

ENC 2210: Technical Writing

Section 4B48 / Class # 12632 / Fall 2023

Instructor: Alexander Slotkin (aslotkin@ufl.edu)
Office Hours: Tuesday (10:00AM—12:00 PM EST)
Office Zoom Link: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3976779541>

****Please note that all times listed throughout are in EST.****

Course Description

ENC 2210 (Technical Writing) is an introduction to technical and professional writing in contemporary workplace environments. This course presents you with practical information about and practice in communicating within different kinds of professional/technical discourse communities.

Throughout the semester, you will produce and analyze common technical writing genres, including emails, letters, resumes, memos, reports, proposals, technical descriptions, definitions, instructions, proposals, and reports.

We will work toward understanding how to analyze and react to the rhetorical situations each genre and writing situation presents, including issues of audience, organization, visual design, usability, accessibility, and the material production of documents. In addition, the course will help you navigate the challenges of setting career goals and determining priorities, as well as develop problem solving skills that are needed in today's technologically driven workplace.

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Course Objectives and Outcomes

General Education Objectives

This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).

- Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive.
- Course content includes multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts.
- The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, you will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

- Content: demonstrated competence in the terminology, concepts, theories, and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- Communication: communicated knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline.
- Critical Thinking: analyzed information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, used discipline-specific methods, and developed reasoned solutions to problems.

Additional Objectives and Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Identify and understand the facets and functions of the primary genres of technical writing, including letters, memos, emails, resumes, reports, proposals, technical descriptions, technical instructions, and reports.
- Produce professional caliber technical documents, such as those listed above.
- Analyze and adapt to the constraints of specific rhetorical situations, including audiences, purposes, and uses.
- Develop strategies for addressing multiple audiences in any given technical document, including accommodations for expert and lay audiences.
- Write documents that are accessible and reader-centered.
- Strategically orchestrate elements of document design and layout, including type, spacing, color, and medium.
- Integrate tables, figures, and other images into documents as necessary.
- Refine writing style for clarity, concision, coherence, cohesion, and emphasis.
- Critique and revise your own documents to ensure that they fulfill their purposes.

Materials Needed

All materials are free and will be posted to Canvas. Our primary texts will be the following, both of which are open-access:

- [Technical Writing](#) by Allison Gross; Annemarie Hamlin; Billy Merck; Chris Rubio; Jodi Naas; Megan Savage; and Michele DeSilva
- [Introduction to Technical and Professional Communication: Technical Communication through a Social Justice Lens](#) by Brigitte Mussack

Communication and Office Hours

The best way to get ahold of me is via Canvas messenger. I'll reply to any questions or concerns within 24 hours, except on Saturdays and Sundays. Likewise, it is absolutely **critical** that you actively monitor your inbox **and** our course website for changes or news from me. I'll be holding regular office hours this semester on Tuesday

(10:00am - 12:00pm EST), but I am also flexible to meet outside of this set time. Just let me know when you'd like to talk—I'll make it happen.

Course Assignments

Your final grade is composed of the following major assignments and evaluative categories, all of which will be detailed at greater length as they arrive in class. **Late submissions will incur a ten-point penalty for each day they are late.** All assignments and projects are due by their designate due date and time. I may consider extenuating circumstances, but you must contact me at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due and provide relevant documentation.

Please be advised that while most of these assignments only have one due date, **three assignments require a draft to be submitted and peer reviewed ahead of the final due date.** These draft due dates are bolded in **red**.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
Introductory Email (200 words; 25 points)	<i>Compose an email to your instructor that follows formal email etiquette and guidelines and introduces yourself and your goals for this course (not the letter grade you hope to earn). Due 8/28</i>
Audience Transformation (300 words; 50 pts.)	<i>Choose a small passage of a technical article related to your field of study and translate it for a wider and more general readership. Due 9/11</i>
Research Profile (500 words; 50 pts.)	<i>Generate a document that demonstrates your ability to research technical information in your field, including the use of generative AI technologies. Due 9/11</i>
Peer Review Memos x3 (200+ words each; 25 pts. each)	<i>Students will peer review one another's work three times during the semester in the form of a memo. To satisfactorily complete these assignments, students will need to provide helpful feedback while also following the writing conventions associated with memo writing. Due 9/22, 10/20, & 11/19</i>
Letter From a Nut (500 words; 50 pts.)	<i>Following the conventions of professional letter writing, write a "letter from a nut" to a major company or organization of your choice. Please make sure that the content of your letter, while hilarious, is PG. Check out the page "Classic Letters From a Nut" to see some examples. Rough Draft Due 9/20; Final Due 9/25</i>

Resume (250 words; 75 pts.)	Create a resume that follows the suggested format, including recommended content outlined in David McMurrey's chapter on resume design. Due 10/2
Job Ad Analysis (300 words; 25 pts.)	List and briefly describe three positions currently offered in a field that interests you, critically analyzing the rhetoric and content in their posted advertisements. Due 10/9
Cover Letter or Statement of Purpose (500 words; 75 pts.)	Craft a cover-letter that spearheads an application to a prospective employer, stating your interest and highlighting your qualifications. Due 10/9
Gen-AI Technical Description Analysis (500 words; 75 pts.)	Critically analyze a technical description generated by a generative AI technology to evaluate its effectiveness, accuracy, and potential limitations. Rough Draft Due 10/18; Final Due 10/23
Website Accessibility Analysis (500 words; 75 pts.)	Select one specific page found on the University of Florida's overall website and assess its usability and accessibility traits. Due 10/30
Progress Report (250 words; 25 pts.)	Submit a formal update on your ongoing Technical Instructions assignment. Due 11/13
Technical Instructions: Text Document (750 words; 200 pts.)	Write a document outlining a selected process, skill, or task's textual instructions, demonstrating your understanding of effective document design and use of graphics and structure for composing technical instructions. Due 11/21
Technical Instructions: Video (90-120 seconds; 75 pts.)	Create a video that transfer's your textual instructions into a step-by-step visual and auditory guide. Due 11/21
Technical Instructions: Reflection (250 words; 25 pts.)	Highlight, explain, or justify the design and structural decisions made for your textual technical instructions, making it clear how the purposeful choices you made in creating your document add to its overall impression and communicative abilities. Due 11/21
UFSG Proposal (750 words; 100 pts.)	Draft a formal proposal for a new initiative or event to be funded by UF's Student Government. Due 12/6

Grading and Evaluation

Earning A's and B's at this level requires strong, consistent effort. An online learning environment, especially an asynchronous one such as this, further necessitates the need for consistency and ongoing engagement. Your assignments will include specific evaluation criteria, and I will provide detailed feedback on your work that illuminates progress, achievement, and areas for revision. In the past, students who have received A's put significant time and effort into this course right from the start and simply kept at it. Be realistic in your expectations about grades; start assignments early and work steadily to avoid last-minute rushing.

This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C) and also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR). To satisfy this requirement, **every major project's word count must be fulfilled in your assignment's final copy. Submitted assignments that fail to reach the minimum word count will receive a score of zero.**

While different writing assignments are assessed or graded according to individualized criteria—all of which may be found on Canvas—the table below is a general overview of the grading criteria I follow. Note: **you must also pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit.** A grade of "C-" will *not* confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition Requirement.

A 90-100	"A" papers far exceed the goal of the assignment. The drafts are thoughtful, the writing is clear, the content is sophisticated and demonstrates critical thinking, and the reflection is candid and shows growth. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in effective, technical communication, "A" papers must be free (or mostly free) of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.
B 80-90	"B" papers meet and sometimes exceed the goal(s) of the assignment. Perhaps there are some mechanical or organizational issues, or the process is not what it should be, or the thinking could be more developed. Papers in this grade range are adequate and/or complete in content, organization, and style, but need further revision.
C 70-80	"C" papers fall short of the goal(s) of the assignment in some way. They might not demonstrate critical thinking, or they might not include part of the process, or fail to show significant revision based on feedback. Papers that fall into this grade range are, at a minimum, complete in content and logically ordered. "C" paper may also feature a straightforward but unremarkable style, imprecise word choice, and/or numerous mechanical errors.
D 60-70	"D" papers fall significantly short of the goals of the assignment, are missing significant pieces, or show a significant lack of clarity and effort. For "D"

	papers, the content (and support) is often incomplete and/or the organization is hard to discern. The ideas presented in papers that fall into this grade range are oversimplified or superficial and/or are not organized around a central argument. Attention to style and mechanics in “D” papers is uneven and/or nonexistent.
F 0-59	“E” letter grades are typically reserved for missing assignments and plagiarized work. Any paper that is short of the word requirement, does not demonstrate an awareness of the task at hand, and/or is sufficiently deficient across the board in terms of content, organization, mechanics and style will also earn an “E” mark.

Attendance

This is a fully asynchronous, online course. As such, there is **no** official attendance policy. That being said, you are required to complete all tasks by their listed due dates as they appear on Canvas.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the UF Student Honor Code. Detecting it is often fairly easy—all of your major assignments are sent into a copyright analysis system—and once found, violations are automatically reported to the Academic Dean. UF’s Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

“A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to 1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patchwriting. 2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student’s own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student’s own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the faculty to whom it is submitted. 3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.”

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Conduct & Honor Code, found here: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>. Understanding what falls under the category of plagiarism and academic dishonesty will help prevent you from committing these acts inadvertently—and will also strengthen your own writing! “I didn’t know!” is not an excuse, and will not be counted as one, so ask if you’re unsure.

Diversity Affirmation

The University of Florida does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Effective learning environments value and support diversity, and free, open discussion is a hallmark of a functioning democratic society.

Disability Affirmation

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those requesting accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center: **001 Reid Hall**. That office will provide documentation to you and then you provide this to me. For more information, see: <https://disability.ufl.edu/>.

Sexual Harassment Policy

The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community. For more information, see: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>.

Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount (cblount@ufl.edu), Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 Turlington). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

Course Evaluations

You'll have the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. You will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in your Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

Physical and Mental Health Resources

For guidance during distressing situations, please contact U Matter We Care or the Dean of Students Office. They can help you navigate resources and academic procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues.

- U Matter We Care: <http://umatter.ufl.edu>, umatter@ufl.edu, (352) 294-2273
- Dean of Students: <https://dso.ufl.edu>, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261
- Counseling Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu>, 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575
- Field and Fork Pantry: <https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu>, 564 Newell Drive, (352) 294-3601
- Student Health Care Center: <http://shcc.ufl.edu>, multiple locations, (352) 392-116

Technical Writing

Course Schedule

The schedule below is **subject to change**. Our Canvas page will be the most accessible, up-to-date site of all resources, texts, due dates, assignments, and course information. Make it a habit to frequently check it along with your e-mail in-box for updates from me as they become available.

Weeks	Major Topics	Readings	Assignments	Deadline
1-3 (8/23—9/10)	Course Introduction	“Introduction” (Gross et al.) “Meet Technical Writers at Google” “14 Technical Writers on the Future of AI”	Introductory Email (200 words)	8/28 at 11:59 PM.
	Audience Considerations	“Chapter 2: Audience Analysis” & “Chapter 13: Communicating Across Cultures” (Gross et al.) “2.2. Technical Communication, Action, and Community” & “2.3. Audience and Access” (Mussack)	Audience Transformation Assignment (300 words)	9/11 at 11:59 PM.
	Information Literacy and Research	“Chapter 4: Information Literacy” (Gross et al.) “Using AI Tools in Your Research”	Research Profile (500 words)	9/11 at 11:59 PM.
4-5 (9/11—9/24)	Memos and Formal Letters	“Chapter 1: Professional Communications” (Gross et al.) “7.1. Correspondence: Text Messages, Emails, and Letters”	Letter Rough Draft (300+ words)	9/20 at 11:59 PM.
			Peer Review Memo #1 (200+ words)	9/22 at 11:59 PM.
			Letter (500 words)	9/25 at 11:59 PM.

6-7 (9/25—10/8)	Resumes and Credentialing	<p>“Resumes” (McMurrey)</p> <p>Monster: “10 Worst Resume Mistakes to Avoid”</p> <p>UF’s Career Center’s Resume Guide</p> <p>Forbes: “How to Write a Competitive Resume in 2021”</p>	Resume (250 words)	10/2 at 11:59 PM.
	Job Materials	Sample cover letters and application statements available on Canvas (see also Indeed)	<p>Job Advertisement Analysis (250 words)</p> <p>Cover Letter (500 words)</p>	10/9 at 11:59 PM.
8-10 (10/9—10/29)	Document Design, User X, & Accessibility Considerations in Technical Writing	<p>“4.2. Definitions and Descriptions” (Mussack and Fuglsby)</p> <p>“Technical Definitions and Descriptions” (Arnett)</p> <p>60 Minutes: “Chat GPT and Large-Language Model Bias”</p> <p>“Chapter 6: Usability” (Race)</p> <p>“Chapter 8: Creating and Integrating Graphics” (Gross et al.)</p> <p>“Usability 101” (Nielsen);</p>	AI Description Rough Draft (300+ words)	10/18 at 11:59 PM.
			Peer Review Memo #2 (200+ words)	10/20 at 11:59 PM.
			AI-Generated Technical Description Analysis (500 words)	10/23 at 11:59 PM.
			Website Analysis (500 words)	10/30 at 11:59 PM.
11-14 (10/30—11/21)	Writing Technical Instructions	<p>“4.3. Instructions” (Mussack)</p> <p>“2.6: Instructions” (McMurrey and Race)</p> <p>“Chapter 6: Progress Reports” (Gross et al.)</p>	Progress Report (250 words)	11/13 at 11:59 PM.
			Instructional Document Rough Draft (450+ words)	11/17 at 11:59 PM.

		"2.5: Progress Reports" (McMurrey)	Peer Review Memo #3 (200+ words)	11/19 at 11:59 PM.
			Instructional Document (750 words)	11/21 at 11:59 PM.
			Video Instructions (3:00 and script)	
			Reflection (250 words)	
15-16 (11/27—12/6)	Proposals & Recommendations	"4.4. Proposals" (Mussack)	UF Student Government Proposal (500 words) and Video Pitch (2:00)	12/6 at 11:59 PM.