

**Syllabus for
ENGL 393: Technical Writing
Fall 2016**

*We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.
—Ernest Hemingway*

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11:00 – 12:15

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Textbooks and Materials	2
Resources.....	2
Communication	2
Electronic Devices.....	2
Schedule of Classes and Assignments.....	3
Class Philosophy	9
Canvas	10
Assignment Requirements.....	10
Graded Assignments.....	10
Revisions	11
Late Assignments	11
Extra Credit	11
Grade Requirements	12
Course Grade Structure	12
Grade Algorithm.....	12
Closings of the University of Maryland.....	13
Course Material Copyright.....	13
Academic Policies	14
Attendance.....	14
Absences.....	14
Class Participation.....	14
Early Dismissals	14
Plagiarism and Academic Integrity	14
Accommodation	15
Academic accommodations for students who experience sexual misconduct.....	15
Diversity	15
Course Evaluations.....	16

Textbooks and Materials

The required texts for this course are:

- *Writing Does Have to Be Lonely* by Lawrence Weinstein (ISBN 978-0-616-65160-6)
NOTE: This text is available only on Canvas. It is out of publication.
- Core Grammar for College: <http://coregrammarforcollege.com/>
Please check Canvas for purchase and login information.
- *Technical Writing Principles, Strategies, and Readings* by Diana C. Reep (ISBN 9780205721504).
You may choose either the 7th or 8th edition.

Resources

Several additional resources are highly recommended for their usefulness:

- http://edu.ifixit.com/c/Tech_Writing_Handbook - this online writing guide is concise and easy to understand.
- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> - Purdue's OWL provides online content for grammar, common mistakes in writing, and resources such as various style guides.
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/OWLPurdue> - for those of you who like the visual and auditory component of material, Purdue OWL has produced video training.

Communication

The most effective way to communicate with me is through email. Please note that responses to email will be made in a timely manner but will not be instantaneous. I respond to email and phone calls during standard business hours, which are Monday through Friday from 8 - 4. The phone contact is my personal cell phone, so please be judicious in calling me. Texting is fine. I strongly recommend if you need to meet with me that we talk before or after class and/or during office hours listed.

Electronic Devices

Since this classroom is not a computer lab, you need to provide your own computer for class time. This is particularly important for completion of in-class assignments. If you do not have access to a personal laptop, you may rent one, at no cost, from McKeldin Library on a class-by-class basis or for the whole semester.

That being said, studies have shown that note taking is most effective when hand-written. My suggestion is you take notes by hand and use a laptop for responding to in class assignments.

All cell phones and other electronic devices such as smart phones; tablets, etc. should be switched off before class begins. You should not expect to communicate with anyone outside the classroom *during* class (no Facebook, tweets, text messages, IM, etc.). Classroom and personal computers may not be used on non-assignment related activities during class. Any unauthorized use of electronic devices for non-class/assignment activity will be held against your class participation since you are not participating in class when using such devices for non-class related contact.

If you are in an emergency situation (i.e. medical or family emergency), let me know before class and exit the room when responding to a call or text of an emergency nature.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

This schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and on email. These include additional readings, assignment sheets, peer review sheets, grade sheets, and other materials.

Week 1

August 30 – Culture in Writing/Communication
Writing on the Job

- Class:**
- Activities:
 - Class introduction, course policies
 - Using Canvas
 - Discussion – Genres of writing
 - Assignment discussion:
 - **Reflective Writing – Course Goals**
 - **This I Believe**
 - In-class assignment:
 - Student introductions
 - Create class goals

Due in-class: Email contact information (from the account you want to receive course email)

September 1

- Reading:**
- Weinstein: Chapters 1-7 (The writing process)
 - Assignment Sheet - **Impromptu Presentations**
 - Article: *Softening the Blow: Taking the Sting Out of Editorial and Other Reviews*

- Research for Discussions - Discussions - Reading Response:**
- Research what an audience is and how you might figure out the specifics of the audience you will write for regardless of the kind of writing you'll produce.
 - Research job information including elements such as interview questions along with good and bad responses; recruiter/interviewers' pet peeves, most sought after jobs; interview do's and don'ts; new trends in job hunting; etc.
 - Research different forms of collaboration. Be prepared to discuss the various pros and cons of collaboration.

-
- Due**
- Register for Core Grammar for College and take pre-test
 - Reflective writing – Course Goals
 - Ethics Challenge
 - Entries for Discussions - Reading Responses

Week 2

September 6 – Collaboration and Audience
Letters, Memos, and Email
Ethics

- In Class:** Discussions
- Weinstein: Chapters 8,9, 11 - 14
 - Ethics and Ethical Writing
 - Assignment Sheets - **Impromptu Presentations**

September 8

- Reading:**
- Reep: Chapter 1,2,3, 15
 - Assignment Sheet - **Prepared Presentations**

Research for Discussions - Reading Response: Research oral presentations. Information can include best practices or examples on how to prepare for a presentation, of what not to do in creating a presentation (the dreaded slides) and during the presentation.

- Due**
- Entries for Discussions - Reading Responses
 - This I Believe...
 - Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend Books 1-3)

Week 3**September 13– Oral Presentations**

- Class:**
- Discussion Points:
 - Organization, developing and preparing presentations
 - Delivering presentations
 - Final Project: forming teams and brainstorming
 - Discuss assignments –
 - **Prepared Presentations**
 - **Final Project Description**
 - Sign up for prepared presentations

- Due in class:**
- Impromptu oral presentations
 - Biography for Class Audience

September 15

Reading: Reep: Chapters 11, 12, 13, 16

- Research:**
- Think about the type of reports you will write in your field or have written for jobs you've held. What is the purpose of a report? What types of reports are there? What elements go into specific types of reports? How are reports organized?
 - Find a report or two, read it, and make some notes about the report (what was effective and what was not) to discuss in class.

- Due**
- Entries for Discussions - Reading Responses
 - Final Project Topic Memo
 - Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend Books 4-6)

Week 4**September 20 – Types of Reports/Short and Long Reports**

- Class:**
- Discussion Points:
 - Elements of reports
 - Types of reports
 - Job Packet exercise
 - Using Microsoft Word

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- Due in class:**
- Impromptu oral presentations
 - Cover Letter and Résumé
 - Biography for Professional Audience

September 22

Reading Reep: Chapter 6, 7

Research for Discussions - Reading Response Research graphic design. This can include figures, tables, charts, photographs, page layout and design, etc. Information can include best practices or examples of what not to do.

-
- Due**
- Entries for Discussions - Reading Responses
 - Final Project Descriptions
 - Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend 7-9)

Week 5

September 27 – Document Design

- Class** Discussion Points:
- Design features/elements
 - Developing and using graphics
 - Developing document standards

Due in class: Prepared oral presentations

September 29

- Reading**
- Reep: Chapter 8
 - Assignment sheet: **Definitions**

Research for Discussions - Reading Response What are definitions in technical documents? Why are they necessary? Find some examples of good or bad definitions and be prepared to share why.

-
- Due**
- Entries for Discussions - Reading Responses
 - Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend Books 10-12)

Week 6

October 4 – Definitions and Workshop

- Class**
- Discussion Points
 - Writing definitions
 - Using definitions in documents
 - In-class assignment: write a definition

Due in class Prepared oral presentations

October 6

- Reading**
- Reep: Chapter 9
-

- Assignment Sheets:
 - **Descriptions**

Research for Discussions - Reading Response Research and be prepared to discuss the differences between definitions and descriptions including how and when each are used. Find examples of descriptions (good or bad) to share with the class. They may be online or hardcopy.

- Due**
- Entries for Discussions - Reading Responses
 - Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend 13-15)

Week 7

October 11 – Descriptions

- Class**
- Discussion Points
 - Planning Descriptions
 - Organization
 - Sections of a Technical Description
 - Discuss Description assignment including peer review
 - Develop Description assignment topics and audience analysis
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- Due in class**
- Prepared oral presentations
 - Description assignment audience analysis

October 13

Reading Assignment Sheet: **Description Peer Review**

- Due**
- Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend Books 16-18)
 - Reflective writing – Midcourse review

Week 8

October 18 – Description Workshop

Class Peer review and edit descriptions

- Due in class:**
- Prepared oral presentations
 - Description draft for peer review

October 20

Reading

- Reep: Chapters 4-5, and 10
- Assignment Sheet **Instructions Topic Memo**
- Assignment Sheet **Instructions**

Research for Discussions - Reading Response

- Research and be prepared to discuss how to choose the appropriate organization for a document. Or, comment on the revision process.
- Instructions are complex documents. Research and write about how instructions are used and what elements a writer must consider developing a set of instructions for a user. Besides the instructions, what other elements should be included in an instruction document?
- Research cautions and warnings. What elements are common to such pronounced document components? Where are they located and why? How do

graphics enhance (or possibly detract) from these? What is the difference between a caution and warning? Bring in examples of the good, the bad, and/or the ugly.

- Due**
- Entries for Discussions - Reading Responses
 - Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend Books 19-21)
 - Status Report
 - Description assignment

Week 9

October 25 – Organization and Revision

Instructions, Procedures and Process Explanations

- Class**
- Discussion Points:
 - Sorting and organizing information
 - Effective paragraphs with style
 - Final drafts
 - Revisions: global, fine
 - Discuss Instructions assignment

Due in class Prepared oral presentations

October 27

- Due**
- Instruction Topic Memo
 - Entries for Discussions - Reading Response “What Not to Say At Work...”
 - Core Grammar for College – 3 books of your choosing (recommend Books 22-24)

Week 10

November 1 – Instructions In-Class Exercise

- Class**
- Discussion Points:
 - Instructions, procedures, and explanations
 - Liability and product warnings
 - Usability Testing
 - iFixit
 - Exercise: Instructions – **REMINDER** – bring in a camera you can upload from

Due in class In-class instruction assignment

November 3 – Instructions Workshop

- In class**
- Draft copy of the introduction to the Instruction Assignment
 - Peer review instructions
 - Writer to edit

Week 11**November 8 – Presentations on Instructions**

- In class:**
- Prepared oral presentations
 - Instructions assignment draft
 - Core Grammar for College Post-test

November 10 – Presentations on Instructions

- Due**
- Document on instructions
 - Remaining presentations

Week 12**November 15 – Government writing**

- Due:**
- Sample cable section
 - Topic selection

November 17 - Government writing

- Due:**
- Report BLUF and Analysis

Week 13**November 22 - Government report synthesized**

- Class**
- Oral presentations/accompanying document

November 24 - NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK**Week 14****November 29 – Final Project Workshop**

- In class:**
- Workshop on final project group presentations and deliverables.

December 1 - Final Project Presentations

- In class:**
- Final Project Oral Presentations

Week 15**December 6 - Final Project Presentations**

- In class:**
- Final Project Oral Presentations

December 8 - Final day of class/wrap up

- In class:**
- Advice to future students
 - Final project hard copies due/all project electronic copies due
 - Department Course evaluations

Appendix A: Course Objectives

Technical writing requires the writer to confidently and effectively combine technical expertise with a clearly understood set of objectives for providing information to a particular audience for an intended outcome. This course is the opportunity for you to develop analytical, drafting, revising, reviewing, and collaborative skills that are needed to succeed as a technical writer.

My objectives of this class are to help students:

- Identify the skills, processes, and products typically considered technical writing.
- Develop, practice, and achieve technical writing skills so that you will feel confident in applying them in your professional lives.
- Learn to work collaboratively as well as individually so that you contribute to successful communications.
- Use technology effectively to support the analysis, planning, and revision of your writing.
- Develop a professional, responsible, and ethical attitude towards your communications.

The Professional Writing Program defines additional course goals to strengthen writing skills and prepare students for the range of writing expected of them after graduation. 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 visuals) and be able to use this knowledge to revise material.
- Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

Class Philosophy

This class is designed to allow a student to develop new skills in communication. This is accomplished through learning about audience, choosing an appropriate document/communication format, and developing content that meets the audience's needs. For students to develop the skills necessary to write professional quality documents, a series of assignments are completed. Each of these assignments introduce new skills and continue to develop the skills previously learned. Students are encouraged to take risks in class and try their hands at new methods of communicating. This class provides an environment that gives students an opportunity to try new things, make mistakes in a safe environment, receive comments to strengthen weaknesses, and have the opportunity to improve on that work to create a piece that is worthy of a professional portfolio.

Canvas

This class uses online resources for:

- Posting the class assignments, examples, discussion notes, and updated syllabus.
- Posting assignments for grading.
- Sharing files for team assignments.
- Participating in online classes.

Assignment Requirements

Assignment sheets with detailed instructions concerning collaboration; format, content, delivery, and other pertinent assignment information are provided at the beginning of the semester as well as throughout the semester. Additional assignment sheets may be made available during the semester. All assignment sheets will be distributed electronically and discussed in class.

In general, assignments should be turned in hard copy for grades (that means in person handed to me or put in my mailbox in Tawes by the deadline). At times, documents will be sent to me electronically. The assignment sheets will detail the format of the assignment – PAY ATTENTION as it will affect your grade.

The standard format for naming files is: username_assignmentname_date unless otherwise stated. For example: komorris_assign1_011506 (i.e. the date is two characters for month, two characters for day, and two characters for year). Canvas will attach your user ID to the beginning of the file name when downloaded.

CAUTION:

I will not rename files. Files that are not named according to the criteria set here are considered late. See *Late Assignments Section*.

Graded Assignments

The assignments that are graded are your opportunity to demonstrate how well you understand the concepts of technical writing and how well you can apply those concepts to various situations. The Professional Writing Program requirements include a minimum of 25 pages of “original” writing (6,500 words). ***Students may not submit papers written for other courses to fulfill a PWP assignment.*** The value for each assignment of the overall grade are as follows:

Assignment	Value	
1	Reflective Writing – Course Goals	2.5%
	Reflective Writing – Midcourse Review	2.5%
	Reflective Writing – Personal Evaluation	2.5%
2	Ethics Challenge	2.5%
3	This I Believe...Essay & Response	10%
4	Core Grammar for College	10%
5	Description	10%
6	Instructions	15%
9	Discussions - Reading Responses	5%

8	Prepared Presentation	2.5%
7	Government Report	2.5%
8	Final Project Description	5%
9	Final Project Oral Presentation	5%
10	Final Project	15%
	Total	100%

Revisions

Because technical writing is interactive, I encourage you to revise work during the course of the semester. Revising a paper cannot be done solely to improve your grade. Your grade will be incrementally affected for narrow changes; a greater impact on your grade will require a greater effort to rethink, redesign, and refine your finished product. To turn in a revision for re-grading, you *must* prepare a memorandum to discuss your intention to revise. You must also identify the specific outcomes you want to achieve in revising your work. The date for resubmission may not be any longer than two weeks after you receive your grade and comments back. The exception for this due date is any assignments due in the last two weeks of class. Those assignments must be resubmitted no later than the due date of the final project.

There are three assignments that cannot be revised: the oral presentations (individual and final project) and the final project. These assignments cannot be revised once they are completed. However, I encourage peer editing of drafts as well as discussion of those drafts with myself. Another exception to revisions is late assignments. If an assignment is handed in late, the assignment cannot be revised.

If a team assignment is selected for revision, there are two options: 1) a single individual may redo the assignment and only that person's grade will be affected or 2) the whole team may work on the assignment and the whole team's grade will be affected.

When turning in a revised assignment, name the file with the following extension: **_revised**

Late Assignments

The final score for any assignment loses 10 points for each *day* it is late. An assignment is late if the timestamp on the electronic submission (uploaded to Canvas) is later than 5 p.m. or it is not in my mailbox by 5 p.m. of the assigned date.

Note that last minute computer or other mechanical problems are not viable excuses for late assignments. You are responsible for scheduling adequate time to allow for such incidents and should maintain electronic backups and hard copies in case such problems arise.

Extra Credit

There are two types of extra credit:

1. The first type is extra credit points added to various assignments. An example of this type of extra credit is earning up to 2 additional points to create an audio file to complement the *This I Believe...* assignment. Points will be added directly to the assignment grade.
2. The second type of extra credit is to earn additional points towards your COURSE grade. To earn these points, extra credit assignments are available on Canvas. Extra credit assignments are available on Canvas. Sometimes opportunities present themselves during the semester that can be used as extra

credit. As new extra credit opportunities become available during the semester, they will be posted on Canvas and an announcement will be made to inform you of new opportunities. You may earn up to a maximum of 2 points of this type of extra credit. Each extra credit assignment is worth 1 point.

Grade Requirements

The grading criteria for each assignment are listed in the corresponding grading sheet. The grading sheet is available at the same time as the assignment sheet is posted for a specific assignment. The grading sheets are divided into categories concentrating on various elements of writing. Each category has a maximum point value. If errors are found in the assignment, points are deducted from the appropriate category on the grade sheet up to the maximum value for that category. For example, if the mechanics category is worth a maximum of 10 points and there are 2 major mistakes in the assignment that fit in this category, the points earned for mechanics is 8 points because each error has a value of one point. As the semester progresses, the elements that are graded and the values for those elements reflect the skills being developed in the class.

Course Grade Structure

GRADE	PERCENTAGE RANGE	
A+	100%	> 97
A	< 97	> 94
A-	< 94	> 90
B+	< 90	> 87
B	< 87	> 84
B-	< 84	>80
C+	< 80	>77
C	< 77	>74
C-	< 74	>70
D+	< 70	>65
D	< 65	>60
D-	< 60	>50
F	< 50	>0

Grade Algorithm

Each assignment is worth 100 points. The point value you earn on an assignment is then multiplied by the percent value of the assignment. The resulting point value is used to compute the final grade, for example:

Assignment	Grade (out of 100)	% Value	Point Value
RW: Course Goals	90	2.5%	2.25
RW: Midcourse Review	85	2.5%	2.125
RW: Personal Evaluation	90	2.5%	2.25
Ethics Challenge	80	2.5%	2.0
This I Believe...Essay & Response	88	10%	8.8
Core Grammar for College	85	10%	8.5
Description	86	15%	12.9
Instructions	89	20%	17.8
Prepared Presentation	90	2.5%	2.25
Discussions - Reading	100	5%	5

Responses			
Status Report	100	2.5%	2.5
Final Project Description	83	5%	4.15
Final Project Oral Presentation	91	5%	4.55
Final Project	92	15%	13.8
Total		100%	88.875 (B+)

Closings of the University of Maryland

When UMD cancels classes, our class will meet online through Canvas for real time discussion, on-line assignments, or other means of covering material from class. Be prepared to log into Canvas at the regular start of class. Messages will be posted on Canvas describing what to do to participate during our class time.

Course Material Copyright

Class lectures, assignment sheets, Canvas material, and any other materials that I produce for this class are copyrighted and may only be reproduced for personal use. Other use requires written permission from the author (for example, a fellow student or me).

The work you produce is your own work and cannot be reproduced for anything other than course use without your written permission. Permission may be requested to use your material as in-class examples outside the scope of this semester. An exception to this is that your portfolio of work may be used as part of the Professional Writing Department's annual portfolio review. For details about this review and how student work is used, please see faculty.umd.edu/teach/IllegalDistribution.html

Appendix B: Academic Policies

Attendance

Attendance is taken by signing in to class. This is similar to signing your time sheet at the end of the day in a professional setting. In the corporate world, success in your job performance is directly related to your ability to “show up” – both mentally and physically.

Absences

Since this class is expected to function in a professional manner, it is expected that you will be proactive in dealing with absences. If you miss a class (either excused, unexcused, or religious observation – I don’t differentiate), it will be your responsibility to inform me prior to class if possible; and, if not, as soon as you can. Do not contact me to find out information about the class you missed. Develop a relationship with a classmate so that you can get the information from them. Because of the nature of this class, your absence will manifest itself in your work and can affect your grade. There is a range of technology that can be used to participate in class if your physical presence is not possible (if you are sick, but still functional for example) and you want to participate in class. This is in accordance to the policy set forth by the University and outlined here: <http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/atedasse.html>

Class Participation

Class attendance is only the beginning of being successful in this course. Come prepared to discuss assigned readings, to make substantive contributions to class discussions, to actively participate during group workshops, and to engage fully with in-class writing assignments. Also, don’t forget any assignments including bringing requested examples, or materials to class for review or discussion. You are also required to have completed drafts of your papers (and copies – or access to online versions – for your peer review partners and/or group members) on the days that they are due.

***Failure to make adequate commentary during peer editing
will reduce your grade for that assignment.***

Early Dismissals

If I am late ***more than 20 minutes*** without sending a message about my late arrival the class may dismiss itself. If I know I am going to be late, I will make every effort to get a message to the class. Messages may be presented in the form of email prior to class, posts to Canvass, or as a verbal announcement/written message posted at the classroom from the Professional Writing Program office. If such a late notice is relayed, it is expected that you ***remain 20 minutes beyond my estimated time of arrival***, in accordance to the policy set forth by the University.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is totally unacceptable and will result in an automatic grade of *F* on the assignment. It will also be reported to the University Honor Council, which can take further action that may impact your educational career. Beyond the University, it can impact your prospects for a job. The workplace, especially in light of current events, is extremely sensitive to this issue. The Student Honor Council clarifies here:

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. 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.president.umd.edu/policies/jii100a.html>

Accommodation

Students with documented disabilities should provide documentation from Disability Support Service by the end of the schedule adjustment period (end of the second week of class) to arrange necessary accommodation. If this information is not provided in a timely manner, accommodations will begin when the information is provided.

For disabilities that develop during the semester, students must submit documentation within two weeks of the onset of the disability in order to arrange necessary accommodation.

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

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.

Appendix C: Course Evaluations

The Professional Writing Program utilizes two forms of course evaluations for department and instructor feedback. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. The PWP policy on course evaluations is as follows:

- 1) PWP uses its own evaluation system that will be distributed at some point during the last two weeks of the semester.
- 2) PWP encourages you to fill out the electronic course evaluation at CourseEvalUM. Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for a period each semester. The dates are posted in the syllabus Schedule. Please go directly to www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete your evaluations. When 70% or more of the students from a class respond, the evaluation information is made available to the whole student body.