

**Syllabus for
ENGL 393: Technical Writing
Spring 2017**

*We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.
—Ernest Hemingway*

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11:00 – 12:15

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Textbooks and Materials

The required texts for this course are:

- Core Grammar for College: <http://coregrammarforcollege.com/>
Check on Canvas for purchase and login information.
- *Technical Writing Principles, Strategies, and Readings* by Diana C. Reep (ISBN 9780205721504).
You may choose either the 7th or 8th edition.

Resources

Several additional resources are highly recommended for their usefulness:

- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> - Purdue's OWL provides online content for grammar, common mistakes in writing, and resources such as various style guides.
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/OWLPurdue> - for those of you who like the visual and auditory component of material, Purdue OWL has produced video training.

Communication

The most effective way to communicate with me is through email. Please note that responses to email will be made in a timely manner but will not be instantaneous. I respond to email and phone calls during standard business hours, which are Monday through Friday from 8 - 4. The phone is my personal cell phone, so please be very judicious in calling me. I strongly recommend if you need to meet with me that we talk before or after class and/or during office hours listed.

Electronic Devices

If this classroom is not a computer lab, you need to provide your own computer for class time. This is particularly important for completion of in-class assignments. If you do not have access to a personal laptop, you may rent one, at no cost, from McKeldin Library on a class-by-class basis or for the whole semester.

That being said, studies have shown that note taking is most effective when hand-written. My suggestion is you take notes by hand and use a laptop for responding to in class assignments.

All cell phones and other electronic devices such as smart phones; tablets, etc. should be switched off before class begins. You should not expect to communicate with anyone outside the classroom *during* class. Classroom and personal computers may not be used on non-assignment related activities during class. Any unauthorized use of electronic devices for non-class/assignment activity will be held against your class participation since you are not participating in class when using such devices for non-class related contact and you are likely distracting other students as well.

If you are in an emergency situation (i.e. medical or family emergency), let me know before class and exit the room when responding to a call or text of an emergency nature.

Appendix A: Course Objectives

Technical writing requires the writer to confidently and effectively combine technical expertise with a clearly understood set of objectives for providing information to a particular audience for an intended outcome. This course is the opportunity for you to develop analytical, drafting, revising, reviewing, and collaborative skills that are needed to succeed as a technical writer.

My objectives of this class are to help students:

- Identify the skills, processes, and products typically considered technical writing.
- Develop, practice, and achieve technical writing skills so that you will feel confident in applying them in your professional lives.
- Learn to work collaboratively as well as individually so that you contribute to successful communications.
- Use technology effectively to support the analysis, planning, and revision of your writing.
- Develop a professional, responsible, and ethical attitude towards your communications.

The Professional Writing Program defines additional course goals to strengthen writing skills and prepare students for the range of writing expected of them after graduation. On completion of a Professional Writing course, students will be able 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.
- 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 visuals) and be able to use this knowledge to revise material.
- Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

Class Philosophy

This class is designed to allow students to develop new skills in technical communication. This is accomplished through learning about audience, choosing an appropriate document/communication format, and write content that meets the audience's needs in tone and content. For students to develop the skills necessary to write professional quality documents, a series of assignments are completed in a scaffold like manner with each having a higher level of expectation. This class provides an environment that gives students an opportunity to take risks, make mistakes, receive comments from the instructor and peers, strengthen weaknesses, and ultimately create pieces worthy of a professional portfolio in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

Canvas

This class uses online resources for:

- Posting the class assignments, examples, discussion notes, and updated syllabus.
- Posting assignments for grading.
- Sharing files for team assignments.
- Participating in online classes.

Assignment Requirements

Assignment sheets with detailed instructions concerning collaboration; format, content, delivery, and other pertinent assignment information are provided at the beginning of the semester as well as throughout the semester. Additional assignment sheets may be made available during the semester. All assignment sheets will be distributed electronically and discussed in class.

In general, assignments should be turned in hard copy for grades (that means in person handed to me or put in my mailbox in Tawes by the deadline). At times, documents will be sent to me electronically. The assignment sheets will detail the format of the assignment – PAY ATTENTION as it will affect your grade.

The standard format for naming files is: username_assignmentname_date unless otherwise stated. For example: komorris_assign1_011506 (i.e. the date is two characters for month, two characters for day, and two characters for year). Canvas will attach your user ID to the beginning of the file name when downloaded.

CAUTION:

I will not rename files. Files that are not named according to the criteria set here are considered late. See *Late Assignments Section*.

Graded Assignments

The assignments that are graded are your opportunity to demonstrate how well you understand the concepts of technical writing and how well you can apply those concepts to various situations. The Professional Writing Program requirements include a minimum of 25 pages of “original” writing (6,500 words). ***Students may not submit papers written for other courses to fulfill a PWP assignment.*** The value for each assignment of the overall grade is as follows:

Assignment	Value	
1	Reflective Writing – Course Goals	2.5%
2	Professional Goal Setting (Reflective)	10%
3	Ethics Challenge	10%
	Core Grammar for College	15%
4	Description Email	5%
5	Instructions - 5% presentation/10% document	15%
	Discussions - Reading Responses	5%
6	Final Project Memorandum	5%
7	Final Project Oral Presentation	5%
8	Final Project Report	15%

9	Reflective Writing – End of Semester Personal Evaluation	2.5%
	Participation/homework assignments	10%
	Total	100%

Revisions

Because technical writing is interactive, I encourage you to revise work during the course of the semester. Revising a paper cannot be done solely to improve your grade. Your grade will be incrementally affected for narrow changes; a greater impact on your grade will require a greater effort to rethink, redesign, and refine your finished product. To turn in a revision for re-grading, you *must* prepare a memorandum outlining specific outcomes you hope to achieve with your revision. This must be attached to your revised document along with the original graded one. The date for resubmission may not be any longer than two weeks after you receive your grade and comments back. The exception for this due date is any assignments due in the last two weeks of class. Those assignments must be resubmitted no later than the due date of the final project.

There are three assignments that cannot be revised: the oral presentations and the final project. However, I encourage peer editing of drafts as well as discussion of those drafts with myself. Another exception to revisions is late assignments. If an assignment is handed in late, the assignment cannot be revised.

If a team assignment is selected for revision, there are two options: 1) a single individual may redo the assignment and only that person's grade will be affected or 2) the whole team may work on the assignment and the whole team's grade will be affected.

Late Assignments

The final score for any assignment loses 10 points for each *day* it is late. An assignment is late if the timestamp on the electronic submission (uploaded to Canvas) is later than 5 p.m. or it is not in my mailbox by 5 p.m. of the assigned date.

Note that last minute computer or other mechanical problems are not viable excuses for late assignments. You are responsible for scheduling adequate time in case of such an incident and should regularly maintain electronic backups or hard copies of your work.

Extra Credit

You can earn extra credit as additional points towards your COURSE grade. As new extra credit opportunities become available during the semester, they will be posted on Canvas and an announcement will be made to inform you of new opportunities. You may earn up to a maximum of 2 points of this type of extra credit. Each extra credit assignment is worth 1 point.

Grade Requirements

The grading criteria for each assignment are listed in the corresponding grading sheet. The grading sheet is available at the same time as the assignment sheet is posted for a specific assignment. The grading sheets are divided into categories concentrating on various elements of writing. Each category has a maximum point value. If errors are found in the assignment, points are deducted from the appropriate category on the grade sheet up to the maximum value for that category. For example, if the mechanics category is worth a maximum of 10 points and there are 2 major mistakes in the assignment that fit in this category, the points earned for mechanics is 8 points because each error has a value of one point. As the semester progresses, the elements that are graded and the values for those elements reflect the skills being developed in the class.

Course Grade Structure

GRADE	PERCENTAGE RANGE	
A+	100%	> 97
A	< 97	> 94
A-	< 94	> 90
B+	< 90	> 87
B	< 87	> 84
B-	< 84	>80
C+	< 80	>77
C	< 77	>74
C-	< 74	>70
D+	< 70	>65
D	< 65	>60
D-	< 60	>50
F	< 50	>0

Grade Algorithm

Each assignment is worth 100 points. The point value you earn on an assignment is then multiplied by the percent value of the assignment. The resulting point value is used to compute the final grade, for example:

Assignment	Grade (out of 100)	% Value	Point Value
RW: Course Goals	90	2.5%	2.25
RW: Personal Evaluation	90	2.5%	2.25
Ethics Challenge	80	10%	8.0
Core Grammar for College	85	10%	8.5
Description	83	5%	4.15
Instructions	89	15%	13.35
Discussions - Reading Responses	100	5%	5
Final Project Memorandum	83	5%	4.15
Final Project Oral Presentation	91	5%	4.55
Professional Goal Setting	85	10%	8.5
Participation/Homework	92	10%	9.2
Final Project	92	15%	13.8

Appendix B: Academic Policies**Attendance**

In sum, behave like the professional you will be upon graduation. In the corporate world, success in your job performance is directly related to your ability to “show up” – both mentally and physically.

Absences

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Consistent attendance offers students the most effective opportunity to gain command of course concepts and materials. Events that justify an excused absence

include: religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

Students claiming an excused absence must notify me in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. All other absences must be reported as soon as is practical. The student must provide appropriate documentation of the absence. The full university attendance/absence policy can be found here:

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Class Participation

Class attendance is only the beginning of being successful in this course. Come prepared to discuss assigned readings, to make substantive contributions to class discussions, to actively participate during group workshops, and to engage fully with in-class writing assignments. Also, don't forget any assignments including bringing requested examples, or materials to class for review or discussion. You are also required to have completed drafts of your papers (and copies – or access to online versions – for your peer review partners and/or group members) on the days that they are due.

To be clear: failure to make adequate commentary during peer editing will reduce your grade for that assignment.

Early Dismissals

If I am late ***more than 20 minutes*** without sending a message about my late arrival the class may dismiss itself. If I know I am going to be late, I will make every effort to get a message to the class. Messages may be presented in the form of email prior to class, posts to Canvass, or as a verbal announcement/written message posted at the classroom from the Professional Writing Program office. If such a late notice is relayed, it is expected that you ***remain 20 minutes beyond my estimated time of arrival***, in accordance to the policy set forth by the University.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: <http://www.shc.umd.edu>

Practice the integrity you will apply in the professional world. We will have an entire section devoted to ethics in your field to discuss further.

Accommodation

Students with a documented disability should inform me within the add-drop period if academic accommodations will be needed. We will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or dissup@umd.edu

If needed, you should practice advocating for yourself now.

Academic accommodations for students who experience sexual misconduct

The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. As 'responsible university employees' faculty are required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., they may not hold such disclosures in confidence. For more information: <http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/>

Diversity

The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.

Closings of the University of Maryland

When UMD cancels classes, look on Canvas for assignments and readings that will be given that day in lieu of a class meeting. This work will in addition to whatever was due in class that day. Everything will be due the next time we meet or electronically, as assigned.

Course Material Copyright

Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted and to be used exclusively for this class. Other use requires written permission from the author (for example, a fellow student or me).

Likewise, note that the work you produce is your own work and cannot be reproduced for anything other than course use without your written permission. Permission may be requested to use your material as in-class examples outside the scope of this semester. An exception to this is that your portfolio of work may be used as part of the Professional Writing Department's annual portfolio review. For details about this review and how student work is used, please see faculty.umd.edu/teach/IllegalDistribution.html

My hope is that this course will help you think about writing like the picture to the right vs. the left



Appendix C: Course Evaluations

The Professional Writing Program utilizes two forms of course evaluations for department and instructor feedback. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. The PWP policy on course evaluations is as follows:

- 1) PWP uses its own evaluation system that will be distributed at some point during the last two weeks of the semester.
- 2) PWP encourages you to fill out the electronic course evaluation at CourseEvalUM. Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for a period each semester. The dates are posted in the syllabus Schedule. Please go directly to www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete your evaluations. When 70% or more of the students from a class respond, the evaluation information is made available to the whole student body.

DATE	DUE BY START OF CLASS	IN CLASS
1/26	Purchase books	Culture in communication Class introduction Course policies Canvas/CGC purchase Student introductions
1/31	Email contract information (from the account you want to receive course email) Register for Core Grammar for College per Canvas instructions Reading: Chapter 1 in Reep	Genres of communication 1 - 3 of samples chapter 1 Discussion of Chapter 1 Hand out class goals assignment & review
2/2	Take pre-test on Core Grammar for College Read & comment – Canvas discussion board Chapter 3 – Audience	Discussion on article/audience777574 Discussion on CGC Email discussion and practice using Mad Libs Passive voice introduction
2/7	<i>Class goals – Reflective Writing/Assignment 1</i>	Drafting work for new assignment/collect #1 Assign #2 – Goal Setting Summary with Graphics Brainstorming & outlining new assignment
2/9	Chapter 15 – Career Communications Core Grammar for College –1 book of your choosing	Discussion and practice with emails & other informal work communications PPT on Rhetoric in Oral Presentations
2/14	Read & Comment – Canvas discussion board Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing	Video on oral presentations Discussion on techniques Practice impromptu presentations
2/16	<i>Assignment #2 - Goal Setting with Graphics</i>	Finish impromptu presentations Start Instructions Section Hand out - Assignment, #5
2/21	Chapter 10 – Instructions Examples of instructions – good, bad, ugly	Discussion on what makes for usable instructions Study web and examples brought in by students
2/23	Discussion Board – read and comment Core Grammar for College – 2 books of your choosing	In class work on Instructions Assignment; Small group discussion on graphics & document design

2/28	Chapter 6 – Document Design Resume of your choosing from your field of study	Small group workshop on effectiveness of different designs. Short presentation & discussion of resumes along with other professional documents
3/2	Discussion Board – read and comment as assigned on Science papers and abstracts Core Grammar for college - 3 books of your choosing	Video of Abstract respond by email with in class homework assignment
3/7	Chapter 14 – Writing Memorandums Research a sample memorandum style you prefer	Hand out Final Project Memorandum Assignment #6 Discussion on formation of groups and goals for Final Project
3/9	<i>Your instructions are due when you present.</i> Article on peer review – Canvas discussion board	Instructions presentations in reverse alpha order by last name. Peer Review
3/14	<i>Your instructions are due when you present.</i> Article on peer review – Canvas discussion board	Continuing instructions presentations in reverse alpha order by last name. Peer Review
3/16	<i>Your instructions are due when you present.</i> Article on peer review – Canvas discussion board	Final instructions presentations in reverse alpha order by last name.
3/21	SPRING BREAK	
3/23	SPRING BREAK	
3/28	Chapter 5 – Revision and style Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing RD of Project Memorandum	Group meetings on final project. Discussion on peer review Peer review of Project Memorandum
3/30	<i>Final Project Memorandum, Assignment # 6 Due</i>	Hand out Ethics Challenge - Assignment #3 Review final project Group discussions of final on report style, expectations

4/4	Research and be prepared to present/discuss in small groups an example of a recent ethical dilemma in your field. Core Grammar for College – 2 books of your choosing	Examples of Ethical dilemma discussed in small groups & presented to class.
4/6	Chapter 2 – Ethics; Online articles on Ethical dilemmas <i>Rough draft of Assignment #3 Ethics Challenge due today</i>	PPT on topic Peer review & discussion
4/11	Discussion Board – read and comment “Ethics Challenge” – assigned on Canvas	Discussion of reading and challenge Group discussions and peer review of ethics challenge papers
3/13	<i>Assignment #3 – Ethics Challenge Due</i>	Examples of reports used in STEM field – break into groups and find and discuss specific examples relating to that field. Assignment #4 handed out
4/18	Chapter 8 - Definitions Chapter 9 – Descriptions	Review of reading Examples reviewed as a group
4/20	<i>Descriptive email (incorporating 2 of 3 definitions) – Assignment #4 Due</i>	Short discussion on abstract and in class homework for watching video and responding with abstract
4/25	Core Grammar for College – should be reviewing your final books this week	In class group preparations for oral presentations and written reports Peer review discussion
4/27		Final report oral presentations, 2 groups as assigned
5/2		Final report oral presentations, 2 groups as assigned

5/4		Final report oral presentations, 2 groups as assigned
5/9	<i>All final report documents due in class today</i>	Final report oral presentations, 2 groups as assigned
5/11	<p>LAST DAY OF CLASS</p> <p><i>Final writing assignment; Reflective Writing due in class</i></p> <p><i>Core Grammar for College – final test due by midnight</i></p>	<p>Time for final group project, if necessary</p> <p>Evaluations</p> <p>Brief discussion on advice and wrap up</p>