

**English 393: Technical Writing**  
**Fall 2016**

**Section 1702, Tuesdays, 6:30pm-9:10pm, TWS 0224**

**Course Schedule**

**Instructor:** Kisa Lape

**Email:** [klape@umd.edu](mailto:klape@umd.edu)

Please follow these three guidelines when writing emails to me:

- Begin the subject line with “ENGL 393”
- Complete the subject line with a concise phrase describing your question or concern
- Appropriately address and sign your email by including my name at the beginning and your name at the end.

**Office:** 1230 Tawes Hall

Phone Number: 301-405-3762 (PWP Main Office)

**Office Hours:** TuTh 2:00-3:00pm, 5:00-6:00pm, and by appointment

**Required Texts—Textbooks are available at Barnes & Noble and BookHolders**

M. Markel, *Technical Communication*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Bedford/St. Martin, 2015. ISBN 9781457673375

J. Williams & J. Bizup, *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Pearson, 2015. ISBN 9780321958761

**Recommended Materials**

An updated grammar/style guidebook that reflects *writing conventions in your discipline* to help you identify proper citations.

**Course Description**

This course prepares you for the type of professional communication you are likely to engage in during your first post-college jobs and beyond. It focuses on learning how to write effective technical documents for professional settings and to present specialized information in an accessible way to a variety of different audiences. We will study how technical professionals communicate in writing in to answer questions, argue for solutions, 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, you will learn to work effectively through the writing process to come up with ideas, think critically, write clearly, and (above all) revise and edit in order to produce a polished product.

**Course Goals and 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.

### Grading Procedures

Your semester grade will be based on a variety of assignments, some individual and some collaborative, accounting for roughly 25 pages of final, polished writing. The specific breakdown is as follows:

Audience-Based Resume and Cover Letter (10% of final grade)  
 Project Proposal (to include resource review) (15%)  
 Definition—Expert (5%)  
 Definition—Non-expert (5%)  
 Survey/Interview Questions (5%)  
 Instructions (10%)  
 Project Presentation (10%)  
 Homework Assignments (could include in-class writing, draft workshops, peer reviews, self-reflective essays, style exercises, and participation in class discussion) (10%)  
 Quizzes on *Style* readings (5%)  
 Final Project (25%)

### Assignments

The focus of the semester is the final project: **a 20-30 page technical report**, collaboratively produced for a specific, real-world audience, not your instructor. 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 teach you different forms of professional communication. You will also develop job application materials (**a cover letter and resume**) for use in 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 be required to produce 25-30 pages of original writing in this course.**

**Paper submission:** Papers must be uploaded to Canvas ([www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)) by the assigned dates and times. Late papers will be subject to grade penalty, unless prior arrangements have been made. You must complete all major graded assignments in order to pass this class. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the ELMS/Canvas system, but if you have questions, be sure to ask early.

The format for assignments will vary; it will always be assignment-specific, and you will be expected to follow the format required by each assignment. *Submissions that do not follow these formatting guidelines will be penalized.*

**Quizzes:** There will be a minimum of ten (announced) quizzes this semester; the quizzes are designed to accomplish two goals: 1) to ensure that you are reading and, more importantly,

understanding *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*; and 2) that you are paying attention and taking stock of what is happening during class time. (NOTE: Only the highest 8 quiz grades will count toward your grade.)

### **Class Communication**

As upper-level college students, you've probably already experienced several different types of communication. In the electronic realm, for instance, you have realized that the emails you send to your friends and family contain a different level of formality than the ones you'll send to potential employers and future co-workers.

In this class, we'll practice becoming adept at communicating with each other in a professional manner. In other words, emails sent to your classmates and to me should use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as proper salutations in the initial communication. I will attempt to answer in a timely manner, usually within 24 hours. Please include "ENGL393" and a short descriptive phrase in the subject line of your email. "Hi" or "question" are not descriptive phrases suitable for class emails.

### **Writing Project Standards**

In this course, you will be held to the professional standards that prevail both throughout the university and within the field of professional writing and editing.

*Promptness:* In this course, as in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All *major writing projects* must be submitted to Canvas by the assigned time on the assigned date. Unless you have made arrangements with me in advance, major writing projects turned in late will be lowered one full letter grade for each day late (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 audience, 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. Your communication should exhibit appropriate format. *Documents without correct and appropriate headers, pagination, and other basic formatting will not be accepted for grading and marked one class period late.*

*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 great seriousness with which these matters are frequently viewed in the working world. If you would like special assistance with any of these skills, I can recommend resources 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. If you would like me to read and comment on a draft, you must come to office hours or make an appointment (at least 24 hours in advance of the due date) to see me. Finally, I am open to your suggestions for improving the course, so please discuss with me your ideas on 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. There will be one required conference during the semester; the dates will be indicated on the Course Schedule.

### Undergraduate Writing Center:

Please consider taking your ideas and your written work to the Writing Center, where trained peer tutors will consult with you about any piece at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in 1205 Tawes Hall, and there is a satellite office in McKeldin library. Their phone number is 301-405-3785.

Please visit the writing center website (<http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>) for information on registering and scheduling appointments.

### 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 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. It is obvious from the text that the author spent significant time on invention, drafting, correcting, peer review, and revision. <i>Any text with frank grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors cannot receive an A under any circumstances.</i>
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.

Instructions for each assignment will be explained in assignment sheets distributed (via Canvas) during the semester.

## REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES: ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

### Participation

Effective class participation will require being prepared for class each day. On days when we have assigned readings from *Technical Communication* or *Style*, you should have the appropriate text with you. On days when we will be discussing readings from Canvas, you should print the readings and/or bring a laptop or e-reader (not a cell phone) to class with you (these devices can also be “checked out” from the library) so that you can follow discussion, point to pertinent passages, and participate effectively.

If it becomes obvious that you are disengaged during class sessions (e.g., due to sleeping, texting, Facebooking, or studying for an upcoming exam in another course), you will be marked absent for the day. Behaviors that would not be acceptable in a professional working environment will not be acceptable in this class.

Repeated occurrences of arriving late or leaving early will affect your class-participation grade. If your schedule indicates that you will not have enough time to travel between this class and another, please consider adjusting your schedule appropriately.

### Attendance

You are expected to attend class every day, and in addition to having completed any assigned reading or writing, 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 TWO, 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 (a physical, paper note; not an

email) 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 two consecutive 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.

### *Participation Grading in English 393*

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, or 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

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%

## **REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES: OTHER**

### **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.

The policy on academic dishonesty is zero tolerance. As professional writers in a workshop course, the chief concern will be inappropriate use of the ideas and writing of others, or “recycling” material that you have written for another course. For this class, you must think your own thoughts and write your own words; all material produced for the course must be new. If I discover signs of academic dishonesty, I will refer the matter for investigation to the Student Honor Council. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity, the Student Honor Council, and general policies regarding these and other issues, please visit <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

**On each formal paper you turn in for a grade this semester, please include the following: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.” Including the statement on documents turned in electronically will be considered your electronic signature.**

### **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.

Your learning in the class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

In order to receive official university accommodations, you will need to register and request accommodations through the Office of Disability Support Services. DSS provides services for students with physical and emotional disabilities and is located in 0106 Shoemaker on the University of Maryland campus. Information about Learning Assistance Service and/or Disability Support Service can be found at [www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS) or [www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS). You can also reach DSS by phone at 301-314-7682.

### **Emergency Protocol**

If the University is closed for an extended period of time, course activities will continue, coordinated through ELMS. The instructor will provide detailed instructions.

### **Course Evaluations**

Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations. In addition, the Professional Writing Program uses its own evaluation for each of its courses. I will distribute this evaluation to you during the last two weeks of class.

### **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/](http://www.umd.edu/Sexual_Misconduct/).

### **Library Modules**

Throughout the semester, as need arises, additional assignments may be added to the syllabus. In particular, the folks in the library have kindly created modules designed specifically to help PWP students with their specialized research needs. When we begin our research component of the course, you may be assigned library modules, in addition to any work that is already listed on the Course Schedule. The modules will be available in Canvas, and you are strongly encouraged to explore this space throughout the semester.

### **Acknowledgements:**

The grading rubrics in this syllabus were created by PWP professors Scott Wible, Michelle Von Euw, Walter Knorr, and Marybeth Shea. Materials in this syllabus were adapted and adopted from past courses in order to ensure consistency between courses and curricula.

### **Copyright Notice**

Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted and they may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

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