**Instructor:** Andrew Testa     **Instructor Email:** atesta@ufl.edu          **Course website:** Canvas
**Course meeting times & locations:** MWF Period 2 (8:30 AM - 9:20 AM) & MAT 116
**Office Location and Hours:** TBA; Mondays Periods 3-4

**Course Description:** Before we begin discussing the policies for this course, I first want to welcome you to Technical Writing. In this course, you will learn how to communicate effectively and efficiently in scientific and technical workplaces. You will also learn how to be an innovator and even an entrepreneur, whether you want to work for yourself or work for a company.

This semester, you will learn how to write a variety of workplace documents, including technical descriptions, letters, memos, formal reports, and proposals. You will also learn how to confidently present information in public. To sharpen your communication skills, you will learn how to interpret situations in the workplace; then, you will learn how to use techniques of reader-analysis, organization, style, and page layout to develop documents that address those workplace situations. Whenever possible, you will have the option to compose documents that suit your major and your future career.

My aim in this course is to prepare you to communicate clearly and persuasively in the workplace communities that you want to join after you graduate from college. There are no formulas for effective communication in the workplace, but some common genres (e.g., documentation, reports, proposals) and conventions (e.g., plain style, graphics, page design) are used across disciplines. In this class, you will learn how to identify these common genres and conventions, and then you will learn how to shape them to fit your needs as an engineer, manager, architect, scientist, nurse, medical doctor, etc.

We will also discuss real or realistic situations to prepare you to communicate in workplace situations. You will learn to interpret complex workplace situations and then use problem-solving strategies to develop documents that take action in those situations.

The rest of these policies will be devoted to the specific policies of this course. Please read through these policies carefully so you have a good idea of how this course will be conducted. If you have any questions, please ask.

**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. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- 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. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

**General Education Learning Outcomes**:
At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content**: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication**: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

**Required Texts/Materials:**
*Technical Communication Today*, 6th edition. Pearson. Richard Johnson-Sheehan.
Print or E-book, any format. Revel access is not required for this course.

*Style: The Basics*, 5th edition. Pearson. Williams, Joseph M. and Joseph Bizup. Any format.

PDF Scanner (Phone App, Scanner). For uploading in-class assignments to Canvas.

**Assignments** (see below for Grading Rubric):

| Assignment | Words | Points |
|---|---|---|
| Introductory Email | 200 | 40 |
| Letter From a Nut | 500 | 70 |
| Application Packet | 650 | 80 |
| Technical Description | 600 | 80 |
| Proposal | 750 | 100 |
| Progress Report | 500 | 80 |
| Instruction Manual | 1000 | 150 |
| Usability Report | 800 | 100 |
| Discussion Posts (5) | 1000 | 100 |
| Peer Reviews | - | 80 |
| Short Assignments/ Quizzes/Participation | - | 120 |
| *Total* | *6000* | *1000* |

Discussion Posts, 1000 words (200 words each)
   Throughout the semester, students will complete five short analytical responses to readings, videos, or case studies. These responses should be clear, concise, and carefully edited.

Introductory Email, 200 words
   Using a standard email format and an effective professional style, send a message to a teacher or professional working within your field (e.g., nurse, doctor, teacher, or engineer).

Letter From a Nut, 500 words

    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.

Application Packet, 650 words total

    This assignment is made up of three parts, which are as follows:

1. Description and Analysis, 300 words

    Find a specific posting for a job, internship, graduate school, and/or professional organization that interests you and write an analysis and description of the application. Your analysis should contain the following:
    - A link to the original posting;
    - A description of the materials (e.g., a resume or writing sample) being requested;
    - A characterization of the ideal candidate.

2. Cover Letter, 350 words

    Write a professional cover letter for your application in which you:
    - Introduce yourself as an ideal candidate;
    - Address any shortcomings in your resume;
    - Provide specific examples from previous work or school experiences that illustrate the primary and/or secondary skills that make you an ideal candidate.

3. Resume, 1 page

    Craft a clear & attractive resume demonstrating your skills and qualifications for the position.

Technical Description, 600 words

    Following the conventions of professional communication, compose a technical description in a Word document that either provides a clear depiction for a specific technical term in your field of study to a general, non-expert audience or argues for the implementation of a specific process or device in regards to some technical aspect of your field. Sources, when used, must be properly cited.

Proposal, 750 words

    Students will write a detailed proposal for a video game instruction manual that attempts to guide users through a particular place or area of the game. Instructions may cover any aspect of the game but must be accessible and easy to find for usability testing from classmates. Any freely available video game can be chosen but must be free and simple for classmates to play and test. Keep in mind that your target audience is made up of either a general or a specific group of college students.

Progress Report, 500 words

    Midway through the instruction manual assignment, students will individually write and submit a progress report detailing the progress you have made on the project, including what has been finished and what still needs to be finished. You should include a plan for completing the project, as well as a reflection on working with your group.

Usability Report, 800 words

    Students will develop a user test methodology for their video game instruction manual. Using test groups from inside the class population, you will conduct user tests to measure the functionality and

readability of your technical manual or guide (i.e., your script). Based on the data you gather and your evaluation of that data, you will then revise your manual before submitting it for a final grade.

Instruction Manual, 1000 words per student

Working in groups, students will create a mini video game guide/manual designed to provide advice or instruction about a particular game to the general UF student body or a specific group of students (e.g., first-year students or senior engineering students). The instructional guide will take the form of a series of three parts for each member of your project. Each member of the group is responsible for writing and submitting a 1000 word instructional manual or guide written in longhand form; this will be part of the larger guide you will put together as a team. You will present your completed instruction manual during class.

**Course Policies:**

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Like all lecture-discussion courses, this one needs you! Use your allotted absences wisely (for emergencies, major illness) as you would for any job. You will fail the course if you accrue **six** 50-minute absences. You will earn a lowered course grade if you accrue **four** absences. Note that missing a *double* session counts as 2 absences.
3. Latecomers receive partial absences, and must see me after class so I know you attended.
4. *UF's policy on Sexual Harassment*: 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: https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/
5. *Paper Format & Submission*: All papers must be submitted in MLA format via Canvas. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins, and every page should include your last name and a page number. All sources must be cited in some form.
6. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Workshops and reviews cannot be made up. If you must be late with an individual assignment, write me a memo or email that tells me that you will be late and when I should expect the assignment. I don't need excuses. However, the absence of the memo will cost you a half grade per day (i.e., A becomes an A-, B- a C+, etc.). Keep in mind, though, that this class moves quickly. Late work tends to lead to more problems down the line. Therefore, you should turn in your work late only in the most exceptional cases.
7. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
8. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.>
   *Definition of plagiarism* UF Student Honor Code: A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
   a. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
   b. 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.
   c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.

d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.>

9. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, https://disability.ufl.edu/ ), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester. As a teacher with a disability, please let me know if you have issue with the center or the course.

10. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: https://counseling.ufl.edu/

11. For information on UF Grading policies, see: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

12. *Grade Appeals*. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

13. *Course Evaluations.* Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/

14. *Participation:* Although I will occasionally give brief lectures, most class sessions will be devoted to large- and small group conversation. For this reason, it is important that you not only be physically present in class, but that you also actively participate in each session. I expect you to come to each class having read the assigned materials and prepared to offer the questions and insights you formed during your independent reading. Additionally, I expect you to respond attentively and respectively to the questions and insights offered by your classmates. If you are absent because of an illness, please consult me as soon as you can, so that we can discuss how you may make up for your missed work. If you anticipate being absent for a legitimate reason – e.g., a religious holiday or an academic or athletic event – please consult me in advance so that we might make arrangements for your missed work. *Texting policy:* Each instance of texting will be counted as an unexcused absence. After all, when you text, your body may be present in class, but your mind is not. *Laptop/phone policy:* If you bring a laptop to class, please sit in the first row(s), and please only use your laptop to access assigned text(s) and/or to record notes. Same policy stands if you are accessing an assigned text on your phone.

15. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County Friends of the Library annual book sale.)

16. *Teaching Philosophy.* For at least three reasons, I see education as a two-way street.  First, I always learn as much from my students as they do from me. Second, just as you require feedback from me, so I desire it from you. Please let me know how the course is going for you. Third, I will expect a lot from you (I believe that students rise to meet the instructor's expectations), but as my students you should expect me to work hard and to make time for you in my schedule. Although in many ways communal, university education is a profoundly personal journey and an exercise in self-reliance. Therefore, I would like to state at the outset that I see my role as teacher, mentor, motivator, and adviser, but not as parent, rescuer, enabler, or scapegoat. If you fall behind in this course or experience academic difficulty, I am always available to help you, and I will do my best to assist you. Note, though, that you, rather than I, control your destiny. I cannot fix a bad grade. In the end, it's your life, and the most important decisions are yours.

17. *Writing Studio.* If you seek additional assistance with your writing, the University Writing Studio is located in Tigert 302 and is available by appointment to all UF students.

I reserve the right to give a quiz or short writing assignment at any time during the class period (for example, at the very beginning, the very end, or any point in between). For this reason, it is additionally important that you be present during the entire class session.

**Course Schedule**
*TCT* = Technical Communication Today and *Lesson* = Style: The Basics. Schedule subject to change with notice; please check Canvas and email regularly to stay updated.

| Date | Topics and Activities | Readings and Assignments |
|---|---|---|
| **Unit 1: Professional Correspondence** | | |
| Week 1: Introductions | | |
| M 8/23 | -Introductions<br>-Discuss Syllabus | -*Canvas* Bio |
| W 8/25 | -Introduction to Technical Writing<br>-Introduction to Argumentation | -*TCT* Chapter 1: Technical Communication in Entrepreneurial Workplace (pp. 1-20)<br>-*Canvas* Toulmin's Model (pp. 1-4) |
| F 8/27 | -Introduce "Introductory Email"<br>-Letter Writing Activity | -*TCT* Chapter 6: Emails, Letters, Memos (pp. 137-169) |
| Week 2: Professionalism and Persuasiveness | | |
| M 8/30 | -Genre, Audience, and Purpose<br>-Rhetorical Strategies | -*TCT* Chapter 13: How to Be Persuasive (pp. 366-385)<br>-*Canvas* Rhetorician's Toolbox (pp. 1-3) |
| W 9/1 | -Professional Correspondences<br>-Introduce "Letter From a Nut" | -*TCT* Chapter 2: Profiling Your Readers (pp. 21-40) |
| F 9/3 | -Workshop and Discussion<br>-Bring Draft of Email to Class | **Due: Introductory Email**<br>-*Lesson One* (Understanding Style) |
| Week 3: Ethos and Plain Style | | |
| M 9/6 | Labor Day. No Class. | |
| W 9/8 | -Concise Writing<br>-Concise Memo Activity | -*TCT* Chapter 4: Managing Ethical Challenges (pp. 71-96)<br>-*Lesson Eight* (Concision) |
| F 9/10 | -Ethos, Actions, and Characters<br>-Play Class Activity<br>-DP: Tech Writer Profile | **Due: Discussion Post #1**<br>-*Lessons Two & Three* (Actions & Characters)<br>-*Canvas* Ernest Hemingway "Hills Like White Elephants" |
| **Unit 2: Drafting, Ethics, and Job Applications** | | |
| Week 4: Ethics and Job Postings | | |

| M 9/13 | -Identifying Ethical Representation<br>-Introduce "Job Application Packet" | -*TCT* Chapter 5: Starting Your Career (pp. 99-134)<br>-*Lesson Eleven* (Ethics of Style) |
|---|---|---|
| W 9/15 | -Analyzing Jobs and Internship Postings | -*Canvas* Nicola Rushton "How to Make Your Resume as User-Centered as You Are"<br>-*Lesson Four* (Cohesion & Coherence) |

| F 9/17 | -Peer Review | **Due: Letter From a Nut** |
|---|---|---|
| Week 5: Job Applications | | |
| M 9/20 | -Resumé Analysis and Review<br>-Cover Letters | -*TCT* Chapter 15: Organizing and Drafting (pp. 420-446) |
| W 9/22 | -Principles of Designing and Drafting<br>-Drafting Activity | -*TCT* Chapter 17: Designing Documents and Interfaces (pp. 476-502) |
| F 9/24 | -Workshop and Discussion<br>-DP: *The Office* "Business Ethics" | **Due: Discussion Post #2** |
| Week 6: Grammar and Fallacies | | |
| M 9/27 | -Grammar Guidelines<br>-Logical Fallacies | -*TCT* Grammar Appx. A & B (pp. 617-639)<br>-*Canvas* Logical Fallacies |
| W 9/29 | -Individual Meetings (Check-Ins) | |
| F 10/1 | -Peer Review | **Due: Job Application Packet** |
| **Unit 3: Technical Documentation** | | |
| Week 7: Reader-Centered Communication | | |
| M 10/4 | -Technical Descriptions<br>-Descriptive Activity | -*TCT* Chapter 7: Technical Descriptions & Specifications (pp. 176-198) |
| W 10/6 | -Document Analysis Activity<br>-Annotating | -*TCT* Appendix C: Documentation Guide (pp. 640-655) |
| F 10/8 | No Class. Homecoming. | |
| Week 8: Claims in Technical Communication | | |
| M 10/11 | -Claim Game<br>-Emphasis | -*Canvas* Wittgenstein (pp. 1-2)<br>-*Lesson Five* (Emphasis)<br>-*TCT* Chapter 21 (pp. 594-614) |
| W 10/13 | -Motivation<br>-Global Coherence | -*Lesson Six* (Motivation)<br>-*Lesson Seven* (Global Coherence) |
| F 10/15 | -Entrepreneur Activity | -*TCT* Chapter 12: Thinking Like an Entrepreneur (pp. 349-363) |
| Week 9: Proposals in Technical Communication | | |
| M 10/18 | -TPC & Video Games | -*Canvas* Stephanie Vie "Game Walkthroughs in Professional and Technical Communication" |
| W 10/20 | -Proposals | -*TCT* Chapter 9: Proposals (pp. 244-278) |
| F 10/22 | -Workshop and Discussion | **Due: Discussion Post #3** |
| **Unit 4: Collaborative Writing and Documentation** | | |

| Week 10: Workplace Researching and Formal Reporting | | |
|---|---|---|
| M 10/25 | -Reading Proposals and Approaching the Genre | -*TCT* Chapter 14: Researching in Technical Workplaces |
| W 10/27 | -Researching Techniques<br>-Brainstorming and Researching Activity | -*TCT* CH 11: Formal Reports (pp. 308-345);<br>-*Canvas* Purdue Owl "Planning and Organizing Proposals and Technical Reports" |
| F 10/29 | -Peer Review | **Due: Technical Description** |
| Week 11: Instructions and Teams | | |
| M 11/1 | -Group Conferences | -*TCT* CH 3: Working in Teams (pp. 47-67) |
| W 11/3 | -Team Planning | -*TCT* Chapter 8: Instructions and Documentation (pp. 204-230) |
| F 11/5 | -Workshop and Discussion | **Due: Discussion Post #4** |
| Week 12: Instructions and Reports | | |
| W 11/8 | -Group Writing Activity<br>-Usable Documentation | -*TCT* Chapter 8: Instructions and Documentation (pp. 230-240) |
| F 11/10 | -Writing Instructions | -*TCT* Chapter 10: Brief Reports (pp. 284-300) |
| F 11/12 | -Peer Review | **Due: Proposal** |
| Week 13: Usability Testing and Surveys | | |
| M 11/15 | -Meet in Groups to Outline Progress Report | -*Canvas* SurveyMonkey "Writing Good Survey Questions"<br>-*Canvas* McPhail "Why Teach Test Wiseness?" |
| W 11/17 | -Testing for Usability (Prep and Discussion) | -*TCT* Chapter 19: Revising and Editing for Usability (pp. 530-549)<br>-*Canvas* Sam Lloyd "The 10 Commandments for Writing Outstanding Survey Questions" |
| F 11/19 | -Workshop and Discussion | **Due: Discussion Post #5** |
| Week 14: Usability Testing and Surveys II | | |
| M 11/22 | **Due: Instruction Manual Draft**<br>-Conduct Usability Test | |
| W 11/24 | No class. Thanksgiving. | |
| F 11/26 | No class. Thanksgiving. | **Due: Progress Report** |
| Week 15: Usability Reports and Pitching | | |
| M 11/29 | -Conduct Usability Test | |
| W 12/1 | -Workshop<br>-Work on Drafting and Revising Instruction Manual | -*TCT* Chapter 20: Presenting and Pitching Your Ideas (pp. 553-591)<br>-*Lesson Nine* (Shape) |
| F 12/3 | -Peer Review | **Due: Usability Report** |
| Week 16: Presentation and Reflection | | |
| M 12/6 | -Instruction Manual Presentations | -*Lesson Ten* (Elegance) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| W 12/8 | -Last Day of Class Recap<br>-Continue Presentations | **Due: Instruction Manual Final Draft** |

**Grading Scale**

Grading for this course will be rigorous. If an assignment illustrates disregard for spelling, grammar, citation guidelines, or a general carelessness in the writing, the assignment will be failed. Do not rely on your instructor for copy-editing, even on drafts. The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the minimum requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, **every** assignment's word count must be fulfilled. **Submitted assignments short of the minimum word count will receive zero credit**.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 4.0 | 93-100 | 930-1000 | | C | 2.0 | 73-76 | 730-769 |
| A- | 3.67 | 90-92 | 900-929 | | C- | 1.67 | 70-72 | 700-729 |
| B+ | 3.33 | 87-89 | 870-899 | | D+ | 1.33 | 67-69 | 670-699 |
| B | 3.0 | 83-86 | 830-869 | | D | 1.0 | 63-66 | 630-669 |
| B- | 2.67 | 80-82 | 800-829 | | D- | 0.67 | 60-62 | 600-629 |
| C+ | 2.33 | 77-79 | 770-799 | | E | 0.00 | 0-59 | 0-599 |

A- to A   You did what the assignment asked for at a high-quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range demonstrates all the qualities listed above for a B; but it also demonstrates that the you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a verbal style or visual design, without error and/or infelicities.

B- to B+   You did what the assignment asked of you at a high-quality level. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style and visual design. May contain a few errors and/or infelicities.

C- to C+   You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style and visual design are straightforward but unremarkable.

D- to D+   You did what the assignment asked for at a low-quality level. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Verbal style and visual design are often non- existent or chaotic.

E   Failure means you did not do what was asked of you. If you gave an assignment an honest try and still received an 'E,' you may not be ready to succeed in this course.