ENGLISH 2338.015 TECHNICAL WRITING

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Textbook

Laura J. Gurak & John M. Lannon, *Strategies for Technical Communication in the Workplace*, 3rd edition, Pearson (2016). (You may use the E-text or the print version.)

A UTA email account that you check at least once a day.

About This Course

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

Student Learning Outcomes

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

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

Assignments and Grades

Assignment Overview

To complete this course, you will submit four major writing projects, post to weekly discussion forums, and complete two exercises. Each assignment is designed to give you practical experience in specific areas of technical writing. For detailed description of each assignment, download assignment directions from Blackboard.

Project 1: Audience Analysis Memo. This assignment asks you to compare and contrast the primary and secondary audiences of two Websites. You will write a memo to your instructor analyzing both Websites and their audiences and explain the persuasive strategies each Website uses to serve its audience's needs.

Project 2: Professional Job Application. This assignment asks you to write a job application letter and create a resume for a real job opening for which you are qualified.

Project 3: Instructions. This assignment asks you to write a set of instructions on how to complete a specific task. You must write your instructions to a specific target audience.

Project 4: Process Descriptions. This assignment requires you to select a technical process and write a description of it. You must clearly understand the distinction between a *process description* and a set of *instructions*.

Weekly Discussion Forums. You are required to participate in twelve graded online discussions. Participation in online discussions involves two distinct activities: an initial response to a posted question and at least two subsequent comments on classmates' responses.

Exercises. You are required to complete two exercises. For more information on the exercises, see the lesson pages for Week 4 and Week 7.

Grade Distribution

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows. Consult the course Calendar for assignment due dates.

- Project 1: Audience Analysis Memo 10%
- Project 2: Professional Job Application 15%
- Project 3: Instructions 15%
- Project 4: Process Descriptions 15%
- Peer Reviews (Posting and Reviewing Drafts) 16%
- Weekly Discussion Forums 24%
- Exercises 5%
- Total: 100%

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

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

At the end of the semester, we will round up your averages from the hundredths place, so that an 89.46% becomes an A.

Strategies for Success

Consider the following study tips for success:

1. Read carefully the entire Syllabus, making sure that all aspects of the course are clear to you and that you have all the materials required for the course.
2. Read the FAQ section in Blackboard.
3. Begin each week by consulting the Course Calendar. The calendar provides an overview of each week's topics, required readings, and lists due dates for submitting assignments and completing exercises.
4. Review the weekly "Assignment Directions" folders thoroughly; they outline what you need to do each week and include locations to participate in discussion posts and to submit assignments.
5. Check your UTA email daily. This is how your instructor will get in touch with you, and you are responsible for reading and being familiar with the information in the emails I send.
6. Contact your instructor if you have a situation that affects your participation in class. You are responsible for keeping track of the due dates.

Rules and Protocols

Submission Policy

- You must complete all assignments by the due dates. **No late work is accepted in this course except in the most unusual circumstances.** (Should you have an **emergency** and need to turn in work late, contact me. I **may** decide to allow you to submit your work late with a daily point deduction [10 points per day]. Any work that is turned in 5 days past the due date will not be accepted.).
- It is your responsibility to submit your work on time and ensure that the correct document is submitted to Blackboard properly. Failure to do so will result in a late penalty or zero.
- In order to check if an essay/assignment is submitted correctly, click on the "Grades" tab located on the left-hand side of the course home page and look for the green exclamation point icon in the appropriate assignment column (Note: for discussion activities and peer

review, a paper and pencil icon or a colored sphere confirms your submission). If an exclamation point is not present after your essay/assignment is submitted, you should resubmit following the steps above to make sure the essay/assignment is properly submitted. Also, view the document you recently submitted (i.e., open the file saved in Blackboard) to ensure that you have uploaded the correct file.

- Please be aware that technical errors in Blackboard are very rare and tech support has sophisticated tools to determine if students have actually submitted assignments or posted to discussion boards.

Plagiarism

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

Academic Integrity

All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code: *I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code. Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center, Room 411 in the Central Library, offers guidance to UT-Arlington students on writing assignments. Appointments are for 45 minutes. Students must register with the

Writing Center before making appointments and should bring a printed copy of their assignment sheet, any instructor or peer comments, and their draft to the appointment. You may register and schedule appointments and find many other valuable resources and information online at http://www.uta.edu/owl. Please note that Writing Center consultants assist students with writing development, from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas or revising an early draft, to polishing a final document. However, the Writing Center is not a document editing service; consultants will not identify or correct every grammar or spelling error, nor will they rewrite student assignments. They focus on improving writing skills and helping students become better editors of their own writing, which includes learning to identify and correct their own grammar, punctuation and editing errors. In addition to one-on-one consultations, the Writing Center will offer grammar workshops periodically throughout the semester. During these workshops students will focus on identifying and correcting one of the most common grammar errors and then will participate in a Consultant-led revising and editing session. For more information on these sessions, please see the Writing Center calendar at http://www.uta.edu/owl.

Drop Policy

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

Americans with Disabilities Act

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

Student Support Services

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information

related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Electronic Communication

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

Student Feedback Survey

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.