Technical Writing
English 393
Section 1101
TTh: 9:30-10:45
Room: TWS 0230
Fall 2015

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Text: Technical Communication by Mike Markel; 11th edition; Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012;

Overview
Technical writing is the art of translating one’s knowledge into words for communicating
information to a particular audience for an intended outcome.

Learning Outcomes for Professional Writing
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 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.

In this class, to improve your technical communication skills, you will also:

• Write honest, logical, precise professional documents
• Use appropriate graphics and design for the audience and purpose of a document
• Work collaboratively
• Make oral presentations

Prerequisites: ENGL 101, and a minimum of 60 credits.
Evaluation
* Assignment 1: Cover Letter 15%
* Assignment 2: Explanation of Process 15%
* Assignment 3: Proposal 20%
* Assignment 4: Progress Report 10%
* Assignment 5: Presentation 10%
* Assignment 6: Final Report 20%
* Professionalism: 10%
(See Professional Etiquette below. Professionalism grade also includes reflective writings, mini-presentations, class contributions, class preparation, 360-degree evaluation, and peer review work.) (Two or more unexcused absences will result in an automatic professionalism grade of zero.)

NB: All PWP classes require six graded assignments comprising a minimum of 25 pages of original writing.

Classroom Policies
Professional Etiquette: Professional writing courses not only aim to prepare students for writing in the working world, but also to teach the types of behavior that are expected from all professionals. With this in mind, your professionalism grade will be negatively affected if you: leave the classroom or a conference session to make or receive phone calls; text message in class; leave class before the class is finished; work on the computers while I am speaking or while your classmates are presenting; sleep; talk while I am talking or a classmate is talking; read a newspaper or work on something not related to the class during class; show up late; send me emails that imply a non-professional relationship; generally make a nuisance of yourself during class. You are all adults, but unfortunately in my experience, I need to mention these things.

* Even if I do not call you on your behavior, I will mark it down.

Paper Submissions
Follow the specific guidelines on the assignment sheets. All written assignments need to be generated from a printer. Do not bind your papers or submit them in plastic covers or folders; staple them in the upper left corner. Proofread your final papers thoroughly for spelling and grammatical errors before turning them in. You are expected to have acquired college-level skills in English by the time you have begun the course. If you have difficulties in this area, you are expected to review grammar and mechanics in the appendix of the text. At this stage, you are also expected to know how to correctly document your sources. Our text thoroughly details MLA and APA documentation styles. Consult the text’s appendix when you have questions on how to cite. All working drafts and supporting materials, such as peer evaluations and outlines, must accompany your final drafts. Unless I instruct you otherwise, staple all rough material to the backs of your final drafts. I will not accept papers without attached rough drafts. Do not come to class looking for a stapler on the day your paper is due. Not following these guidelines will reduce the assignment grade. This is a professional writing class; it is essential you turn in clean copies of each assignment. Turning in papers with faded ink, for example, will automatically reduce your assignment grade. Because you will be thoroughly editing your work, both in and outside of class, before it is due, I do not accept rewrites. Keep both a
hard and an electronic copy of each assignment you give me. In case I lose or misplace your paper, which isn’t likely, you will definitely have a backup.

**Electronic Copies**
Via the reflector list, I will provide you with electronic copies of the syllabus and all major assignment sheets.

**Reflective Writings**
You will receive full credit for completely doing each of the three reflective writings. If you only partially complete a reflective writing, you will be asked to rewrite it, and have one class period to submit the rewrite. Failure to submit all three of your reflective writings will result in an automatic professionalism grade of “0.”

**Deadlines**
Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late papers will be marked down two-thirds of a letter grade for each day (not class) they are late and most likely will not receive comments, just a grade. So, if you hand in a paper that would have received a B on time, the grade will automatically become C+ if it is a day late, C- if it is two days late, etc. I do not accept papers emailed, faxed, or mailed to me. If you turn in a late paper, you must either give it directly to me or turn it in to someone working in the PWP office. If you do turn it in to the PWP office, email me on that day; otherwise, I will mark it as turned in late on the day it is in my hands, and this most likely will be later than the day you actually turn it in. Do not put any papers under my office door.

**Attendance & Participation**
You are expected to attend each class and to participate in class discussions. Come to class on time prepared to discuss the assigned readings and to participate in given assignments. If you arrive late, you are not fully participating and you are preventing your classmates from fully participating in the learning process. Without all of you participating in a studio class, such as this, the class loses energy. Arriving late will lower your professionalism grade. Two late arrivals of ten minutes or more equals one absence. You are allowed one unexcused absence for both the expected (i.e. being the best man in your brother’s wedding) and the unexpected (i.e., a flat tire). If you use an unexcused absence, use it wisely. More than one unexcused absence will result in a professionalism grade of “0.”

Excused Absences: The University excuses absences for your own illness or the illness of an immediate family member, for your participation in university activities at the request of University authorities, for religious observances, and for compelling circumstances beyond your control. Documentation is required for all excused absences. If you have an anticipated excused absence, such as a religious observance, you must let me know in writing within the first three weeks of class.

Absence for one class due to your own illness: The University requires that you provide me a self-signed note attesting to the date of your illness, with an acknowledgment that the information provided is true. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
Absence for more than one class because of the same illness: You must provide written documentation of the illness from the health care provider who made the diagnosis. The provider must verify dates of treatment and indicate the time frame during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities.

Non-consecutive medically necessitated absences from more than a single class: Such absences may be excused provided you submit written documentation for each absence as described above, verifying the dates of treatment and time frame during which you were unable to meet your academic responsibilities. However, as noted below, if you miss too many classes—even if excused—though you are technically eligible to make up the work, in practice students are rarely able to do so.

**If you do miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you miss from a classmate, not from me. If you cannot make it to class on a consistent basis (like you would a job), consider dropping the course.** Missing two weeks of class, for whatever reason, will make catching up difficult, if not impossible.

During the class or two before an assignment is due, you will collaborate with your classmates in peer-editing workshops. Put your best efforts into these workshops to improve your drafts and those of your classmates and professor. Please give others the same opportunities to participate that you would like them to give you.

**Academic Integrity and Honesty/Honor Pledge**
It is important to familiarize yourselves with The University of Maryland’s Code of Academic Integrity (www.shc.umd.edu/code.html) pertaining to plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and facilitation. Plagiarism policy: all quotations taken from other authors, including from the Internet, must be indicated by quotation marks and referenced. Paraphrasing must be referenced as well. Intentionally presenting someone else’s words or work as your own constitutes plagiarism. Such action will result in an automatic F for the class as well as possible dismissal from the University.

Unless instructed otherwise, you should write the University of Maryland Honor Pledge, followed by your signature, on each assignment:

“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.”

**Students with Disabilities**
The University of Maryland is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. **Students with a documented disability must inform me within the add-drop period if academic accommodations are needed.** To obtain an Accommodation Letter prepared by Disability Support Service (DSS), a division of the University Counseling Center, please call 301-314-7682, e-mail dissup@umd.edu, or visit the Shoemaker Building for more information.
Academic Accommodations for Students Who May 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. Disclosures made to faculty are not confidential and must be reported to the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct. For more information visit www.umd.edu/Sexual_Misconduct/.

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.

Copyright Notice
All class lectures and other materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from me.

Inclement Weather
Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website at umd.edu and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW), as well as on local radio and TV stations.

Evaluations
The Professional Writing Program uses its own evaluations that will be distributed during the last two weeks of the semester; however, we also encourage you to fill out the online evaluations.

Folders
Keep all graded assignments throughout the semester in a two-pocket folder. This will be turned in to me at the end of the semester and returned to you after final grades are submitted. Not turning in all of your graded assignments at the end of the semester will automatically reduce your professionalism grade by 50%.

Contacting Me
Email is the best way to reach me. Write 393 in the subject heading. Without this heading, your mail may be tossed without being read. I will not open attachments.

Grading
By now you have realized that many benefits are associated with being students of a top university that strives for national excellence. Some of the responsibilities associated with a celebrated academic community include vigorous evaluation of student work. A significant percentage of the grade you will earn this semester will be based upon your out-of-class writing. In accordance with the University of Maryland’s high standards, the following grading rubric will be applied to each written assignment. These grades reflect how you would be graded in a real-world setting.
A
Your work exceeds the standards for the assignment. You have shown an appreciation for and an application of the techniques we use to develop a specific assignment. The overall product of your work meets the highest standard for your audience, your purpose, and the strategies for meeting all of those goals. You have been willing to draft, correct, reject, revise (before the due date), invent, and experiment, which takes time and planning. You have been creative and dexterous in your work with the content as well as the methods. Finally, A papers have very few to no grammar and spelling mistakes.

B
Your work meets the requirements of the assignment. The overall product of your work meets the general expectation of your audience, your purpose, and context; the strategies for meeting those goals are adequate but might benefit from more thinking, planning, or revising (before due date). Your effort has been solid, but some of your choices may have been forced or inconsistent. Your work might reveal additional issues or challenges that you have not considered. You have had more successes than failures in the content, and the means to improve are clearly suggested by the work you have done. You have learned techniques that need more time to practice and refine in your drafting. B papers occasionally have a miniscule number of (if any) grammar, diction, or spelling issues.

C
Your work does not quite meet the requirements of the assignment. You have tried but perhaps you have not grasped some fundamental part of the assignment nor have you spent adequate time in developing your analysis of your audience, a plan for meeting the objectives, or applying the techniques of the assignment we discussed in class and that you have read in our text. Content may be too general and organization may be problematic on a paragraph-level or overall. You are inconsistent or unfinished in your writing. The product seems rushed or poorly conceived. The symptoms suggest you have not used your time well. You may or may not have learned the techniques well enough to use them. Grammar mistakes may take away from the paper’s effectiveness.

D
Your work is on time but hardly meets any of the requirements of the assignment. You have not demonstrated that you understand the concerns of your audience, and your analysis of the purpose, context, and task are indistinct and unreasoned. Your writing is mostly unclear, unplanned, and indistinguishable. You have not used or only inconsistently used the techniques of analysis and writing that were part of the assignment’s objectives. Supporting materials may be missing. Numerous spelling and grammatical errors may also lead to a paper earning a grade in this category.

F
Your work is more than disappointing. You have failed to meet the fundamental requirements for effort and understanding. You have not demonstrated your exploration or application of the concepts, purposes, and techniques of technical writing that the assignment was intended for you to develop. You fail to cite your sources. Your work might be late; ill considered; poorly planned; inappropriate for audience, purpose, context, or task; or it is clearly
rushed and inadequate. You choose to do something other than to work effectively in analyzing, planning, drafting, and revising your assignment.

* The class is never graded on a curve.

* If you want to discuss a paper grade with me, please do so during my office hours, not during class.

**Calendar**
(Subject to change)

**Week One**
9/1, 9/3:
**Topics:** Introduction to Technical Writing; Job Application Materials.  
*Introduction to Assignment 1: Job Application Letter.* Resume discussion. Reflective Writing 1.  
**Read:** Ch. 15 (Writing Job-Application Materials); Ch. 10 (Writing Correct and Effective Sentences); Ch. 16 (Writing Proposals); Ch. 1 (Introduction to Technical Communication); Appendix C (Editing and Proofreading Your Documents).

**Week Two**
9/8, 9/10:
**Topics:** Analyzing Audience and Purpose; Logos, Pathos, and Ethos; Generating Final Report topics; Good topics/Bad topics.  
*Introduction to Assignment 2: Explanation of a Process.*  
*Introduction to Assignments 3, 4, and 6.*  
**Due:** Resume and Cover Letter draft; Workshop; Logos, Pathos, and Ethos presentations. Reflective Writing 1.  
**Read:** Ch. 5 (Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose).

**Week Three**
9/15, 9/17:
**Topics:** Final Project ideas; Writing Definitions and Descriptions. Formation of Final Project groups.  
**Due:** Cover Letter; Final Project pitches; Logos, Pathos, and Ethos presentations continued.  
**Read:** Ch. 8 (Communicating Persuasively); Ch. 20 (Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions).

**Week Four**
9/22, 9/24:
**Topics:** Collaborative group work; Writing proposals; Discuss plan for writing; Persuasion.  
**Due:** Explanation of a Process draft; Workshop.  
**Read:** Ch. 6 (Researching Your Subject); Ch. 2 (Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations); Ch. 9 (Emphasizing Important Information).

**Week Five**
9/29, 10/1:
**Topics:** Research; Ethical and Legal Considerations.
Due: Explanation of a Process; Presentation of document targeting non-English-speaking audience.
Read: Ch. 4 (Writing Collaboratively); Ch. 7 (Organizing Your Information).

Week Six
10/6, 10/8:
Topics: Conferences; Conferences.
Due: Proposal draft.
Read: Ch. 17 (Writing Informational Reports).

Week Seven
10/13, 10/15:
Topics: Impromptu Presentations; Extemporaneous Presentations; Presentation Rubric; Research. Reflective Writing 2.
Due: Proposal; Presentation of document targeting non-English-speaking audience continued. Reflective Writing 2.
Read: Ch. 17 (Writing Informational Reports).

Week Eight
10/20, 10/22:
Topics: Progress Reports/Graphics
Due: Graphics Presentation.
Read: Ch. 11 (Designing Print and Online Documents); Ch. 12 (Creating Graphics).

Week Nine
10/27, 10/29:
Topics: Progress Reports.
Due: Progress Report in class.
Read: Ch. 18 (Writing Recommendation Reports).

Week Ten
11/3, 11/5:
Topics: Final Reports; Oral Presentations.
Due: Final Progress Report.
Read: Ch. 21 (Making Oral Presentations).

Week Eleven
11/10, 11/12:
Topics: Drafting and Revising Final Reports; PowerPoint; Instructions.
Read: Ch. 20 (Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions).

Week Twelve
11/17, 11/19:
Topics: Conferences; Conferences.
Due: Final Report draft.

Week Thirteen
11/24:
Topics: Presentations; Drafting and Revising Final Reports; Reflective Writing 3; Workshop; Final Report Considerations.
Due: Presentation Rehearsal; Reflective Writing 3.
11/26: Thanksgiving. No Class.
Week Fourteen
12/1, 12/3:  **Topics:** Presentations.
**Due:** Final Reports (12/3); 360-Degree Evaluations; Presentations; Final Folders.

Week Fifteen
12/8, 12/10:  **Topics:** Presentations.
**Due:** Presentations.

* No Final Exam.

* This syllabus may be subject to change. You will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc.