ENGL393-BL: TECHNICAL WRITING
SYLLABUS
THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Professor Sheila B. Lalwani
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BL 51: Tuesdays 9:30-10:45 a.m., SPH 0301, Thursdays Online
BL 61: Tuesdays 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. PLS 1158, Thursdays Online
BL 65: Tuesdays 12:30-1:45 p.m. EDU 2102, Thursdays Online
BL 75: Tuesdays 3:30-4:45 p.m. JMZ 1215, Thursdays Online

Office Hours:
McKeldin 4th floor, 8-9 a.m.; 5-6 p.m McKeldin 4th floor
Virtual Office Hours: 7-9 p.m. Sundays, By Appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

Writing is a necessary skill in our world today. This course aspires to give students essential skills that they will need in the workplace. In particular, this course focuses on technical writing and communication in specialized formats for different audiences.

This course highlights the key characteristics of good writing and emphasizes the importance of planning drafting, revising and rewriting. Rewriting is fundamental to the successful essay, manual, letter and proposal. Nobody is born a great writer. Great writing takes time to cultivate and fundamental to this process is the feedback students will give and receive from their mentors, peers and colleagues. In this course, students can expect individual writing assignments, in-class writing assignments and group work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES & GOALS

- ✓ Analyze a variety of professional situations and produce appropriate texts.
- ✓ Produce persuasive texts that reflect the degree of available evidence and take into account counter arguments.
- ✓ Understand and practice the skills needed to produce competent, professional writing, including planning, drafting, revising and editing.
- ✓ Identify and implement appropriate research methods for each writing task.
- ✓ Practice the ethical use of sources and the conventions of citation appropriate (MLA, CMS, APA, IEEE).
- ✓ Improve competence in Standard Written English (including grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, coherence and document design) and 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.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Arrive prepared to class each session ready to discuss the material.
- ✓ Contribute thoughtfully to classroom collaborations and in-class presentations.
- ✓ Support fellow students during the writing process with thoughtful critiques and praise.
- ✓ Submit assignments that are illustrative of the student's abilities.
- ✓ Think creatively and innovatively during the semester.

COURSE MATERIALS

Technical Communication. John M. Lannon and Laura J. Gurak: 13th Edition. New York: New York. March 2014.

Additional readings will be distributed in class.

Students are urged to own their own updated grammar/style guidebook to help students identify proper citations and generally assist students with grammar, diction, syntax and writing development.

Students should also keep a pocket folder or binger to hold the class handouts and papers that that they will submit and receive. Flash drives are advisable as well.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Sheila B. Lalwani has been an instructor with the University of Maryland since 2011. She previously served as the Special Advisor to the Publisher at *Foreign Policy* magazine with the Washington Post Company.

A former Fulbright Scholar, she is a graduate of Harvard University.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance in this course is mandatory. Much of this course will be collaborative in nature, and it is difficult to engage in successful discourse without attendance. Below are the policies on unexcused and excused absences, as well as tardiness. Please note that **missing more than two weeks' worth of class for any reason may result in a zero for the participation/professionalism portion of the grade** and may jeopardize a student's overall course grade. It is the student's responsibility to learn what has been missed. It is strongly advised to avoid missing more than one class.

Unexcused Absences. A student may take up to one week's worth of no-questions-asked absences per semester for both the expected (i.e., being the best man in a brother's wedding) and the unexpected (i.e., a flat tire). If a student takes a no-questions-asked absence, however, **the student is still responsible for whatever material was covered in class**. If a major scheduled grading event (assignment due, in-class workshop/peer review, presentation) is scheduled for that class period, and a student doesn't show up and doesn't have a university-sanctioned excuse (see below) then that student will lose the points for that activity.

Excused Absences. The University excuses absences for illness or the illness of an immediate family member, for participation in university activities at the request of University authorities, for religious observance, and for compelling circumstance beyond one's control. Documentation is required for all excused absences. If a student has an anticipated excused absence, the student must inform the instructor **in writing** by the end of the schedule adjustment period or at least two weeks in advance.

Absence for one class due to illness. The university requires that students provide a self-signed note attesting to the date of the illness, with an acknowledgment that the information provided is true. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. The Health Center has an online form (http://www.health.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Class%20Excuse110.pdf).

Absence from more than one class because of the same illness. Students must provide written documentation of the illness from the health care provider who made the diagnosis. No diagnostic information shall be given. The provider must verify dates of treatment and indicate the time frame during which the

student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.

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

Tardiness. In the professional world tardiness is not tolerated. To ensure regular and on-time attendance, 2 late arrivals (or unexplained early departures) will convert to 1 absence.

Electronic Device Policy. Students should turn off their cell phones before class begins.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Communications about this course. Faculty and advisors use email to convey important information, and students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date, and must ensure that forwarding to another address functions properly. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding, and returned email are the responsibility of the student, and do not constitute an excuse for missing announcements or deadlines.

Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge. The University has a student administered Code of Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge, which prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without permission of both instructors, buying papers, handing in fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu. On each paper a student hands in this semester, please print and sign the following: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment."

Special Needs. If a student has a registered disability that will require accommodation, please consult with the instructor. If a student has a disability and have not yet registered it with Disability Support Services in the Shoemaker Building (301-314-7682), please do so immediately.

Course Evaluations. Students participating in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility that student member of the academic community holds. Feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. CourseEvalUM will be open to complete evaluations at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the website www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete evaluations. In addition, the Professional Writing Program uses its own evaluation for each of its courses. Those will be distributed during the last two weeks of class.

General Item. To succeed at technical writing requires a mastery of the process of writing: learning and developing skills that will assist students in communicating highly specialized content to a variety of audiences. Thus, this class will take a significant amount of time and energy. The return on student investment is a significantly advanced understanding of technical writing and communication.

Copyright Notice: Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted. They may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor. Copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

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: http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1541 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.

For information on ELMS, counseling, health, learning workshops, tutoring, writing help, student rights in undergrad courses, questions about graduation or add/drop/withdraw, please see http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html.

Emergency Protocol. Communicated to students via e-mail.

GRADING

Grading: The entire semester is worth 200 points. The semester grade is based on several assignments:
Participation: 20 points
Resume/Cover Letter: 30 points
Project I: 40 points
In-Class Writing, Draft Workshops, and Early, Mid and End-of-Semester Assessments: 70 points
Project II: 40 points

On grades: Assigned grades run from A through F throughout the semester. To give students a better sense of the qualities that determine these grades, here is a general guideline:
A: Clear demonstration of the lessons and strong adherence to the Measures of Excellence, grammar and diction
B: Reasonably strong understanding of the lessons and decent adherence to the Measures of Excellence
C: Average understanding of the lessons and average adherence to the Measures of Excellence
D: Below average understanding of the lessons and below average adherence to the Measures of Excellence
F: Demonstrable lack of effort

PORTFOLIOS & WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All out-of-class assignments must be submitted in either hard copy or through the shared system or both. The student will always know. All assignments must be typed in 10, 11, or 12 point standard-sized font or equivalent (for instance, Arial 10 = Times New Roman 12). All double-spaced assignments should contain name and page numbers where appropriate. Most one page documents, such as memos, letters, and resumes, should be single-spaced and should not be numbered.

Students should not submit materials on double-sided paper. Students should keep all graded assignments in one folder. This portfolio will represent the cumulative aspect of the semester's work. Assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class and in person.

A letter grade from the paper for each class day it is late (i.e., a B+ paper due Tuesday but handed in Thursday would receive a D+). If it is absolutely necessary for students to submit a paper other than the traditional way,

please contact the instructor with as much advance notice as possible.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

The follow is the schedule for the semester, but it is subject to change based on the dynamics of this particular class, as well as the inevitable unplanned events and opportunities; all amendments will be announced in class and/or communicated electronically. *Please note that assignments are due the day they are listed on the syllabus*.

Week One: August 30/September 1
Tuesday: Introduction to course & classroom policies. Web site introduction.
Thursday: Introduction to online learning and written assignment.

Week Two: September 6/8
Tuesday: Introducing technical communication. Read Chapters 1-2.
Thursday: In-class writing and video. Reflective essay.

Week Three: September 13/15
Tuesday: In-class writing on audience and analysis.
Thursday: Resumes and Job-Search Materials. Chapters 17-18. **Students receive Project 1 guidelines.**
Due Friday-Sunday: *Submit: Submit idea for Project 1. Pick a product, idea or issue of interest.*

Week Four: September 20/22
Tuesday: In-class peer review. **STAR Method. Resume, cover letter writing examples.**
Bring to class: Rough copy of resume and cover letter for peer edit.
Thursday: Understanding Audience. Read: Chapter 3, 16, 17.
Due by 6 p.m. Friday, revised resume and cover letter.

Week Five: September 27/29
Tuesday: Thinking Globally. Read: Chapter 4-5.
Thursday: In-class writing and lecture.

Week Six: October 4/6
Tuesday: In-class writing and examples. Read Chapter 18-1 9.
Thursday: Thinking critically and researching. Chapter 7.

Week Seven: October 11/13
Tuesday: The Research Process. Chapters 8-9
Thursday: In-class writing drafts.

Week Eight: October 18/19
Tuesday: Bring draft to class. Organizing and editing. Chapter 10-11.
Thursday: Project 1writing peer review.

Week Nine: October 25/27
Tuesday: Thinking Visually. Chapter 12-13
Thursday: Project 1 draft due.

Week Ten: November 1/3
Tuesday: In-class lecture and exercise on proposals. Chapter 23.
Thursday: In-class writing and lecture.

Week Eleven: November 8-10
Tuesday: Writing memos. Chapter 14.
Thursday: Group project and lecture.
Students receive guidelines for Project II.

Week Twelve: November 15-17
Tuesday: Report Writing. Chapters 20-21.
Thursday: In-class writing

Week Thirteen: November 22
Tuesday: Meet with the professor
Thursday: No class.

Week Fourteen: November 29/Dec.1
Tuesday: Project II Prep and peer review.
Thursday: Project II prep. Read Chapter 24 on oral presentations.

Week Fifteen: December 6/8
Tuesday: In-class presentations.
Thursday: Project II prep.

Week Sixteen: December 13
Tuesday: Project II submitted through ELMS