

ENGL 2338-005: Technical Writing

Spring 2018 | Dr. Worlow | PH 310

Class Time:	TR 5:30 – 6:50 PM
Office:	CARH 604
Office Hours:	T 11:00 – 1:30 PM, Th 10:00 – 1:30 PM & by appointment
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Course Description

What is technical writing? You can think of technical writing as including technical and professional writing and communications, and in this class, you will learn how to prepare several kinds of these documents. You will work on

- Resumes and cover letters
- Brochures
- Instructional materials
- Proposals

Furthermore, you will work on creating a booklet as a service learning project for the Arlington Public Library that requires you to use all of the skills you will learn in this class as you create a document providing information on resources for the homeless. Before you begin working on these projects, you will also experience a crash course in writing style that emphasizes concision and clarity. I will also give you some basic graphic design principles.

In all cases, you should focus on creating documents that keep their readers' goals and needs in mind even as you try to fulfill **your** purposes in these documents. If First Year Writing (1301 and 1302) taught you to prepare persuasive documents for community and academic audiences, then this course teaches you to prepare persuasive documents for most any other audience.

Please note that this syllabus includes a FAQ just before the **Tentative Schedule**. You will also find a **Syllabus Contract** and a form for **Permission to Use Student Writing** on the last page.

ENGL 2338: Technical Writing

This course covers the processes of researching, drafting, designing, editing, and revising technical reports, proposals, instructions, resumes, and professional correspondence for specific audiences. Prerequisites: ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302.

Student Learning Outcomes

I have adapted these in part from the [Maker Competencies List](#).

Students write in clear and concise style and can adapt their professional writing to a variety of audiences.

Students analyze rhetorical situations in terms of audience (composition, demography, expectations, needs), purposes (students'/organizations' and readers'), and occasions for writing in order to develop documents best suited to fulfilling the students' and readers' needs.



Warnings!

As students often fail to pay attention to the syllabus, I have marked certain key parts of the syllabus with a warning icon to call your attention to common problems for students in my classes.

Students apply sound document and graphic design to enhance the readability and success of professional documents.

Students produce different kinds of technical and professional documents, including correspondence, manuals, guides, brochures, and similar works.

Students practice usability testing to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, revising as necessary.

Students develop a variety of technical writing and professional communication documents.

Students apply design praxes to define, analyze, and respond to problems or situations that instigate document projects.

Students demonstrate time management best-practices by keeping project logs and team meeting minutes.

Students assemble effective teams

- To collaborate with others
- To evaluate the costs & benefits of “Doing-it-Together” vs. “Doing-it-Yourself”
- To delegate responsibilities to those team members best suited to different tasks

Students employ effective knowledge management practices

- To communicate clearly with team members and stakeholders
- To articulate technical and “maker” jargon in clear, concise language
- To document work clearly

Students develop, maintain, and follow accurate style guides/manuals in order to ensure consistency of design and writing style on projects and in accordance with organizations’ professional personae.

Required Texts & Materials

McMurrey, David. *Online Technical Writing*. This open-source technical writing textbook is available for free online. I will ask you to read sections of this textbook and also lecture about several topics in class. In addition, you will have some secondary readings on Blackboard for the Writing Style portion of the course.

I also recommend the following:

- USB flash drive
- Microsoft Word. NB: Google Docs will only be useful for the textual side of composition. It lacks the formatting features that Word has.
- Cloud storage solution for sharing team project files (OneDrive, Google Drive, etc.)
- Access to a writing handbook: [OWL at Purdue](#) is a good start, but you may want to find a good cheap used copy of a handbook, too.
- A free [Canva](#) account for helping design graphics and images. (NB: Canva is a third-party service unaffiliated with UTA.) Alternatively, if you are a Photoshop whiz, feel free to use that or another app.



NB: Save your work often, both in the labs and on your own computers! Save multiple versions of your projects as you progress, naming them with some system you can track the versions of your projects. Back up your files to multiple locations (or use a cloud storage service).

Grade Breakdown

Assignments	%	Due Dates
Quizzes & Homework Average	10%	Daily
Writing Style Exam	10%	2/6
Design Case Study (DCS)	10%	3/1
Resume & Cover Letter	15%	3/20
Team Instruction Project (TIP)	15%	4/3
Team Proposal (TP)	15%	4/19
Formal Project (FP)	15%	5/3
Participation	10%	Daily

You can find a [Google Sheet here](#) that you can copy to plug in your grades to forecast your final grade as the term progresses. Enter the relevant grade data from My Grades on Blackboard, but be sure to make your own copy of the Sheet first. Do not ask me to grant you access to the Sheet: make a copy in Google Docs.

Students should demonstrate a mastery of grammar, spelling, and punctuation (GSP) as well as the writing skills developed in Composition & Rhetoric I and II. In the professional world, you will seem unprofessional if you have these kinds of errors.

Students should keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels; see **Student Support Services** below. Your Weighted Average on Blackboard reflects your **current** overall grade.

Major Assignments

All “Projects” below will include a detailed assignment document on Blackboard in PDF format that will include a rubric. Please note that Blackboard has a “General Rubric” PDF you should consult as a checklist as you work on Projects.

Daily Grade

Your daily grade includes Blackboard quizzes, drafts of major assignments, various exercises, pop quizzes, and other forms of homework. Your Daily Grade reflects the average of these kinds of assignments.

Style Exam

The style exam tests your ability to identify different writing style problems and to then revise/fix those problems without introducing more style problems or introducing grammar, spelling, or punctuation (GSP) errors. The Style Exam includes several sentences in which you will identify the style problems and then revise the sentences. You will also choose one of two paragraphs to revise in a similar manner. If you are going to write effective documentation or any other kind of professional writing/communication, then you need clear and concise writing. **This exam will be online.**

Design Case Study (DCS)

You will create a trifold brochure for [Enchanted Rock State Natural Area](#) in Texas for a general audience. From the available information, you must decide what will generate interest in visiting Enchanted Rock for your audience and what information they would want. NB: You have a single sheet of paper, front and back—so you have to make decisions about content **and** design. This assignment is your chance to practice using document and graphic design skills and applications. You must submit a full-color, properly folded hard copy of your brochure in addition to the materials on Blackboard.

Resume & Cover Letter

You will find a job ad for a position you would be interested in applying for and for which you **currently** qualify. You will use that ad to tailor a resume and cover letter for that position.

Team Instruction Project (TIP)

Working with a team, you develop instructions for a topic of your choice (subject to my approval) for a specific audience. You will develop your instructions and engage in usability testing with your classmates.

Team Proposal (TP)

Working with the same teams, you will choose some problem relating to UTA or the DFW area, subject to my approval, and develop a proposal on how to address that problem. You will also give a presentation version of this assignment in class worth five daily grades.

Formal Project (FP)

You will work as a team on a service learning project to develop a booklet for the Arlington Public Library that provides information on resources for homeless patrons. I will share the best booklets with the APL for their possible use.

Participation

Punctual attendance and participation is vital for succeeding in this course. Accordingly, for every absence you have, I will penalize your Participation grade by 10 points to a minimum of zero (0). **During group project workshops in class, this penalty doubles to -20 points.** Students with exemplary in-class contributions may salvage penalized Participation grades at my discretion.

Other Required Documents

When you submit your final drafts for each major assignment, you must prepare and submit several other documents as part of the process for practicing technical writing and professional communications. **If you or your team fails to submit the required documents with your final drafts to the appropriate place on Blackboard, then you will suffer cumulative penalties.** For example, if your project is lacking the thumbnail sketch and style sheet, your project suffers a -15 penalty on its grade. Please note that many homework assignments require you or your team to submit provisional or tentative versions of these documents before the final draft is due. However, you must still submit **final** versions of these supplemental documents with your final drafts of the projects.

Templates & Required Documents on Blackboard

You can find templates as Word documents for these supplemental, required documents on Blackboard in a separate folder that also includes the General Rubric.

The assignment sheets include **two** copies of the list of required materials you need to submit. Use them as checklists!

Component	Penalty	Brief Description
Thumbnail Sketch	-5	The thumbnail is a rough sketch of how you envision organizing pages in your document in terms of text and visuals. You should create a thumbnail (or several) as you decide how you plan to format and layout your document.
Style Sheet or Style Guide	-10	This document catalogues the various design decisions you make regarding the layout and format of your document, including the following: typefaces, sizes, colors, and styles, including your headings and your body text; general color decisions; paper formatting; and any and all other design decisions. You will also delineate in this document your document's content decisions: How do you abbreviate? What do you abbreviate? Which terms will you use (for example, <i>patrons</i> , <i>customers</i> , or <i>the public</i>) for consistency, and so on? You should also include your image credits and references/sources at the end of this document, but you will likely also include those in your main documents. You can find a sample style guide for this syllabus in the FAQ section below.
Project Log	-10	This document lists the dates you worked on projects, when on those dates, for how long, and what you did (generally). On team projects, you will keep individual project logs and a team log tracking what you do collectively .
Minutes for Team Meetings	-10	Only on the team projects, your minutes for your team meetings tracks when you have team meetings (including in class), who is present, what courses of action do you decide upon, and who is responsible for them. Your minutes should be informal (bullet points are fine). In part, the meeting minutes provide you and your team a record of what you decided and who was responsible.
Audience Analysis	-10	This worksheet requires you to analyze your target audience for a document.
Usability Testing Report	-25	This memo reports on your usability testing for the TIP, as appropriate. You should include the date of the testing and a breakdown of the results and your team's plan to revise with those tests in mind.

Team Evaluations	—	On team projects, you should privately fill out the form for evaluating team members in which you “grade” their contributions to the project and provide your reasoning for the evaluation you offer. You will then submit your team evaluations to a private submission site on Blackboard. I do consider these evaluations when assigning individual grades for team projects.
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Expectations for Out-of-Class Study

The readings for this class typically include general concepts and strategies for technical communication, and when I lecture over those chapters, I intend to supplement and build upon the readings. Students will also work on a variety of projects and practical exercises (especially in the earlier part of the term) relating to these skills.

In regards to the main projects, many of these documents are **team**, collaborative assignments, and most projects include in-class workshop time to allow students to ask questions and to receive feedback from the instructor. In many cases, students must submit successive drafts reflecting progress on their projects, but these drafts primarily demonstrate whether you are proactively keeping up with the work. That is, most of those rough drafts and related homework assignments are completion grades.

Otherwise, students are learning and practicing how to design, to draft, to revise, and to edit technical writing and professional documents: students must necessarily entail out-of-class diligence and effort. I estimate that students will spend an **average** of 10-12 hours per week outside of class working on assignments and studying.

Class Policies

Blackboard Quizzes

After several classes, students are responsible for completing any quizzes on Blackboard covering material I lectured about in class. These quizzes constitute many of your primary Daily Grades in the course. Quiz deadlines appear on the schedule.



Extra Credit Opportunities

Opportunities for extra-credit will arise over the term. I will offer more information as the term progresses.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

I will not accept any late assignments for credit. Late work earns a zero for a grade. **No exceptions.** If you know you will miss class, then you are still responsible for submitting your assignments on time. Similarly, I will not give make-up quizzes or exams except in instances of excused university absences for the exams, but you must schedule alternative exam arrangements with me in advance of the exam dates.

Turning in Assignments to Blackboard

You will submit all major assignments in this course to Blackboard. You must save **all final drafts** of assignments submitted to Blackboard as **.pdf** (unless otherwise specified) to ensure that I am able to open them on my computer **complete with your formatting**. You may submit drafts and supplemental documents (like Style Guides) as .docx. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have saved and submitted all of your work in the correct format. **If you submit work in the wrong format, then you will receive a zero for the assignment.**

Other than the DCS, I **require** no hardcopies of final drafts. I will likely offer **some** extra credit for submitting **professional-quality full-color hardcopies** of **some** final drafts that are handed in on time. I will note those opportunities on the assignments in question.

I will not discuss any grade you receive on an assignment until at least 24 hours have passed.

When you submit your final drafts on Blackboard, please name your PDFs as follows:

- **For individual assignments:** lastname-ENGL 2338-assignment-name.PDF (for example: 0nymous-ENGL 2338-resume.pdf)
- **For team and/or group projects:** team-name-or-number-ENGL 2338-assignment-name.PDF (for example: Pediatric Pandas-ENGL 2338-TIP.pdf)

Late Enrollment Policy

Though I realize that at times enrolling in a course after the start date is unavoidable, please be advised that you are 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 participation points or any other assignments that occurred before you enrolled. If you enroll in class after the start date, then your responsibility is to contact your peers in order to catch up on the schedule and any announcements that occurred in your absence. This policy also applies to students who drop and add.

Paper Reuse Policy

You may not reuse papers from prior classes in this course or any other course that you have taken at any institution. If you feel your situation constitutes a clear or significant exception to this rule, you must discuss this situation with me prior to the due date of the assignment. Otherwise, I will consider you in violation of the provisions under **Academic Integrity**.

Attendance Policy

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. 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. Please note the following:



- As the instructor of this section, I will take attendance every class session, and absences count against your **Participation** grade.
- If you have **four unexcused absences**, I will lower your final grade by 10 points (one letter grade).
- If you have **five or more unexcused absences**, I will assign you an F for the course.

However, 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.

If you are late to class or tardy, you are responsible for coming to me immediately after class to tell me you were late. If you are very tardy, I reserve the right to count you absent nonetheless. Do not assume I marked you down if you feel unsure.

Missed Class

If you miss a class, do **not** come to me to ask what you missed. I recommend you exchange emails with your classmates, so you can find out what we did in class when you were absent. Please note that missing class **does** affect your **Participation Grade**.

Excused Absences

The only excused absences recognized by the University of Texas at Arlington are those wherein a student is representing the university in an official capacity and those religious holidays the student informs the instructor of at the beginning of the term **in writing. These absences will not count as excused without appropriate documentation.** Athletes and other students who will miss class for an official university activity **must advise me in writing at least 48 hours in advance of the absence.** Notice only lets the instructor know that a student will be missing class; this notice does not extend due dates for assignments or allow the student to make up missed quizzes. Students must make arrangements with the instructor at least 48 hours prior to the absence for turning in the work. Expect no guaranteed extensions.

If you are an armed forces reservist and you are called to active duty or otherwise have a schedule conflict, I need to see documentation in a timely manner that acknowledges your service commitment.

Classroom Behavior

Class sessions are short and require your full attention. You should work on whatever in-class activity we are working on that day. **If I find you working on work for other classes, surfing the web, texting, or updating your Whatever account, I will dismiss you from the class and count you as absent for the day.**

Remove all earpieces while in class. Store materials from other classes, reading not related to this class, bulky bags, and other distractions so that you can concentrate on the ENGL 2338 readings and discussions each day. Bring book(s) and e-reserve readings (heavily annotated and carefully read) to every class. Students should participate respectfully in class, should listen to other class members, and should comment appropriately. I also expect consideration and courtesy from students. Address your instructors appropriately, and communicate 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 asked to leave class and/or be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

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 www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/.

Classroom Visitors

Only students officially enrolled in this section may attend class meetings. Students may not bring guests (children, spouses, friends, family) to class unless an academic request has been submitted and approved by the instructor well in advance of the proposed class visit. Children may not attend class as visitors at any time

Academic Integrity

Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses must 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. 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 indicate correctly where you are making use of the work of another or by colluding with another to prepare assignments. You are responsible 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. Remember your First Year Writing courses and consult a writing handbook for more information on quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and cit-

ing properly to avoid plagiarism. If you still do not understand, **ask your instructor**. I will refer all students caught plagiarizing or cheating to the Office of Student Conduct.

Disability Accommodation

UT 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), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. 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 disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification **in the form of a letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: The Office for Students with Disabilities, ([OSD](#)), or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found [here](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services ([CAPS](#)) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [here](#).

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 [here](#) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or by [email](#).

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 withdraw officially if they do not plan to attend after registering. 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.

Restroom Breaks

- Students may leave the class and return without asking permission for restroom breaks.
- Be polite and quiet.

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 [here](#).

University Tutorial & Supplemental Instruction (Ransom Hall 205):

UTSI offers a variety of academic support services for undergraduate students, including: 60-minute one-on-one tutoring sessions, Start Strong Freshman tutoring program, and Supplemental Instruction. Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm. For more information visit www.uta.edu/utsi or call 817-272-2617.

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. Students can drop in, or check the schedule of available peer tutors at www.uta.edu/IDEAS, or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center offers FREE tutoring in 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Register and make appointments [online](#). Classroom visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services.

If your grammar or mechanics or paragraph writing skills need work, I strongly suggest you work with the Writing Center. While they cannot offer you help on how your instructions are working, they can help you with your writing in general.

[The Library's 2nd floor Academic Plaza](#) offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library's hours of operation.

Student Feedback Survey

At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are 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 via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/sfs.

Final Review Week

For semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit:

1. Exit the classroom
2. Walk towards the stairwells at either end of the hall.
3. Take the stairs down until you reach the bottom floor.
4. Exit the building through the glass doors just past the bottom step.

When exiting the building during an emergency, you 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 arrange to assist individuals with disabilities.

Electronic Communication Policy

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 www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

However, please note the following requirements and guidelines regarding email communications for this course:

- Include ENGL 2338-007 and a detailed topic in the subject line of all emails. **I will not open emails that do not include a correct subject line.** (For example: *ENGL 2338-007: Question about Resume.*)
- Sign your first and last name at the bottom of each email, so I know who you are.
- I check email daily, except on the weekends. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours. I will not check email after 5 PM.
- If you email me after noon on Friday or over the weekend, you will likely not hear back from me until Monday.

Conferences and Questions

The office hours indicated on the syllabus are 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, but please note I am only on campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Syllabus and Schedule Changes

Instructors try to make their syllabuses as complete as possible; however, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies/assignments. Instructors reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. Students will learn of any major changes in writing.

Headphones and Music

I do allow students to listen to their own music on headphones during **workshop portions** of the class as long as the volume is low enough that students can hear me if I need to bring something to their attention.

Computer Etiquette

While we will be using the computers in the classroom to complete both homework assignments and papers, you must use good computer etiquette during class time. You may not hack, surf the net, send/read personal emails, or complete work for other courses during class time. Failure to adhere to these rules will result in dismissal from the classroom and will count as a zero on any daily work for that class day.

Students may bring their own laptops or tablets to class, but the student is then responsible for having all the software needed for the course and for using the software.

Team Projects

The team projects for this course require students to work in teams of 3-5 persons to collaborate on documents. Teams will create team contracts for handling students who fail to do their work as well for setting team expectations. If a team member fails to complete their part of the work on time, the rest of the team **must** complete the work or risk a lower grade; however, the team can vote (if written into the contract) to remove the team member from the team. The removed team member will then be responsible for doing an entire project individually, and the project will be due on the same day as the team project.

Students will keep minutes of their team meetings, and they will turn in a final product to the instructor on the due date. If the final product fails to meet the assignment requirements, all team members will fail the assignment, thus team members must work proactively to complete the work on schedule even if someone fails to do their part. The reason for these strict rules is to teach the students to respect deadlines and complete projects on time with a team (and sometimes in spite of the team).

When you submit the final drafts of your team projects, you will also have the opportunity to submit a private team member evaluation, and I do take into account these evaluations and the consensus view of the team about its members when assigning **individual** grades.

Removed team members can petition to join their original team or a new team, but the removed team member must compose a formal application letter and participate in an interview moderated by Dr. Worlow with the petitioned team. That team will then elect whether or not to accept the individual who will be subject to that team's existing contract.

NB: I double the penalty to your Participation grade for missing class on team workshop days to -20 per absence.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

FAQ on Class Policies

Q. Can I turn in late work?

A. No. If your work is late, you get a zero.

Q. What if it is a couple of minutes late?

A. Tough. Do not wait until the last minute.

Q. Can I revise for a better grade?

A. No. Turn it in right the first time. Besides, in my experience, students don't "re-vise" so much as fix a comma or two and call that a "revision." So no, you can't revise.

Q. What if my assignment is too short/fails to meet the minimum length required?

A. Then it earns a zero.

Q. What if my assignment is longer than the listed maximum length?

A. If you are a little over the maximum, then do not worry about it. If you are well over the maximum (for example, 10 pages rather than 5), then I am only reading and grading until page 5.

Q. Can I have an Incomplete?

A. No.

Q. Can I do anything to get a better grade?

A. Do the work in the first place the first time around. If we are approaching the end of the term and you are worried about passing, then you probably should have done more/done a better job/gotten help sooner. If I have already offered extra credit, then do that, but do not expect to change magically a failing grade into a passing one.

Q. But I need [some particular grade] for financial aid/to graduate/to get into [some program]!

A. Maybe you should have done better before this point.

Q. How many absences can I have?

A. If you have four unexcused absences, then you suffer a -10 penalty to your final grade (one letter grade). If you have five or more unexcused absences, you will fail the course. Also, I penalize your Participation grade for every absence you have.

Q. Can I go to the restroom?

A. Yes. Be discrete and do not disrupt class.



Q. Can you look at my draft for me and give me feedback?

A. Sure. Bring it by my office **as a hard copy or email it to me ahead of time**. Be aware: My job is not to edit/copyedit/revise your work. I will point to issues or give you guidance on how to improve your draft, but I do not give out a formula to students for specific grades. That is, I do not say, *If you do this and this and this with your draft, you will earn an A*.

Q. But you said my draft looked fine! Why did I get [grade I do not want]?

A. Because your work earned that grade. Do not mistake “You’re on the right track” or “This looks okay” for “This gets an A.” A *D* is passing. A *C* reflects **average** work.

Q. But I worked so hard on this!

A. Effort does not equal competency or success.

Q. But I submitted my assignment to Blackboard/I had a Blackboard issue!

A. If it is before the deadline, try using a different browser or another computer. If that does not work, email it to me **before the deadline as an attachment**. If it is after the deadline, start thinking about how to avoid having this problem on the next assignment. If a quiz has an issue, then take a screenshot of the error and contact me before class.

Q. Do you drop any grades?

A. I typically drop one of your lowest Daily Grades at the end of the term.

Q. I was late to class! What should I do?

A. Come to me at the end of class to let me know you were present but late. Do not **assume** I marked you down. If you came in very late, then I will likely mark you absent nonetheless.

Q. What does it take to earn an A on an assignment?

A. For technical writing projects, it should demonstrate excellent writing style (including few **if any** passive constructions or other style issues) and excellent document/graphic design based upon the principles taught in class.

Q. Can I have a letter of recommendation?

A. Two things: Firstly, you cannot have a recommendation until after the class is over. I want to see if you are the kind of student I feel confident and comfortable in recommending for something. Also, I might have something to **talk about** by that point. I have used students’ work and projects in my classes as specific examples to **justify** why I recommend students for scholarships, academic programs, etc. Secondly, I only write letters of recommendation for students who earned A’s in the course overall.

Q. Where is your office? When are your office hours?

A. Look at the cover page of this syllabus.

Q. Do you post your PowerPoints or lecture notes on Blackboard?

A. Because I am experimenting with an open source textbook and relying on lecturing about technical writing, I will post versions of my PowerPoints on Blackboard that will be available after class.

FAQ on Sources & Citation

Q. Can I use Wikipedia, Ask Jeeves, About.com, Ask.com, Metafilter, Reddit, or some other general internet resource as a source in my paper/project?

A. No. You should be searching for reputable sources and have a good understanding of what reputable sources **are** and which are appropriate to the project or discipline within which you are working.

Q. What citation style should I use for my projects/assignments?

A. For Technical Writing, choose a citation style and stick to it on particular projects. Note that choice on the Style Sheet. You will have a Works Cited, References, or Bibliography section as appropriate to the style you choose. Note that you can also specify **exceptions** to the style. For example, MLA wants you to double-space; I want you to never double-space unless in **very particular** circumstances. You would note that exception in your Style Sheet.

Please note that the library can direct you to more information about those specific styles. I recommend you **avoid** using Citation Machine and similar web services to generate your Works Cited entries unless you are working with printed, hardcopy sources like books and journal articles.



FAQ on Technical Writing Projects & Documents

Q. Do I need to submit a hard copy of this assignment?

A. Only the DCS. You **will** submit all major documents/projects as Adobe Acrobat PDF files on Blackboard.

Q. Can I center [this thing on a document]?

A. No. I will count off if you center **anything** unless specified in a Style Guide.

Q. Can I use all-caps for this heading or warning?

A. No. I will count off if you do so.



Q. What is the difference between a serif and sans serif typeface/font?

A. The body text—like this answer and its question—appears in a serif font called “Georgia.” Georgia is an **example** of a serif font. A **serif** itself is one of the flourishes and strokes at the ends of characters. Look at Figure 1. Notice how the *G* on the left has little bits at the ends of the character that the right *G* lacks. Those “bits” are serifs, and if a typeface has serifs, then it is a serif typeface. In addition, serif typefaces typically have varying stroke thickness on the characters. Notice how the left *G* has a thinner stroke along the top of the character compared to the left side of the *G*.



Figure 1: A serif and sans serif *G*

In contrast, the *G* on the right lacks serifs, so it is a **sans serif** font (*sans* is French for *without*, thus *without serif*). In particular, I have written that *G* in “Arial,” an **example** of a sans serif font. Also, notice how the stroke thickness tends to be uniform rather than in the *G* on the left. Sans serif fonts tend to have that feature.

NB: **Serif** and **sans serif** fonts are broad **categories** of fonts. Individual fonts will be serif or sans serif. For example, good serif fonts include Times New Roman, Book Antiqua, Goudy, and Caslon. Good sans serif fonts include Arial, Tahoma, Trebuchet, and Helvetica.

Q. When should I use serif and sans serif fonts?

A. It depends. For texts meant for online reading, sans serif is probably better. For printed materials, serif is probably better **for the body** (use sans serif for headings). Ultimately, it comes down to

- How **readable** the typefaces are
- How well they **pair together**
- What persona the font choices convey for the document and organization and audience in question

Q. What color should my headings be in?

A. Your headings should be in a different color than your body text (which should typically be black or at least high contrast and very readable given your background). That said, your headings should be in a distinct but **easily read** color that stands out from the page and the black body text. For example, this syllabus uses UTA blue (R 0/G 100/B 177) and Arial for the headings while the body is black Georgia (12 point).

FAQ on Project Logs, Team Meeting Minutes, and Style Sheets

Q. What goes into a Project Log?

A. A project log should record the days you worked on a project, the times on those days you worked, and how many hours you worked on that day, and it should also indicate what general activity you performed during that time for the project. You can find a simple template Word document on Blackboard that you can use and adapt. Project logs show me (and your team) how much time you put in on the project.

Q. What goes into team meeting minutes?

A. You should record the time, date, and location of the team meeting (including meetings in class), who was present, and what business or decisions you made. You should also note action items (things that the team needs to do) complete with who is responsible for them. These minutes serve as records for your team's activities, decisions, and processes.

Q. What goes into a style sheet?

A. Your style sheet records every style and formatting decision you make for a document/project. This information includes what fonts you use. For example, this syllabus's style sheet would include:



Cover Page:

- Main title in Arial 48-point white with black outline
- Semester line in Arial 20-point white with black outline
- Other information on cover in Arial bold 14-point white with black outline, with information after colons indented to 2½" from margin
- Cover image: photo of PH 310 computer keyboard (taken by instructor) with alt-text "Keyboard from Preston Hall 310 (2015)"

Margins: 1" on all sides

Body Font:

- Georgia 12-point black, ½" indent from margin, full justification with automatic hyphenation
- Block quotes indent a further ½" and use 10-point size with blank line before and after

File name format: OCR A Extended 12 point black

Headings:

- Heading 1: Arial 18-point UTA blue, black border on bottom
- Heading 2: Arial 16-point UTA blue

Footer: on pages after cover page, "Technical Writing" on left, semester (term year) in middle, page number on right, Arial 12-point UTA blue, with black horizontal line above

Accent Bar: UTA orange (R 245/G 128/B 38) accent bar on left margin (7/8" width) on all pages after cover

Tentative Schedule: 1-point black table borders. Dates in Arial 12-point. Class session date format: number of month/day. Bold Due items.

Notes:

- FAQ section starts questions with “Q:” and has questions in bold. Answers begin with “A:” in normal body.
- Top-level bulleted lists have text indented further ½” from body with bullets ¼” to left, and nested bullets begin a further ½” further indented.
- Use filled circles for all bullets.
- Include a blank line between paragraphs and lists.
- Use warning icon (public domain image: yellow image with black !) as necessary, with alt-text “WARNING icon”).
- Bold for emphasis. Italics per MLA title usage and when referring to words as words.

An accurate style sheet should reflect all of that information and more. A style sheet helps keep you consistent as you design and draft a document, and you should be able to share your style sheet with a team so that everyone formats their documents **accurately** and **consistently**.



Tentative Schedule

- All readings are due the day indicated below, along with any quizzes, which you should complete on Blackboard **before** class.
- **All quizzes and homework (submitted on Blackboard unless otherwise noted) are due by the beginning of class on the day indicated below.**
- All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted.
- All readings come from the textbook unless otherwise specified.
- Unless otherwise stated, you should submit all **HW** assignments below as Word .doc or Adobe PDF files on Blackboard. **If you fail to do so, then you will earn a zero for the assignment.**
- Unless otherwise stated, you should submit all **final** drafts on Blackboard as an **Adobe PDF file** and submit the “deliverables” per the assignment’s rubric and assignment sheet.
- 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.

January 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Introduction • What is Technical Writing? • Audience Analysis and Rhetorical Situations
January 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Style Reading (Chapter 7) & Quiz due at beginning of class • Writing Style Part 1 • Syllabus Quiz Due • Grammar Quiz Due • Syllabus Contract & Permissions Due
January 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Style Exercises Part 1 Due (budget 3 hours to do) • We will go over them in class!
January 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Style Reading (Chapter 8) & Quiz due at beginning of class • Writing Style Part 2
January 30	Writing Style Exercises Part 2 Due (budget 3 hours to do)
February 1	Practice Style Exam Due (discuss in class)
February 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Style Exam Due (before class) • Document Design Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Common Page Design ◦ Headings ◦ Bulleted and Numbered Lists ◦ Notices ◦ Graphics ◦ Highlighting and Emphasis ◦ Report Design Overview • Designing Documents (Quiz by 11:59 PM)
February 8	Introduction to Graphic Design (Quiz by 11:59 PM)
February 13	Word & Canva Orientation (in-class grade)
February 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails, Memos, and Letters (Quiz by 11:59 PM) • Good & Bad News in Correspondence • Letters from a Nut • Assign Design Case Study (DCS)
February 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCS Workshop • Thumbnails (in-class) • Audience Analysis Due • Tentative Style Guide Due (by end of class)
February 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Case Studies Workshop • HW: First Draft Due
February 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCS Workshop • HW: Second Draft Due

March 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCS Final Draft Due (hardcopy in class) • Resumes & Job Applications (Quiz Due by 11:59 PM) • Assign Resume & Cover Letter
March 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HW: Cover Letter Draft Due • Volunteers get +2 points on the final draft if you submit and expressly state in the comments that you volunteer your draft for the workshop. Submit by 12 PM this day to gain this extra credit. • Cover Letter Workshop
March 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HW: Resume Draft Due • Volunteers get +2 points on the final draft if you submit and expressly state in the comments that you volunteer your draft for the workshop. Submit by 12 PM this day to gain this extra credit. • Resume Draft Workshop
March 13-15	Spring Break
March 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume & Cover Letter Final Draft Due • Instructions Reading • Instructions (Quiz Due by 11:59 PM) • Assign TIP and Formal Project • Team Contracts Due (in-class)
March 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIP Workshop • TIP Style Guide Due • TIP Thumbnail Due (have it ready in-class)
March 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIP Workshop • HW: Written & Tested Instructions & Draft Due
March 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIP Workshop & Usability Testing • Have a working draft of your TIP ready to test in class • Progress Report #1 for FP (Due by 11:59 PM)
April 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIP Final Draft Due • Proposals Reading • Proposals & Progress Reports (Quiz Due by 11:59 PM) • Assign Team Proposal (TP)
April 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP Workshop • TP Style Sheet Due
April 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP Workshop • Discuss Presentations • HW: Prototype Due
April 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP Workshop • HW: TP Draft 1 Due • Progress Report #2 for FP (Due by 11:59 PM)

April 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP Workshop • HW: TP Draft 2 Due • Peer Review
April 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP Final Draft Due • TP Workshop for Presentation Version
April 24	Presentations
April 26	Presentations & FP Workshop
May 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FP Workshop • FP Draft Due
May 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class does not meet • FP Final Draft Due by 11:59 PM
Finals	This class has no final exam.

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. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381

Beyond This Class: Technical Writing

Dr. Worlow teaches Technical Writing (and more), and the Department offers a [Certificate in Technical Writing and Professional Communications](#). You might want to go check it out: technical writing offers any student a good skillset that helps distinguish and market themselves when on the job market.

go!
TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL
WRITING CERTIFICATE

Department of English

Technical writers often begin their career as research assistants or specialists; additional experience may bring opportunities to work on more complex projects. Prospects for advancement include positions such as senior technical writer and technical publications manager. Some technical writers operate on freelance contracts, working for multiple clients.

CREATE


TOP 10 STATES HIRING TECHNICAL WRITERS


1. Minnesota
2. Utah
3. Nebraska
4. Michigan
5. Florida
6. Massachusetts
7. New York
8. Maryland
9. Oregon
10. California

Source: *Forbes*
18 August 2015

OUTLOOK FOR EMPLOYMENT

Employment of technical writers is projected to grow by 10% through 2024, exceeding the average rate of 7% for all occupations, according to May 2016 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).





Syllabus Contract

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

Print Name

Signature

Date

Permission to Use Student Writing

Student's Name_____

Class Number and Section: ENGL 2338-005_____

Instructor Name_____

___ (initial) 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 my name will be removed before being shared with other students.

___ (initial) I give permission for my Formal Project to be shared with the Arlington Public Library for their possible use.

Student's signature_____

UTA ID_____ Date_____