiz #8: Chapter 21 in Technical Communication

Next Time

Prepare: Oral presentation of the project report

WEEK 15

Oral Presentation & Proposal Prep

tue 4.25.17

During class time, each team may use the time to revise the proposal and/or work on the oral presentation of the proposal.

thu 4.27.17

During class time, each team may use the time to revise the proposal and/or work on the oral presentation of the proposal.

WEEK 16

Oral Presentations

tue 5.2.17

Oral presentations of team projects

thu 5.5.17

Oral presentations of team projects

FINAL

Examination

Before the end of the final examination hour, one team member must submit the final proposal for grading.

Each team member will additionally submit a team-member status assessment review packet on the team project/collaboration

Image credits:

Figure 1.

by Flickr user "Susanne Nilsson" - Flickr image stream: "infomastern."

Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0 via

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/infomastern/14151710281/>

Figure 2.

by Bedford/St. Martin's

Used under fair use guidelines for educational purposes