Course Syllabus
English 393: Technical Writing
Section 1802
Spring 2015

Instructor: Andrew Delfino
Office: 1232 Tawes Hall
Office Hours: M & W, 5:30-6:30pm
Email: adelfin1@umd.edu
Text: Williams, Joseph M. and Gregory G. Colomb. *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*. 4th
                        edition (if possible). Pearson. ISBN 13: 978-0-205-83076-3

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course focuses on learning how to write effective technical documents for professional settings. We will study how technical professionals communicate in writing to solve problems, answer questions, and explain ideas clearly. You will also conduct research to solve problems, write proposals, and collaborate to create written documents and oral presentations as one would in a professional workplace. For that reason, you will learn the conventions of organization and style appropriate in professional writing, which means you will have to learn a new style of writing and thinking, one that breaks out of the academic formulae appropriate for other courses. Also, throughout the course, students will learn to effectively use the writing process to come up with ideas, think critically, write clearly, and (above all) edit and revise in order to produce a polished product.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In addition to the goals germane to this course subject, students should be able to:
• Analyze a variety of professional rhetorical situations and produce appropriate texts in response.
• 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 differ in their familiarity with the subject matter.
• Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

COURSE REQURIMENTS

The focus of the semester is the final project: a 20-30 page technical report written for a specific, real-world audience, not your instructor. You will work in groups of two or three students to create this final product (20 pages). This project encourages you to identify a real-world problem that you then "solve" through your final project. Most assignments over the semester help you develop your final project as well as teaching you different forms of professional communication. You will also develop job /grad school application materials (a resume and cover letter or personal statement) for use your future. Peer-related assignments (workshops, draft critiques) and an oral presentation also give you a chance to experience how people collaborate on large projects in the workplace. **You will produce 25-30 pages or original writing in this course.**

COURSE POLICIES

ELMS
Our primary means of communicating as a class will be ELMS. All assignment sheets will be posted on CANVAS, including the dates and times the work is due. **All assignments must be turned in to ELMS (except for in-class exercises: hard copies will be turned in during class--primarily for participation); I do NOT accept assignments in hard copy (except for the final report) or via e-mail.**

If there are changes to an assignment or I need to make an announcement, I will use ELMS. Please set up a ELMS profile (with picture!).

Attendance
This course only meets once a week, so attendance is essential and required. Also, this is a studio-style class that incorporates workshops, meaning that you not only miss a learning opportunity but deprive your classmates of valuable feedback; therefore, attendance and participation is required**. Please note that missing more than two weeks' worth of class for any reason—excused or unexcused—may result in a zero for the participation portion of your grade and will likely seriously jeopardize your overall course grade. Missing half the semester or more, regardless of the reason, will result in a failing grade.**

If you are involved in university-sanctioned activities this semester or if you will be observing religious holidays this semester, you will not be penalized for missing class, but please notify me in person within the first two weeks of class, and please be prepared to make arrangements with me in advance to make up the work that you will miss. Be advised that you must make arrangements with me (this means informing me and then receiving a response from me) if you have circumstances that arise during the semester that affect your attendance in this class—whether those circumstances are extenuating or planned.

Coming late to class is disruptive. Leaving class early or in the midst is also disruptive. Please treat our class time as you would treat time at a job: begin modeling professional behavior now.

Communication
The primary way of contacting me is by attending office hours. Please make the necessary arrangements to attend my office hours if you want to discuss course policies, ask questions about readings, or get feedback on assignments.

For less substantive questions, I am available by e-mail pretty consistently throughout the week. My practice is to respond to email messages within 24-48 hours, but if you fail to hear from me after that time period, please resend your message. **Please use email to remind me in advance of an excused absence or if an extended emergency arises.** Do not use email to inquire after what you missed while you were absent, to find out what is assigned for an upcoming class, to submit draft material, or to discuss non-academic issues. These things should be done with the help of a classmate, by consulting the syllabus, or by meeting with me during office hours.

Late Assignments
Your work is due on the assigned date as noted on the calendar. In the case of an emergency or extenuating circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible so we can work together on an effective course of action. If you know in advance that you will need to miss a class, please contact me at least one week beforehand as well as receive a response from me in order to submit an assignment on a due date that varies from what is

stated on the calendar. **Please be advised that you may not submit papers to my office, or to the PWP office, or via e-mail. Assignments that are not turned in receive a zero (0).**

Revisions
In many ways, this course should be called technical revising: the nature of writing is recursive, whether in academics or in the workplace. For that reason, I encourage every student to revise their assignments. Each assignment will have a due date for a "final" draft, but you can revise all assignments this semester (anything except for the final project or any presentation) for a new grade. I only will only accept revisions from the first half of the semester until Spring Break. These must be substantative revisions, not just cleaning up the grammar or syntax or an assignment: major thought about changing the organization or ideas must be incorporated.

For successful revision re-grades, the new grade will be 4/5 of the difference between the original grade and the new grade. For example, an 80 paper that is revised to a 95 will receive a new grade of 92 (i.e., 95-80 is a 15 point difference; 4/5 of 15 is 12, so 12 points are added to the original score of 80).

Cell Phones and Computers
You are not allowed to take calls, make calls, text, email, or surf the web during our class period.
Please turn off your cell phone, laptop, iPad or iPod, or other electronic devices when you come to class, and please plan to use computers only for class activities.

Conferences and Workshops
I will meet with your project groups a couple of times throughout the semester to conference about your work. Some of these meetings may occur during class, or they may occur in place of class. These conferences are mandatory and they require you to be individually engaged, prepared, and participatory. I will inform you ahead of time about which of your documents we will be discussing at each one.

Additionally, you will be required to read and comment on your peers' work in practically each class throughout the semester. I call this "workshop," and it will occur during class time. On workshop days, you are required to come prepared with a copy of your completed draft (hard or electronic), exchange that draft with a peer, review that peer's draft, and discuss your comments together. Although some of your drafts will be group efforts, you are required to provide an individual review. This aspect of our course is aligned with the collaborative nature of the workplace, and I expect you to approach workshopping with an attitude of professionalism.

Participation
Your participation grade reflects my observation and judgment about your performance in the classroom and in the course as a whole. A typical participation grade is a B. The student who makes an unusually strong contribution to our learning environment may receive an above-average participation grade. The following examples are the kinds of behaviors that have earned students their participation grades.

High-Scoring Participation
1. Asked useful questions in class about assignments and activities.
2. Submitted papers when due.
3. Arrived on time for class; prepared to work before I took attendance.
4. Scheduled conferences with me for guidance long before an assignment was due in order to incorporate my advice on strengthening the document.
5. Brought the textbook to every class session and used it.

<u>Low-Scoring Participation</u>
1. Failed to bring the required hard-copy versions of assignments to class.
2. Arrived consistently late for class.
3. Failed to meet deadlines.
4. Missed classes because scheduled conflicting events.
5. Failed to be an effective, worthwhile team member.
6. Failed or refused to purchase the course textbook.
7. Read a text or did work for another course during class time.
8. Worked on the crossword puzzle during class time.
9. Sent a text during class.
10. Checked a text during class.
11. Surfed the web during class.

Plagiarism
All the work you submit must be written for this course during this term. Work from other courses or from other academic or non-academic settings, past or present, is not acceptable and may be subject to immediate failure. If you wish to submit extensively revised or expanded work previously submitted in this or another course, you must obtain my approval in advance.

University Policies

Honor Code Standards:
Academic dishonesty is not tolerated at the university. The University of Maryland, College Park, has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html.

Violations of the university's Honor Code will result in an automatic F grade for the assignment in question and may result in a grade of XF for the course and expulsion from the university. Please familiarize yourself with the University's Honor Code.

Preventing Sexual Harassment:
The University of Maryland is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment in which students, faculty, and staff can develop intellectually, professionally, personally, and socially. Sexual harassment by university faculty, staff, and students is prohibited. This constitutes campus policy.

Students with Disabilities:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (enacted in 1990) prohibits discrimination based on disability in employment, public service, public accommodations, telecommunications, and transportation. The Act is intended to afford the disabled equal opportunity and full participation in life activities. If you have a disability and need accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services and let me know your needs in the first few weeks of class, before assignments are due.

GRADING

The following are some general guidelines for the grading standards in this course:

Grade A Document
•Exceeds the standards for the assignment stipulated in assignment sheets and classroom discussion.
•Exhibits a high degree of audience awareness.
•Exhibits sufficient and credible information with source citations when necessary.
•Exhibits logical organization, accessible structure, and consciousness of aesthetic/usable format.
•Exhibits appropriate tone, clear writing, few or mechanical errors. The reader can easily understand and follow the writer's points.

Grade B Document
•Does a good job meeting the standards of the assignment.
•Exhibits a good, clear sense of audience and purpose throughout the document, though might be inconsistent.
•Exhibits thoughtful, but not complex, reasoning. May not contain enough details to support its main point. Cites sources consistently, though may have missed several.
•Exhibits a clear introduction and conclusion, and displays overall consistency with structure and organization, though not necessarily in the best possible option
•Needs editing revisions to make it excellent. (For instance, persistent grammar errors could reduce an A document to a B.)

Grade C Document
•Meets the basic standards of the assignment.
•Exhibits understanding of the purpose and/or audience overall, though unclear in areas.
•Exhibits the minimum supporting evidence with lacking or inappropriate citations.
•Exhibits a clear organizational pattern with formatting, though unclear and insufficient in some sections .
•Exhibits inconsistent mechanics such as: sentence variety, structure, and fragments; comma splices; spelling and/or grammatical errors; confusing paragraphs. C documents need more revision and, often, re-working of the entire piece to make them excellent.

Grade D Document
•Does not meet the standards of the assignment.
•Exhibits a limited or non-existent sense of purpose and audience.
•Lacks necessary evidence or exhibits misplaced evidence. Citations are not used or are used inappropriately.
•Does not exhibit obvious organization. Sections may be unclear, underdeveloped, or missing. Formatting is incorrect or unapparent.
•Exhibits numerous sentence-level errors and problems that compromise the reader's ability to understand the overall document.

Grade F Document
•Fails completely to meet assignment standards in both content and structure.
•Evidences poor, hastily-referenced research.
•Exhibits little or no logic in organization and formatting.
•Contains excessive errors in grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation that compromise its meaning.
•If a document contains plagiarized work, it will receive a failing grade.

ASSIGNMENT VALUES

Note: I reserve the right to change assignments and point values as the semester progresses. These values are a guide, not a contract.

(I = individual assignment; G = group assignment)

Papers and Assignments
- Self-Reflection#1/What I've Learned (30 points) I
- Syllabus Quiz (10 points) I
- In-class Style Exercises (50 points) I
- Class Opening Essays (30 points--2 points each for doing, plus some points to make it round)
- Comparison Through Graphics (30 points)
- Claim Email and Two Responses (50 points)
- Resume and Cover Letter (100 points) I
- Proposal for Final Project (100 points) G
- Mid-term Reflection (30 points) I
- Annotated Bibliography (25 points) I
- Final Self-Reflection Essay (30 points) I
- Final Project Personal Accountability and Work Breakdown (30 points) I
- 1st Draft and Progress Report of Final Project (50 points) G
- 2nd Draft and Progress Report of Final Project (50 points) G
- 3rd Draft and Progress Report of Final Project (50 points) G

Final Project
- Final Draft of Recommendation Report (20% of final semester grade) G

Oral Presentations
- Essay Presentation (20 points) I
- Project Pitch (20 points) I

Participation
- Overall End of Semester Participation Grade50 points) I

Grade Breakdown

A+	97-100%
A	93 – 96.9%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83- 86.9%
B-	80-82.9%
C+	77-79.9%
C	73-76.9%
C-	70-72.9%
D+	67-69.9%
D	63-66.9%

D-	60-62.9%
F	59.9% or below

ALENDAR (M 1603)

Information on this schedule is subject to change at my discretion. I reserve the right to make whatever changes may be necessary in order to fulfill course or class needs.

Date / Class	Readings / Homework (DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS)	In Class Activities / Objectives
28 Jan Class 1		course introduction technical communication intro writing process introduction to final paper genre What I've Learned Examples
4 Feb Class 2	**What I've Learned** **Draft: Description of Writing Process includes list** **Style Ch 2, 3**	Intro to peer editing Style exercises document and page design Writing process formal letters introduction and resumes
11 Feb Class 3	**Draft: Letter of Application (include job posting)** **Writing Process DUE** **Style Ch 5**	Style exercises Rhetorical triangle evaluating audience (definition considerations)

		persuading audience (with ethos, pathos, logos and JFK!)
18 Feb Class 4	Draft: Product Comparison Graphics Coverl Letter DUE Style Ch. 4	Exercises using and citing visuals Intro to workplace writing In class writing exercises
25 Feb Class 5	Draft: Email Response Product Comparisons DUE Style Ch. 6	4 elements of an argument using summary, quote, paraphrase formal reports
4 Mar Class 6	Topic Pitch Emails DUE	presentations considering recommendations Proposals, Audience Analysis
11 Mar Class 7	Draft: First Half Recommendation Proposal Research Training Quiz (Intro section)	scholarly source review proposals Library for research
18 Mar	SPRING BREAK	ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE; ANYTHING NOT RECEIVED WILL EARN A ZERO

25 Mar **Class 8**	**Reflective Essay #2** **Draft: Recommendation Proposal (1 copy per group member)** **Style Ch. 8**	**workshop; thesis draft workshop** **documentation style**
1 April **Class 9**	**Final Draft: Recommendation Proposal**	**conferences**
8 Apr **Class 10**	**NO CLASS**	**No Class**
13 Apr **Class 11**	**Final Draft: Annotated Bibliography**	**thesis draft workshop**
23 Apr **Class 12**	**First Draft: Recommendation Report (10 pgs)**	**workshop** **paragraphing; chunking; a "hook"**
27 Apr **Class 13**	**Second Draft: Recommendation Report (15 pgs)**	**workshop** **overview/abstract/scope**
4 May **Class 14**	**Third Draft: Recommendation Report (20 pgs)** **Reflective Essay #3**	**workshop and conferences** **laundry list** **front matter**
11 May **Class 15**	**Final Draft: Recommendation Report (20 pgs)** **Personal Accountability and Work Breakdown**	

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