

ENC 3250:

# Professional Communication

Instructor: Laura Gonzales, Ph.D.

Contact: [gonzalesl@ufl.edu](mailto:gonzalesl@ufl.edu)

Office: TUR 4358

Office Hours: Tuesday 4-6pm & by appt.

Class location: TUR 2306

Class meets: Tuesday 10:40-11:30am

Thursday 10:40-12:35pm

## D escription

This class is intended to introduce you to the field of technical and professional writing (TPW), focusing on how professional communication is mitigated through relationships between various stakeholders and community members. Through our course projects, students will practice professional communication in a variety of rhetorical situations, understanding how issues of access, inclusion, and accessibility are at play in all professional communication contexts. Our course will be structured through the following grounding concepts:

- **Technical and professional writers build and maintain relationships**  
Although things like word choice, visual rhetoric, proper punctuation, and effective use of digital media are important, these abilities amount to nothing if a technical and professional writer cannot use them to facilitate relationships between organizations and their communities/publics, writers and publishers, experts and lay people, and so on.
- Because technical and professional writers build and maintain relationships, **their social abilities and curiosity are just as important as their ability to construct coherent prose or communicate in multiple media**  
Good technical and professional writers must know how to pose good questions, to listen actively, and at times to observe others' actions. They must know how to seek information and become versatile in determining where that information might be found.
- **Technical and professional writers write, edit, and design with and on behalf of others**  
Some writers (such as novelists and poets) attach their names to their work. Technical and professional writers usually leave their names unattached because they produce and maintain an organization's communications. They are essentially stewards of an organization's rhetorical resources. This means that technical and professional writers must learn to compose texts that others can access, engage with, use and perhaps reuse.

# Goals and Structure

This course is designed with three primary learning goals in mind:

- 1) To provide an opportunity to practice and refine technical and professional communication skills, including research, design, drafting, review, collaborating, and editing.
- 2) To acquaint you with the professional practices of technical and professional communication, considering issues of access, accessibility, diversity, advocacy, and ethics.
- 3) To reinforce your ability to make research-based arguments and design decisions with clear claims and evidence.

You will meet these goals through our course readings and discussions, and by collaborating with both your peers and with our community partners.

**Note:** This course satisfies 6000 words of the University Writing Requirement, provided you earn a final grade of C or higher.

# Materials

It is especially important that you check the Course Schedule before every class meeting, as our assignments and readings will definitely change throughout the course. All of our required materials will be available through our course website.

Because this course focuses on the connections between rhetoric(s) and technologies, you will need access to online materials during our class time.

Please bring your laptops to every class meeting. If you cannot access a lap top, please reach out to me during the first week of class so that I can help secure one for you. You are not required to purchase any additional materials.

# P projects

Our work will be threaded through the following major projects, which accumulate to 475 possible points:

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
<b>P1: Rhetorical Tool Review</b> (100 points possible)	After reading about usability, accessibility, difference, and technical communication, you will be asked to compose a rhetorical review of a tool. By “tool,” I mean a specific piece of software, application, website, or another artifact that is intended to facilitate users’ movement through a process or action.
<b>P2: Technical Documentation</b> (100 points possible)	This assignment will introduce you to and give you practice with something that is harder than it looks: writing quality technical documentation, specifically, defining, describing, and instructing and testing your documentation for usability. This assignment asks you to document something with a very specific audience in mind.
<b>P3: Community Project Memo</b> (25 points possible)	In preparation to work with a community partner, this project asks you to write a memo where you propose a specific project that you will collaborate on with a community partner of your choice.
<b>P3: Community Project</b> (150 points possible)	After reading about the work that technical and professional writers do within their communities, you’ll be asked to complete a project with a community partner of your choice.
<b>P4: Professional Portfolio and Digital Identity</b> (100 points possible)	Being a technical and professional writer often requires that you build and maintain a digital identity and showcase your work portfolio. This assignment asks you to build a digital identity based on your own future professional goals.

# C class P policies

My evaluation of your work in this class will be based not only on the materials that you submit, but also on your broader engagement with your colleagues in our classroom community. My expectation is that all members of our class community will attend every class session and will submit all work on time, so that we can build and sustain a reciprocal and collegial relationship. I will take attendance during every class period, so please come speak with me immediately if you anticipate not being able to attend class and/or to submit your work on time. If students accrue 3 absences during the term, they will receive a lowered grade. If students accrue 5 absences, they will automatically fail the course. Numerous absences will also make it impossible to keep up with the course’s pace.

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog (<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#attendance> ) and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

All work is due on the day indicated on the course calendar. Late class participation assignments are not accepted in this course and receive a grade of Zero. Major assignments which are submitted late will lose 10 points with an additional 10 points deducted for every 24 hours late, including weekends.

If there is anything I can do to make the classroom environment more accessible to you for any reason, please come speak with me during the first week of class so that we can ensure that you have everything you need to be successful in this course and in the graduate program.

## **I**nclusion & **A**ccessibility

No two people learn exactly the same way. If you find that the materials are difficult for you to absorb, don't assume right away that you don't understand the material. Perhaps you prefer to process information through speaking or listening, but all I am providing are written handouts, making it difficult for you to process. Please speak with me if you would like to think through other options for engaging with the material and activities in the course.

Disabilities are visible and invisible, documented and undocumented: I do not distinguish between these designations. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, I encourage you to speak with me as soon as you can about your learning needs and how I can best accommodate them. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please speak with me and register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) as soon as possible.

**U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):** Student Health Care Center, 392-1161

## **G**radings

Grades will be assigned on each project and your final grade will be assigned cumulatively based on your scores on each assignment. If you are concerned with your grade at any point in the semester, please come see me during office hours. I will not discuss grades via email at any point. The table below outlines grade percentages and their corresponding letter grades.

Percent	Grade
93.0 - 100.0	A
90.0 - 92.9	A-
87.0 - 89.9	B+
83.0 - 86.9	B
80.0 - 82.9	B-
77.0 - 79.9	C+
73.0 - 76.9	C
70.0 - 72.9	C-
67.0 - 69.9	D+
63.0 - 66.9	D
60.0 - 62.9	D-
0 - 59.9	E

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades>

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## Evaluation

Your feedback, both during at after our course, helps me improve my pedagogical practices and course accessibility. At UF, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

# Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Date	Readings and Assignments Due Before Class
1	8/20	No readings due
	8/22	Jones, "The Technical Communicator" Hart-Davidson, "Core Competencies" No class meeting—Submit memo assignment to Canvas for attendance grade.
2	8/27	Butler, "Where Access Meets Multimodality"
	8/29	Dragga, "Cruel Pies"
3	9/3	Bring draft of P1 to class
	9/5	Submit P1 to Canvas by 11:59pm
4	9/10	Sun, "The Triumph of Users" Gonzales & Zantjer, "Translation as a User-Localization Practice"
	9/12	Walton, "Supporting Human Dignity and Human Rights"
5	9/17	Quesenbery and Brooks, <i>Storytelling for User Experience</i>
	9/19	Shivers-McNair & San Diego, "Community Strategy"
6	9/24	Bring draft of P2 to class
	9/26	Submit P2 to Canvas by 11:59pm
7	10/1	Rose et. al., "Community-Based User-Experience"
	10/3	Redish, "Content Strategy"
8	10/8	Del Hierro, "Hip Hop and Technical Communication"
	10/10	P3 Proposal Memo due in Canvas by 11:59pm
9	10/15	P3 Conferences
	10/17	P3 Conferences
10	10/22	Work on P3
	10/24	Work on P3
11	10/29	Bring draft of P3 to class
	10/31	P3 presentations
12	11/5	Introduce P4
	11/7	Work on P4
13	11/12	P4
	11/14	P4
14	11/19	P4
	11/21	P4
15	11/26	P4
	11/28	Thanksgiving
16	12/3	Final presentations
	12/5	Final presentations
17	12/10	Final exam day