ENGL393 Policies and Procedures

I. Class Description and Objectives
The intent of ENGL393 is to prepare you for the type of professional communication you are likely to engage in during your first post-college jobs and beyond. This course focuses on technical communication – learning how to present specialized information in an accessible way to a variety of different audiences, but audiences who, no doubt, will expect clarity, accuracy, and professionalism from you.

This class stresses the key skills that highlight a successful professional technical communicator. Specifically, we focus on the process of writing (including the planning, drafting, and revising stages) and look carefully at the work that goes into the final polished product. As collaboration is often a key part of the professional realm, you’ll spend much of the semester working with your classmates, even in this asynchronous online version of the course.

In all, you can expect to:

- Analyze a variety of professional rhetorical situations and produce appropriate texts in response.
- Understand the stages required to produce competent, professional writing through planning, drafting, revising, and editing.
- Identify and implement the appropriate research methods for each writing task.
- Practice the ethical use of sources and the conventions of citation appropriate to each genre.

IX. Grades and How they are Determined
Your semester grade will be based on a variety of assignments, some individual and some collaborative, accounting for approximately 25+ pages of final, polished writing (approximately 6,250 words). The specific breakdown is as follows, although these percentages are subject to change during the course of the semester. All changes will be announced on this course site, via email, and/or during class time:

Major Assignments: 70%
Includes:
1. Extended Definition: 15%
2. Proposal: 25%
3. Final Project: 30%

Draft Submission/Peer Review: 20%
Includes:
- Submitting major assignment drafts as directed on time
- Completing all assigned peer reviews

Quizzes/Activities/Other: 10%
Includes:
- Quizzes and any other activities/exercises

Each major assignment will be graded using a rubric, providing point distribution and comments. Your grades on
Write for the intended readers of a text, and design or adapt texts to audiences who may differ in their familiarity with the subject matter.

Demonstrate competence in Standard Written English, including grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, coherence, and document design (including the use of the visual) and be able to use this knowledge to revise texts.

Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

II. Course Personnel
Your Instructor is Scott Moses.
Email address: pmoses1@umd.edu.
Office: 1220B Tawes Hall

III. Course Communication
I will send all course-wide communication through the course website/email and announcements.

IV. Required Course Materials
1. There is no required text that you need to purchase for this course. Among the many online resources we will be using, two of the most useful sites include David McMurray's Online Technical Writing (Links to an external site.) and Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL) (Links to an external site.).
2. We will use the university's course management system ELMS/Canvas to manage all course activities and resources throughout the semester. To ensure you have reliable access to the internet, find more on the UMD wireless network here.
3. In addition to the resources provided on this site, you will most likely benefit from having access to an updated grammar/style guidebook to help you identify proper citations, and to assist with your grammar, diction, and syntax issues (e.g., The Everyday Writer (Links to an external site.) or A Writer's Reference (Links to an external site.).)

Each major assignment will adhere to the following general standards:

A papers: exhibit excellence & correctness expected in professional environment (what a future boss might expect as a final draft)
- A+ 97+
- A 94 to 96.9
- A- 90 to 93.9

B papers: exhibit competency in subject matter but still need revision (ready to be shared with colleagues, but still needs extra polishing)
- B+ 87 to 89.9
- B 84 to 86.9
- B- 80 to 83.9

C papers: meet most basic requirements but require extensive revision (a first complete draft: whether or not this is actually your first draft, these submissions appear unedited and unproofread)
- C+ 77 to 79.9
- C 74 to 76.9
- C- 70 to 73.9

D/F papers: do not meet requirements/are inappropriate and unprofessional
- D+ 67 to 69.9
- D 64 to 66.9
- D- 60 to 63.9

***If you do not turn in every major assignment, you will not earn a passing grade for this course.***

X. Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge
The University has a student administered Code of Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge, which prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without permission of both instructors, buying papers, handing in fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the
V. Minimum Technical Requirements
In this asynchronous online course, it is imperative that you are comfortable using an updated internet browser and accessing/using online resources including digital media and applications.

Moreover, you will need a working microphone on your computer or smartphone to complete some activities.

You can access the UMD Division of Technology's Help Desk here.

VI. Attendance Policies
Because this is an asynchronous online course, there are no designated class meeting days, in class or online. In this case, it is important to keep up with all assignment deadlines in order to receive full credit throughout the semester.

For some weeks there will be optional online meetings, but if you are unable to attend you may watch the presentation on your own time.

There will be two optional conferences during the semester, which will be scheduled as conveniently as possible.

VII. Technical Communication: The Literal Side
As upper-level college students, you've probably already experienced several different types of communication. In the electronic realm, for instance, you have realized that the texts you send to your friends from home contain a different level of formality than the emails you'll send to potential employers and future co-workers. In this class, we'll practice becoming adept at communicating with each other in a professional manner. In other words, emails sent to your classmates and instructor will use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as proper salutations. Emails that follow these guidelines will be answered in a timely fashion during normal business hours. Please include “ENGL393” and your section number in your subject line.

VIII. Written Assignments
Assignments are expected to be submitted electronically, by the stated time, using the ELMS/Canvas space.

XII. Course Evaluations
Your participation in CourseEvalUM is your responsibility as a member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of University teaching and learning. CourseEvalUM will be open at www.courseevalum.umd.edu for you to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester.

In addition, the Professional Writing Program uses its own evaluation for each of its courses, which will be distributed by the end of the semester.

XIII. Privacy Policy
For the UMD Division of Technology statement on Privacy, please go here.

XIV. General Note
To succeed at Technical Writing requires a mastery of the process of writing: learning and developing skills that will assist you in communicating highly specialized content to a variety of audiences. For most of you, this class will take a significant amount of time and energy, and you may have inferred from these pages that we have high expectations from you. However, it is likely that an effort on your part to meet – and exceed – the requirements outlined will successfully prepare you for professional communication in the world beyond our classroom.
For more on submitting Assignments, go here (Links to an external site.).

Please plan document submission in advance because late submissions due to technical difficulties – such as computer failure, corrupted documents, or files that don’t follow exact naming directions – will not be excused. Late work posted electronically will be subject to a grade penalty of up to 10 points per day.

Every new draft of an assignment should be just that, new. All editing advice/notation should remain only in previous drafts. Final drafts in particular should be free of all earlier editing and should represent your very best, polished work.