

ENC 2210

Technical Writing

Instructor: Logan Schell (schellj@ufl.edu)

Section: 34F7

Office Hours: MW 11:00—12:00 PM

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 analyze and produce common technical writing genres, including emails, letters, resumes, memos, reports, proposals, technical descriptions, definitions, instructions, proposals, and reports.

As an introductory writing course, **this class is also practice**. 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, and accessibility. 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. Finally, we will also examine how these forms of technical communication intersect with novel generative-AI technologies and consider what the implications, possibilities, and limitations of these intersections are for technical communicators today.

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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 are writing-intensive and provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts.
- 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 the 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 discipline of technical communication.
- Communication: communicated knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to this 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

If pursued with appropriate energy, effort, and care, you will achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of this course:

- *Practice* technical communication:
 - Identify and work with various genres of technical communication.
 - Recognize the prevalence of technical writing in everyday experience.
 - Practice using common tools of technical writing production with proficiency—including emergent generative-AI technologies.
- *Analyze* technical writing artifacts and practices:
 - Explain rhetorical choices made as a result of both individual and collaborative work.
 - Analyze specific artifacts (including documents “written” by gen-AI) to better understand the rhetorical, social, cultural, and political implications of technical communication.
- *Research* practices that impact effective technical communication:
 - Plan and implement appropriate research practices that impact technical writing tasks.
 - Explore technical writing as a way of thinking, knowing, and being.
- *Produce* professional artifacts:
 - Apply rhetorical and design principles to compose effective deliverables.
 - Apply principles of fair use, copyright and documentation conventions for print, visual, and digital media.
 - Recognize the rhetorical possibilities of different modes and make sound choices when combining modes.

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. 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, 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.

Major Course Assignments and Grade Categories

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.

Introductory Email (200 words; 25 points)

Due 1/14

- *Compose an email to your instructor that follows formal email etiquette and guidelines and introduces yourself and goals for this course.*

Letter (300 words; 50 points)

Due 1/21

- *Compose a formal letter to a company or business that seeks reparation or reimbursement for a past unsatisfactory service.*

Memo (500 words; 100 points)

Due 1/28

- *Taking the role of an upper-level manager attempting to combat workplace burnout and stress, and better support your employees' mental, physical, and emotional health, write a memo to your employees that details new policies that will increase employee well-being and satisfaction.*

Resume (250 words; 100 points)

Due 2/4

- *Create both a formatted and unformatted resume that follows the suggested format and recommended content outlined in your readings this week.*

Job Ad Analysis (300 words; 25 points)

Due 2/11

- *List and briefly describe three positions currently offered in a field that interests you, critically analyzing the rhetoric and content in their posted advertisements.*

Cover Letter or Statement of Purpose (500 words; 50 points)

Due 2/11

- *Craft a cover-letter that spearheads an application to a prospective employer, stating your interest and highlighting your qualifications.*

Research Profile (500 words; 50 points)

Due 2/25

- *Using [Elicit](#), generate a document that demonstrates your ability to research technical information in your field with novel AI technology.*

Gen-AI Technical Description Analysis (500 words; 75 points)

Due 2/25

- *Critically analyze a technical description generated by a generative AI technology to evaluate its effectiveness, accuracy, and potential limitations*

Gen-AI Audience Transformation Assignment (500 words; 75 points)

Due 3/3

- *Choose a small passage of a technical article related to your field of study, and using generative-AI, rewrite it for a wider, more general readership.*

UF Website Accessibility Analysis (500 words; 75 points)

Due 3/17

- Select one specific page found on the University of Florida's overall website and assess its usability and accessibility traits.

UF Event Document Design (N/A words; 75 points) Due 3/24

- Following design principals and using [Canva](#), create a flyer or infographic that effectively informs a reader of an upcoming event or initiative on campus.

Technical Instructions: Text Document (750 words; 200 points) Due 4/14

- Create 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.

Technical Instructions: Video (90-120 seconds; 75 points) Due 4/14

- Create a video that transfer's your textual instructions into a step-by-step visual and auditory guide.

Technical Instructions: Reflection (250 words; 25 points) Due 4/14

- 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.

Experiential Learning Assignment (750 words or 3:00 video; 125 points) Due 4/24

- In week 1, you will select a particular technical skill to learn or improve at over the semester. Here, you'll reflect on your progress and experience leaning this skill in a semester devoted to the art and craft of technical communication.

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 either 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.

A 90-100	The qualities of a B project, <u>plus imagination, originality, and engaging expression</u> . The work exhibits depth of thought, command of language, and a keen eye for communicating through the selected medium.
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B 80-90	A sufficient, thorough execution of the assignment's objectives. The work demonstrates coherent organization, ample supporting details, and a clear expression of ideas.
C 70-80	A satisfactory fulfillment of the assignment's objectives, with baseline organization and style. A "C" means your work met the demands of the assignment in a minimally acceptable way.
D 60-70	The presence of a significant defect in context, substance, organization, style, or delivery in a lackluster paper; the project demonstrates an inadequate treatment of the assignment.
F 0-59	Inadequate coverage of essential points; uncertain or misguided purpose; poor organization; ineffective and inconsistent expression; significant defects in standard usage.

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.

Late Work and Revisions

Life happens. There may be times where our planned itinerary conflicts with your other obligations and commitments. Knowing this, you each get two (2) days of no-questions asked extensions on major assignments. The only requirement is that you e-mail me before the assignment's original deadline and let me know you're using the extension. Otherwise, major assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late.

Revising and Resubmitting

This course is practice, which means that you should feel free to take risks and experiment with our assignments and major projects. To that end, if you would like to revise a major project and resubmit it in light of the feedback you receive on your first attempt, you may do so up until the end of April. The only stipulation is that you schedule a meeting with me to discuss your proposed revisions and create a plan for strengthening the new version.

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.

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 this 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 ever 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) 392-1116

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 check it along with your e-mail in-box for updates from me as they become available.

Weeks	Major Topics	Readings	Assignment	Deadline
1-3 (1/8—1/28)	Course Introduction and Professional Communication	"Introduction" (Gross et al.) "Email" (Gross et al.) "Meet Technical Writers at Google" ; "14 Technical Writers on the Future of AI"	Introductory Email (200 words)	1/14 at 11:59 PM.
		"Chapter 1: Professional Communications" (Gross et al.); "7.1. Correspondence: Text Messages, Emails, and Letters"	Letter (300 words)	1/21 at 11:59 PM.
			Memo (500 words)	1/28 at 11:59 PM.
4-5 (1/29—2/11)	Resumes and Credentialing	"Resumes" (McMurrey) Monster: "10 Worst Resume Mistakes to Avoid" ; UF's Career Center's Resume Guide ; Forbes: "How to Write a Competitive Resume in 2021"	Resume (250 words)	2/4 at 11:59 PM.
	Job Materials	Sample cover letters and application statements available on Canvas (via Indeed)	Job Advertisement Analysis (250 words) Cover Letter (500 words)	2/11 at 11:59 PM.
6-8 (2/12—3/3)	Generative AI Technology and Audience Considerations	60 Minutes: "Chat GPT and Large-Language Model Bias" and "Using AI Tools in Your Research" and "2.3. Audience and Access" (Mussack)	AI-Generated Technical Description Analysis (500 words)	2/25 at 11:59 PM.
			Research Profile (500 words)	2/25 at 11:59 PM.
		"Chapter 2: Audience Analysis" and "Chapter 13: Communicating Across Cultures" (Gross et al.) "2.2. Technical Communication, Action, and Community"	Gen-AI Audience Transformation (500 words)	3/3 at 11:59 PM.

9-11 (3/4—3/24)	Document Design Principles and Usability / User X Testing	“Chapter 6: Usability” (Race) “Chapter 8: Creating and Integrating Graphics” (Gross et al.) “Usability 101” (Nielsen); “A Beginner’s Guide to Using Canva”	UF Website Accessibility Analysis (500 words)	3/17 at 11:59 PM.
			UF Event Document Design	3/24 at 11:59 PM.
12-14 (3/25—4/14)	Creating Technical Instructions	“4.3. Instructions” (Mussack) “2.6: Instructions” (McMurrey and Race) “Chapter 6: Progress Reports” (Gross et al.) “2.5: Progress Reports” (McMurrey)	Progress Report (250 words)	4/7 at 11:59 PM.
			Instructional Document (750 words)	4/14 at 11:59 PM.
			Video Instructions (2:00)	
			Reflection (250 words)	
15-16 (4/15—4/24)	Experiential Learning		Reflection on Experiential Learning Project (750 words of 3:00 video or podcast)	4/24 at 11:59 PM.