

English 393: Technical Writing

Fall 2016 Syllabus

Section 1001 – TTh 8 – 9:15am Tawes 1105

Section 1102 – TTh 9:30 – 10:45am Hornbake 1112

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Office hours: by e-mail or by appointment TTh 12:30-2pm

Professional Writing Program Office

The PWP Office is located in Tawes 1220. Any documents submitted through the PWP should go in the drop box outside the main PWP entrance. Be sure to put my name on any document you submit. The PWP website is

<http://www.engl-pw.umd.edu/index.htm>.

Overview and Objectives of the Course

English 393 is a hands-on workshop in preparing, reviewing, revising, and finalizing documents typical of the workplace, including letters and resumes, memos, proposals, and both written and oral reports. Students learn to improve the readability and usefulness of their writing in a variety of professional styles and formats. Students are graded not only on their ability to produce individual work, but also on their ability to collaborate in research and writing, as well as in evaluating and improving one another's work.

Learning Outcomes

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.

Course Texts

This semester, we will experiment with open source technical writing materials. This means there may be some hiccups in editing and compiling the best materials but there will be no cost for student access to these materials.

If you wish to spare no expense and desire further exploration of technical writing matters, I recommend consulting Mike Markel's *Technical Communication*, 10th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2010); <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

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.

Major Assignments

Individual

Recipe

Job Packet

Proposal and Pitch

Team

Audience Analysis

Progress Report

Formal Presentation

Major Project

When each assignment is announced, a sheet describing key elements, goals, and expectations will be distributed. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are to be submitted before class time via ELMS. Updates on minor assignments, course readings, and activities will come via ELMS and in person throughout the semester.

Writing Project Standards

In this course, I will hold you to the professional standards that prevail both throughout the university and in the professional world.

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, drafts and completed writing assignments turned in late will result in grad reductions.

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 résumé, cover letter, personal statement, memo, research review article, fact sheet, instruction manual, conference abstract, or poster, 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.

Grading Criteria

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 I distribute to you during the semester, 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:

Recipe	10%
Proposal Memo and Pitch	10%
Job Packet (Career Fair Reflection 5% + Cover Letter/Resume 5%)	10%
Audience Analysis	10%
Progress Report	10%
Formal Presentation	15%
Final Group Project	25%
Participation and In-class writing	10%

I will distribute assignment sheets during the semester that explain each project in detail. Many of our major assignments will be assessed through a rubric posted on ELMS. I will use the following grading scale to calculate your final grade for 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%

Attendance

You are expected to attend class every day, and you should also have the textbook or other assigned reading (or notes on those readings) 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," and I will lower your **final grade** by one grade (e.g., A becomes an A-, A- becomes a B+, B+ becomes a B, and so on).*

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.

The 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.

Course Calendar:

Dates and activities may be subject to change. I will

Day	Session Objectives	Reading Due	Work Due
Week 1 Day 1 T 8-30	Intro to the course; Syllabus Highlights; ground rules; writerly strikes and gutters memos; Recipe Assignment introduction		
Day 2 Th 9-1	Recipe genre analysis; audience		Bring in a recipe to share
Week 2 Day 3 T 9-6	Food writing ethics, research,	Guy Fieri Restaurant Review (ELMS)	
Day 4 Th 9-8	Recipe Workshop; intro to mini-lessons		Recipe Draft due
M 9-12	END OF SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENT (last day to add or drop classes without a W)		
Week 3 Day 5 T 9-13	Recipe reflection; Job Hunt unit introduction		Recipe Due
Day 6 Th 9-15	Personal Statements and Cover letters		
Week 4 Day 7 T 9-20	Job Packet Workshop		
Day 8 Th 9-22	Career Fair Prep		Career Fair 12-5pm
Week 5 Day 9 T 9-27	Major Project Introduction; Designing Pitches		Job Packet and CF Reflection Due
Day 10 Th 9-29	Pitfalls; Seeking a Problem through stasis theory		

Week 6 Day 11 T 10-4	Project Pitches Day I		
Day 12 Th 10-6	Project Pitches Day II		Proposal Memos Due
Week 7 Day 13 T 10-11	Sorting Day		
Day 14 Th 10-13	Early Conferencing I		
Week 8 Day 15 T 10-18	Early Conferencing II		
Day 16 Th 10-20	Audience concerns; Mid-semester Evals		
Week 9 Day 17 T 10-25	AA Workshop		Audience Analysis Draft
Day 18 Th 10-27	A gala of opportunity? The progress report assignment		Audience Analysis Due
Week 10 Day 19 T 11-1	Ethos in the progress report		
Day 20 Th 11-3	Past PWP Contest winners analysis		
Week 11 Day 21 T 11-8	National Research Day		
Day 22 Th 11-10	Transmittal letters		
Week 12 Day 23 T 11-15	Progress Report Workshop		
Day 24 Th 11-17	Conferencing I		Progress Report Memo Due
Week 13	Conferencing II		

Day 25 T 11-22			
W 11-23 Through S 11-27	Thanksgiving Day Break Observed NO CLASS		
Week 14 Day 26 T 11-29	Formal Presentations		Presentations Due
Day 27 Th 12-1	Workshop I		
Week 15 Day 28 T 12-6	Workshop II		
Day 29 Th 12-8	Last Day; a long-expected party		Major Project Due