

English 297: Introduction to Professional Writing
Fall 2015

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m., 1164 Plant Science Building

Instructor: Dr. Scott Wible

Email: swible@umd.edu

Tip for effective email use:

(1) Begin the subject line with “ENGL 297”

(2) Complete the subject line with a concise phrase describing your question or concern.

Office: 1220C Tawes Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Additional physical and virtual office hours by appointment.

Course Description

This class introduces you to the rhetorical principles and professional practices of professional writing, particularly the research, writing, communication, analytical, and technological skills you'll need to succeed within the Professional Writing minor and in your professional and technical communication careers after graduation. You will also learn how core concepts such as culture, rhetoric, and technology relate to the work of professional writing, and you will begin to use and apply this knowledge as you begin to compose the kinds of documents; analyze and manipulate the design principles and rhetorical moves; and experiment with the digital tools, research skills, and writing strategies that mark effective professional writing practice in today's information economy. Finally, you will develop the self-reflection, visual design, and digital composing skills needed to publish a writing portfolio that showcases your professional writing competencies and projects your professional writing identity.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- Understand how various organizations and industries define professional writing as well as how various humanities scholars define professional writing studies.
- Discuss what kinds of roles and what types of activities professional writers perform within various organizations and industries.
- Define core concepts of professional writing, such as genre, context, audience, culture, usability, writing, information design, work tools, usability, technology, and new media, and discuss how these concepts relate to the work of professional writing.
- Use and apply knowledge of the kinds of documents; rhetoric and design principles; and digital tools, research skills, and writing strategies that mark ethical, effective professional writing practice.
- Identify and analyze patterns in one's own writing practice and in the writing and communication practices of organizations or communities in which one works.
- Use problem-solving methods from the fields of professional writing studies and rhetorical studies to invent or redesign texts and communication tools and to manage individual and collaborative writing projects.
- Design and compose a writing portfolio that showcases the student's professional writing competencies and projects a distinct professional writing identity.

Course Texts

Johnson-Eilola, Johndan, and Stuart A. Selber. *Solving Problems in Technical Communication*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2013.

Smith, Herb J., and Kim Haimes-Korn. *Portfolios for Technical and Professional Communicators*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.

Social Justice Statement

The University of Maryland is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Accessibility Statement

The University of Maryland is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the university's programs or services, contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with DSS. The DSS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact the DSS.

Office of Disability Support Services
0106 Shoemaker Building
301-314-7682
dissup@umd.edu
<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>

I assume that all of us learn in different ways, and that the organization of any course will accommodate each student differently. For example, you may prefer to process information by speaking and listening, so that some of the written handouts I provide may be difficult to absorb. Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services, including the Writing Center and the Learning Assistance Services Center (<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/>), are available to all students.

Grades

When grading each of your assignments, I will ask one overriding question: “Does this document do its job successfully?” The “job,” or purpose, of each document will be explained on the individual assignment descriptions that appear later in this syllabus, and we will spend ample time in class discussing how you can create a rhetorically successful text for each assignment. I will use the following criteria to evaluate your major writing projects:

A	<i>Exemplary work.</i> The text demonstrates originality, initiative, and rhetorical skill. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and formatted so that it is accessible and attractive; genre conventions are effectively used; mechanics and grammar are correct. The text is well-edited, well-written, well-argued, and well-documented and requires no additional revisions.
B	<i>Good work.</i> The text generally succeeds in meeting its goals in terms of audience, purpose, and rhetorical skill without the need for further major revisions. The text may need some <i>minor</i> improvements in content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics.
C	<i>Satisfactory work.</i> The text is adequate in all respects, but requires some substantial revisions of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics; it may require further work in more than one area. For instance, central ideas may generally be apparent, but may often lack adequate explanations, rhetorical analysis, or documentation necessary for different audiences and purposes.
D	<i>Unsatisfactory work.</i> The text generally requires extensive revisions of content, presentation, writing style, and/or mechanics. The writer has encountered significant problems meeting goals of audience, purpose, and acquiring command of rhetorical principles.
F	<i>Failing work.</i> The text does not have enough information, does something other than is appropriate for a given situation, or contains major and pervasive problems in terms of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning. A failing grade is also assigned to plagiarized work.

Your final grade will be determined by the grades you receive on written and in-class assignments, according to the following weighting:

1. Weekly Reading Responses/Discussion Board Posts (20%)
2. “A Day in Your Life as a Writer” Visualization and Essay (10%)
3. “Studying Your Work Context” Visualization and Essay (10%)
4. “Writing and Revising within Organizational Structures: Technical Communication Body of Knowledge Project Wiki (25%)
5. Proposal for TCBOK project (10%)
6. Electronic professional writing portfolio (includes welcome page, competency statement, reflections, resume, and at least 2 writing samples) (20%)
7. Participation (5%)

I will use the following grading scale to calculate your grade for each assignment and the course:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
97%	93%	90%	87%	83%	80%	77%	73%	70%	67%	63%	60%	0%

Participation in English 297

Your participation grade for the course will be based on the following criteria:

A	<i>Superior participation</i> shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions through her or his contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. Interaction and collaboration with peers is tactful, thorough, specific, and often provides other students with a new perspective or insight.
B	<i>Strong participation</i> demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. Interaction and collaboration with peers is tactful, specific, and helpful.
C	<i>Satisfactory participation</i> demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. Interaction and collaboration with peers is tactful and prompt.
D	<i>Weak participation</i> demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. Interaction and collaboration with peers may be lacking, disrespectful, or off-topic.
F	<i>Unacceptable participation</i> shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. The student has a pattern of missing class, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class every day, and you should also have the *Solving Problems in Technical Communication* book (or notes on the week's assigned reading) with you. An occasional absence is perhaps understandable, but habitual absence is inexcusable. *For any unexcused absence after three, you will receive an F for "Class Participation."*

I will follow the University of Maryland Faculty Senate's policy on "excused absences" such that legitimate reasons for missing a class include regularly scheduled, University-approved curricular and extracurricular activities; medical illness; and religious observances.

Missing Class Due to Illness

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that you must miss a class due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

- For every medically necessary absence from class, you should make a reasonable effort to notify me in advance of the class. When returning to class, bring a note identifying the date of and reason for your absence and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate.
- If you are absent more than 2 times for the same illness, upon returning to class, bring documentation signed by a health care professional. Please note that this documentation should not disclose any details of your illness; it should only note that your illness prevented you from participating in class on the days noted.

Requirements

You will be expected to

- attend all class meetings, prepared for work (see “Attendance” below);
- participate in class discussions;
- complete both in-class and out-of-class writing exercises;
- participate in all draft workshops;
- draft, write, and revise each course writing project;
- submit all work *on time*, on the hour/day it is due (see “Promptness” below).

Please note: Passing the course requires timely completion of all of the assignments, long and short, in-class and out-of-class.

Writing Project Standards

In this course, I will hold you to the professional standards that prevail both throughout the university and within the field of science and science communication.

Promptness. In this course, as in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All *major writing projects*, reflective writing pieces, and homework activities must be submitted by the beginning of class on their respective due dates. Unless you have made arrangements with me in advance, major writing projects turned in late will lead to the grade for that assignment being lowered one full letter grade (e.g., A becomes a B, B becomes a C, and so on).

Development. In all the writing you do for this course, strive to compose “substantive” writing. You should make your argument and your purpose clear to readers and, where appropriate, provide convincing evidence, concrete details, and relevant examples.

Rhetorical Strategy. Throughout this course, you will be learning various rhetorical theories and techniques for persuading your audiences, from composing effective *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* appeals to creating a specific sentence-level style and tone. Your formal writing projects should reflect your efforts to apply these theories through your planning, drafting, and revising process.

Appearance. All work should be neatly prepared on a computer using spacing and design techniques that are conventional for the genre. Whether it is a essay, proposal, wiki entry, electronic portfolio, or email, your communication should exhibit appropriate format.

Grammar, Spelling, Proofreading. At work, even a single error in spelling, grammar, or proofreading can jeopardize the effectiveness of some communications. Grading will reflect the seriousness with which these matters are frequently viewed in the working world. If you would like special assistance with these skills, I can recommend sources for extra help.

Expectations

In addition to the requirements outlined above, you are expected to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading and writing assignments on time; to help your classmates learn by your participation in class discussions and group activities; to spend at least six hours per week out of class for research, writing, and class preparation; and to be courteous and considerate.

Conferences

Meet with me when you have questions about an assignment, when you would like to try out some ideas before a document is due, when you have questions about a comment, or when you want to know where you stand in the course. You should also see me to get help with particular writing-related problems or to resolve differences about grades. Finally, I am open to your suggestions for improving the course, so please discuss with me your ideas about how the course is going. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours and would like to meet with me, we can work together to find a convenient time for conferencing.

Undergraduate Writing Center

Please consider taking your ideas and your written work to the Writing Center, where trained peer tutors will consult with writers about any piece of writing at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in 1205 Tawes Hall. You can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in three different ways:

Phone: 301.405.3785

Email: writadmin@umd.edu

Scheduling Website: <http://rich65.com/umd/>

For more information about Writing Center programs as well as for materials to help you negotiate various stages of the writing process, visit the center's website:

<<http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>>.

Academic Integrity

The University of Maryland defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights, and property; and help to create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. For university procedures that I intend to follow when addressing academic dishonesty cases, please consult the University of Maryland's Student Honor Council webpage: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx>.

Code of Academic Integrity and the Honor Pledge

The University of Maryland is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered "Code of Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge"

<http://www.orientation.umd.edu/VirtualFolder/academicintegrity.pdf>. The code prohibits you from cheating, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without permission of both instructors, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.

Following University Senate recommendations, I ask you to write the following signed statement on each major writing portfolio you submit for this course:

"I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment."

You may choose not to write the pledge, but in such an event, I will want to discuss with you your reasons for declining. Please note that compliance with the Code is administered by the University of Maryland Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a "community of trust" on the College Park campus.

Descriptions of Major Writing Assignments

1. Weekly Reading Responses/Discussion Board Posts (20% of final grade)
2. “A Day in Your Life as a Writer”: Visualization and Essay (10%)
3. “Studying Your Work Context”: Visualization and Essay (10%)
4. “Writing and Revising within Organizational Structures: Technical Communication Body of Knowledge Project (TCBOK)Wiki (25%)
5. Proposal for TCBOK project (10%)
6. Electronic professional writing portfolio (includes welcome page, competency statement, resume, reflections, at least 2 writing samples) (20%)
7. Participation (5%)

1. Weekly Reading Responses/Discussion Board Posts

Each week, compose a 250-word response to the following questions about that week’s reading(s) in *Solving Problems in Technical Communication*. Post your response to the discussion thread that I have created for that particular week on our course Canvas page.

Week 1: Conduct an Internet search for technical writing blogs. Choose a blog post or article that interests you and discuss its contents with your classmates. How might the information you gathered from the article help you develop professionally?

Week 2: Think about all of the various organizations and communities in which you actively participate, and then identify a document in your organization that you can talk about not only for what it *says* but also for what it *does*. What kind of cultural work does this artifact accomplish, how does it accomplish it, and why?

Week 3: Find a technical document created at least fifteen years ago (e.g., a user manual or a set of instructions). How might we understand that document as a historical artifact? How do the features of that document (organization, style, language, and graphics) represent its social and cultural setting? What type of order does this historical document create? What influence does this document have on current technical communication practice?

Week 4: What different views of writing have you encountered in your academic education (or, if relevant, your work, internship, or extracurricular experiences) so far? Have different instructors provided differing perspectives—or have they conveyed one consistent view? Be sure to describe particular moments, events, or cases that provide evidence of differing views of writing and communication.

Week 5: Think about a tool that you use in class or at work (e.g., email, a course management system, an inventory control system). With whom do you interact through that tool? How does the tool mediate that relationship? What kinds of identities are associated with the users of that tool (e.g., a course management system assumes teachers and students)? What kinds of values are associated with those interactions?

Week 6: Corporate authors often face the challenge of “speaking with one voice” when they collaborate on documents and presentations. However, a corporate group’s multiple voices and perspectives are often valuable. Can organizations achieve a unified voice without sacrificing the value of having diverse perspectives? If so, how? Analyze a variety of pages and documents available on a corporate website. Annotate rhetorical moves that establish a voice and identity for the corporation as well as any moments of

heteroglossia. Evaluate the effectiveness of the corporate voices, making recommendations for improvement.

- Week 7: Go to the user forum for the Ubuntu operation system (<http://www.ubuntuforum.org>) and browse through several topics, particularly under the “Main Support Categories” heading. How does the user-generated technical support you found on Ubuntu Forums differ from what you might find in a formal user guide? How might an organization use forums like this to assist in developing new technologies? How might users exert influence on organizations through such forums? How might a technical communicator use such a forum to coordinate software developer and user needs?
- Week 8: *Context* has a very specific definition in Clay Spinuzzi’s chapter “Studying Work Contexts.” How is it different from how you usually think about context?
- Week 9: What types of ethical principles are embedded in the Code of Student Conduct here at the University of Maryland (<http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/OCJ.aspx>)? Should these be followed to the same degree in all situations? Why or why not?
- Week 10: As a technical communicator, how would you respond if faced with a situation in which no obvious genre exists, or the genre implied in a situation does not seem to support your rhetorical purposes?
- Week 11: Find a short example of poor information design. Make an electronic version of the example so you can upload it to the discussion board for your classmates to see. Write a brief post that first analyzes the stakeholders for the example and their likely purposes for using the communication, and then, drawing on information design research and the heuristic in figure 16.2 in Karen Shriver’s chapter (p. 398) as a framework, evaluates why the information design is inadequate. As you discuss the example, identify the specific visual or verbal features that make the design poor.
- Week 12: How well are you prepared to be a facilitator of technical communication and knowledge, learning from audiences and helping them learn from each other, in addition to or instead of being the person who makes knowledge for others? What more do you need to do to help prepare for this facilitating work? Do you think such facilitation is appropriate, given your own experiences using and learning about the technologies you use now?
- Week 13: What rhetorical aspects or factors do you think are unique to your particular culture? What rhetorical aspects or factors do you think are commonly used across multiple cultures?

2. “A Day In Your Life as a Writer”: Visualization and Essay

Document a day in your life as a writer, using a visual format like a flowchart that allows you to show the flow or sequence of actions. Then, write a 500-word essay that analyzes your visualization, considering in particular these questions: What parts of this flow or sequence do you see as constituting a successful pattern? What aspects would you like to repeat each time you write? What aspects would you recommend to others, and why? What aspects constitute patterns you’d like to change or avoid next time?

3. “Studying Your Work Context”: Visualization and Essay, in Two Parts

As Clay Spinuzzi contends in his contribution to *Solving Problems in Technical Communication*, successful technical communicators not only possess competencies in writing, editing, and designing documents but also possess analytical skills necessary to examine and understand how

specific contexts affect the ways that writers strategize and execute these composing activities. This project gives you an opportunity to develop these skills in analyzing how contexts influence professional writing practices. The project has two parts, which you will submit together.

1. Select some task that you often perform—at work, while studying, in a campus organization, and so forth. Sketch out a Communication Event Model (see Spinuzzi’s discussion in *SPTC*, Ch. 11) showing the different texts that you have to receive, produce, alter, and hand off during this task. Compare your sketch with those created by at least two of your classmates. After you have done so, compose a 250-word essay describing the differences and similarities you see and explaining why these differences or similarities likely appear.
2. Take the same task and sketch a Genre Ecology Model showing the different texts that support it. Compare your sketch with those created by at least two of your classmates. After you have done so, compose a second 250-word essay that addresses these two questions: What are some of the hidden “helper” genres that make your task successful? How does your diagram differ from others, and what is the significance of those differences?

4. “Writing and Revising Within Organizational Structures”: Technical Communication Body of Knowledge Project Wiki

This project will expand your competencies in composing with new texts and new tools and also deepen your thinking about the social processes underlying organizational composing. For this project, you will divide into teams of five, and each team must make two contributions to the Technical Communication Body of Knowledge wiki. This project, sponsored by the Society for Technical Communication, gathers career-related information into a central resource for the profession. Your group can choose to contribute new content to one of the many nodes that are at this time content placeholders, or your group can choose to further develop and improve existing material. (Note: The latter option, while perhaps more difficult, actually better reflects real-world professional writing practice, since so much workplace writing involves reworking existing texts for new purposes and audiences.)

This project demands that you start forming a sense of audience beyond the class (your teacher and your classmates). To produce this project successfully, you have to think about what professional or technical communication is, who belongs to this community, and what backgrounds, prior knowledge, interests, and expectations they bring to the text. Moreover, you must start to form your own identities as professional writers, as participants within this professional community who have something to contribute.

Composing for TCBOOK also requires you to work within certain guidelines, as it includes instructions for authors, templates, documentation guidelines, and style sheets. These are likely new constraints for many of you; most of you are more accustomed to composing on your own as opposed to posting within an existing publishing system. For that reason, you will need to take some time to explore this resource that you are contributing to and figure out just what it is. Through your work on this project, you will start to get a sense of the complexities of maintaining order and consistency in a widely co-authored text.

Your team will also need to figure out how your information can best fit into existing hierarchies, be linked appropriately, and be edited to a consistent style. I encourage you to take time to form a model of the system, lest you create texts that might be informative but nevertheless are redundant or do not fit within the existing wiki. Examining the technology of the wiki and analyzing its structure will enable you to work more productively to a defined target.

5. Proposal for TCBOK Wiki Project

Write a brief proposal that both explains what topics you will compose or revise and describes how you will manage your collaborative research and writing activity for the “Writing and Revising Within Organizational Structures: TCBOK Wiki” project. For the topic and your major composing or revising goals, include several sentences explaining why a new topic, additional content about an existing topic, or substantive revisions to an existing topic is needed. In outlining your project management and collaboration management strategies, meanwhile, explain how you will do each of the main steps listed in the heuristics in Chapter 13 (R. Stanley Dick, “How Can Technical Communicators Manage Projects?” especially p. 315) and Chapter 18 (Rebecca E. Burnett, L. Andrew Cooper, and Candice A. Welhausen, “What Do Technical Communicators Need to Know about Collaboration?” especially pp. 468-70) of *Solving Problems in Technical Communication*. For each of the steps or topics in these heuristics, include several sentences explaining how you and your collaborators will perform that particular step or manage that particular dimension of the collaboration for your assignment.

6. Professional Writing Web Portfolio

Professional writers create web portfolios to showcase their best technical writing work and to highlight the range of professional skills they possess and could put to use in future jobs or on future writing projects. Similarly, you will produce a professional writing portfolio to demonstrate that you have achieved the learning outcomes expected of students in this course. In effect, the purpose of this final portfolio is to convince your instructor that your portfolio represents your best work in this professional writing course, that you have become a reflective learner, and that you have developed writing abilities that match the high evaluative standards set for this course.

Throughout this semester, you will be introduced to the concept of the writing portfolio, learn about its key textual and design elements, and create a portfolio that both highlights your work in this course and offers space to which you can add more documents as you continue through your academic career and move into your professional and civic life after graduation.

The only firm guidelines for the contents of your final portfolio in this course are the following:

- It must be digital, and it is recommended for it to be web-based.
- It must include the following contents:
 - Welcome page
 - Statement of professional and academic professional writing competencies
 - At least three finished, polished documents
 - Reflective pieces that accompany each document and highlight the professional writing competencies each one illustrates.
 - Resume

You are free to include any additional pages of finished or unfinished writing—from brainstorming and rough design sketches to drafts and email correspondence—that help you to make a specific claim about your abilities, your development, or your identity as a professional writer. Additionally, you will also compose a reflective essay that pulls together the various documents in your portfolio and explicates what these documents illustrate about your academic and professional development and your professional identity as a writer.

You should use all of the documents and other pieces of writing in your portfolio as evidence to support the claim you want to make about your professional writing competencies and identities. Your reflective essay and statements should analyze how those writing projects illustrate your application of the concepts, theories, and heuristics you have learned about and learned how to use through the semester's readings, activities, discussions, and writing projects. In that sense, then, this portfolio assignment demands that you demonstrate your knowledge of and application of key professional writing theories and concepts and, equally as important, demonstrate your ability to describe and to analyze how you incorporated these theories and concepts into your writing strategies and practices.

This latter ability—the ability to explain what one did and why one did it—is an extremely important skill for professional writers to develop, as they often must demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge and skills in workplaces where coworkers and managers think of them as just the “walking & talking grammar book” who fixes or tidies up other people's writing. For example, you might discuss how the extensive revisions your group made to one of the existing TCBOK wiki entries illustrates your greater sensitivity to an audience's informational needs. Or, you might explain how the email correspondence with your colleagues shows you working through the difficulties of blending different writing styles. So, after you have selected your materials and built a cohesive argument, you will explain to me what cohesive argument they make and how they do so. Your goal with this statement of your professional competencies is to show me what you have learned about the qualities of good professional writing, anticipating readers' needs, and the importance of careful presentation.

As we will discuss throughout the semester, the visual design of your web portfolio plays an important part in readers' assessment both of its content and of you, its composer. I certainly expect students to come to this portfolio project with a wide range of abilities in publishing documents for the web. The course readings and the demonstrations during our class meetings should help everyone to develop basic web-authoring skills they can use to build effective web portfolios. Ultimately, my concern while evaluating your portfolio will be not on whether your portfolio reflects highly advanced web-authoring skills but instead on whether every element of the portfolio—from its textual contents to its visual design—supports your purposes and goals for the project.

Statement on the Professional Writing Web Portfolio as an Original, Creative Performance

While your revisions of the other writing projects in this course will be important components of your web portfolio, you should approach this final assignment as the creation of a new, unique creative work in and of itself. You will need to consider matters such as the needs, motivations, and expectations of primary and secondary audiences for the portfolio—rather than for the

audiences of their original texts—and make strategic decisions about how best to address these concerns through your introductory essay, your contextual statements that frame each document in the portfolio, your statement of professional competencies, and your graphic design and web arrangement decisions. Just like the portfolios that painters, photographers, and other visual artists construct, your professional writing web portfolio, while it certainly includes many individual creative works or projects, is also a creative work itself, one in which you put your scholarly learning into practice as you demonstrate your rhetorical knowledge, showcase your research and writing skills, and project your professional vision and identity.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
1	What are the boundaries, artifacts, and identities of technical communication? How can technical communicators develop as both students and professionals?	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 1, pp.19-49 (Selfe and Selfe). <i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 4, pp. 98-120 (Cargile Cook, Cook, Minson, and Wilson).	Discussion board post #1.
2	What are the work patterns of technical communication? How can technical communicators fit into contemporary organizations?	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 2, pp. 50-74 (Hart-Davidson) <i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 3, pp.75-97 (Henry).	Discussion board post #2.
3	What can history teach us about technical communication? What is the future of technical communication?	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 7, pp. 165-187 (Longo and Fountain). <i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 8, pp. 187-208 (Mehlenbacher).	“A Day in Your Life as a Writer”: Visualization and Essay. Discussion board post #3.
4	How can rhetorical theory inform the practice of technical communication?	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 5, pp.125-145 (Porter).	Discussion board post #4.
5	How can work tools shape and organize technical communication? Understanding professional writing portfolios.	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 6, pp. 146-164 (Swarts). <i>PTPC</i> , Ch. 1, pp.1-18.	Discussion board post #5.
6	How can technical communicators manage projects? What do technical communicators need to know about collaboration?	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 13, pp. 310-32. (Dicks). <i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 18, pp. 454-78 (Burnett, Cooper, and Welhausen).	Discussion board post #6.
7	How can technical communicators study work contexts? Creating a portfolio identity.	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 11, pp. 262-84 (Spinuzzi). <i>PTPC</i> , Ch. 2, pp. 19-30.	Group proposal for TCBOK project. Discussion board post #7.
8	How can technical communicators plan for users? How can technical	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 10, pp. 237-261. (Ceraso). <i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 12, pp. 285-309	Discussion board post #8.

	communicators evaluate the usability of artifacts?	(Mirel).	
9	How can technical communicators work in an ethical and legal manner? E-Portfolio contents, design, and structure.	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 9, pp. 213-236 (Scott). <i>PTPC</i> , Ch 4, pp. 59-80.	“Studying Your Work Context”: Visualizations and Essays. Discussion board post #9.
10	What do technical communicators need to know about genre? What do technical communicators need to know about writing?	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 14, pp. 337-361 (Henze). <i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 15, pp. 362-385 (Blakeslee and Savage).	Discussion board post #10.
11	What do technical communicators need to know about information design? Revising and contextualizing E-Portfolio documents.	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 16, pp.386-427 (Schrivier). <i>PTPC</i> , Ch. 3, pp. 31-58. <i>PTPC</i> , Ch. 5, pp. 81-106.	Discussion board post #11.
12	What do technical communicators need to know about new media? Legal and ethical issues affecting portfolios.	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 17, pp. 428-453. (Wysocki). <i>PTPC</i> , Ch. 6, pp. 107-124.	TCBOK Project. Discussion board post #12.
13	What do technical communicators need to know about international environments? Getting feedback: responding to and revising portfolios.	<i>SPTC</i> , Ch. 19, pp. 479-496 (St. Amant). <i>PTPC</i> , Ch. 7, pp.125-138.	First draft of Professional Writing E-Portfolio. Discussion board post #13.
14	Adding to and reshaping your writing portfolio through your academic and professional writing career. Course wrap-up and student evaluations.	<i>PTPC</i> , Ch. 9, pp. 165-180.	Final draft of Professional Writing E-Portfolio.