ENC 2210 (Sec. 5147): Technical Writing

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Course Information

ENC 2210 Technical Writing is an introduction to technical and professional writing. This course presents students with practical information about communicating in different kinds of workplace environments and professional/technical discourse communities. Throughout the semester students will produce and analyze common technical writing genres, including emails, letters, resumes, memos, reports, proposals, technical descriptions, technical definitions, technical manuals, and proposals. Students will work toward understanding how to analyze and react to rhetorical situations each genre and writing situation presents, including issues of audience, organization, visual design, style, and the material production of documents.

Class meetings provide students with the opportunity to participate in ongoing class discussions about assigned readings and writing projects, to work closely with the instructor, to work with peers in writing and revision workshops, and to collaborate with peers on projects. Because as much of the communicative work produced in the workplace is collaborative as it is individual, ENC 2210 emphasizes both individual writing projects and collaborative writing projects.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, students enrolled in ENC 2210 should 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 definitions, and technical manuals
- produce professional caliber technical documents
- 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
- produce documents both collaboratively and independently
- develop and administer user tests; analyze and synthesize user test data
- refine writing style for clarity, concision, coherence, cohesion, and emphasis
- critique and revise your own documents to insure that they fulfill their purposes
- work with peers in order to provide written and oral feedback to one another

Required Texts

Technical Communication in the Twenty-First Century. 2nd Edition. Sidney I. Dobrin, Christopher J. Keller, and Christian R. Weisser. Pearson, 2009. (ISBN: 0135031745)

Technical Communication in the Twenty-First Century (*companion WWW site*).

Assignments

Letters (x3) (100 pts total)
Over the course of the semester students will write three letters:
1. The first letter assignment is written in response to case study #1 provided on page 391 in Chapter 13 of *TCTC*. In this case study, students are asked to write a letter in response to a series of letters written by the National Park Service in 2004. This letter will be submitted in draft form for instructor comment, will be presented in workshop for peer evaluation, and will be revised before submitted for a final grade. (word count: 150 words)
2. Students write their second letter to inform the instructor as to what subjects/terms they intend to address in their technical description and technical definition assignments. (word count: 150 words)
3. The third letter is written as an assessment and evaluation of the manual collaborative project. This letter is written from the student to the instructor. (word count: 150 words)

Total Word Count: 450 words

Memos (x3) (100 pts total)
1. The first memo assignment serves as an introduction between students and teacher. Memo format is located at
   http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/sdobrin/ENC2210Memo1.pdf
   (word count: 50 words)
2. The second memo is more detailed. For this project, students will read and analyze case study #1 found in chapter 2 of *TCTC* (p. 38-39) Once students are familiar with the case study, they will write a memo to the instructor explaining the relationship between ethics and technical writing as it is manifest in the case study. The memo should address how the writers involved in this case might have avoided both the disaster explained in the case study as well as how they may have acted more ethically by way of their technical documentation. Of course, students may also argue in their memos that the writers identified in the case study did act ethically. In such cases, students should explain this conclusion in their memos.
   (word count: 250 words)
3. For the third memo, students will explain to their instructor why they made the rhetorical choices they made in designing their job application packet.
   (word count: 100 words)

Total Word Count: 400 words

Project: Resume and Cover Letter (100 pts total)
Students produce professional-caliber job application materials: a cover letter and a resume. This assignment is explained in detail in exercise 5 on page 438 of *TCTC*. Students will submit drafts for peer evaluation and instructor feedback.
Word Count: 300 words

Project: Technical Definition (100 pts total)
For this project, students will respond to case study #1 in chapter 15, page 462 of *TCTC*. Students will write the extended definition portion of the assignment and will do so in a web page.

Word Count: 250 words

Project: Proposal (100 pts total)
This project is the first of four linked projects.

Working in groups of three, four, or five, students will identify a problem that requires detailed technical instructions, policies, and/or procedures in order to solve. The problem should be one with which students are familiar and that is relevant to student lives. Once the group has identified the problem, they will produce a proposal (see chapter 20 of *TCTC*) that identifies how they intend to produce a manual that guides others through the process, procedure, or policy. The proposal will contain subject, schedule, method, and format for the manual. Draft versions will be submitted for peer evaluation and for instructor feedback prior to submission of the final proposal.

Word Count: Each student will produce 1000 words of writing.

Project: Progress Report (100 pts total)
This project is the second of four linked projects.

Once each group's proposal has been approved and evaluated by the instructor, each group will begin work on its manuals (see below). Mid-way through the manual project, each group will be required to submit a formal progress report (see chapter 21). The progress report will detail what the group has accomplished, what remains to be completed, a revised schedule for completion, and a general assessment of the group's efforts thus far. Draft versions will be submitted for peer evaluation and for instructor feedback prior to submission of the final proposal

Word Count: Each student will produce 1000 words of writing

Project: Manual (200 pts total)
This project is the third of four linked projects.

For this project, each group will produce a technical manual (see chapters 18 and 19 of *TCTC*) that defines and provides instructions, policies, and/or procedures for solving the problem students have opted to solve (see proposal). This project is substantial, requiring not only the production of a large amount of text, but specific consideration of design, layout, images, organization, and accessibility.

Word Count: Each Student will produce 2500 words of writing

Project: User Test and Report (100 pts total)
This is the fourth of four linked projects.

For this assignments student groups will develop a user test methodology, including procedures and protocols (see chapter 11 of *TCTC*). Using test groups from outside of the class population, groups will conduct their user tests in order to measure the functionality and readability of their technical manuals. Based on the data they gather and the group's evaluation of that data, each group will then revise the technical manual before final submission for grade. In addition, each group will produce a user test report (see chapters 11 and 22 of *TCTC*) that identifies the user test methodology, the materials, the processes, and procedures. The report will provide evaluation of that data and will address how that data was considered in regard to the final revision of the manual. The report will also detail what revisions were made as a result of the user test.

Word Count: Each student will produce 1000 words of writing.

Professionalism and Participation
Participation includes speaking in class, group activities, peer review, attendance, and all assignments assigned for the course.

TOTAL WORD COUNT FOR FINAL SUBMISSION: 6,900 words

Grading Scale
A   930-1000
A-   900-929
B+   870-899
B   840-869
B-   800-839
C+   770-799
C   740-769
C-   700-739
D+   670-699
D   630-669
D-   600-629
E   0-599

Points Breakdown

Assignments	Word Count	Points	Percentage
Letters (3)	450	100	10%
Memos (3)	400	100	10%
Job Application	300	100	10%
Technical Definition	250	100	10%
Proposal	1000	100	10%
Progress Report	1000	100	10%
Manual	2500	200	20%
User Test/Report	1000	100	10%
Participation	N/A	100	10%

Course Policies

Attendance

This course is heavily oriented towards discussion and lecture. Therefore, attendance is crucial. Unexcused absences exceeding **three periods** may result in a failing grade for the course.

It is also expected that you will arrive on time for class. If you are five minutes late, you are absent. This is non-negotiable. Arriving late for class disrupts the learning process.

Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed (at least a week before), or they will not be counted. Other absence-related issues should be discussed with your professor in advance.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. In class assignments and so on cannot be made up.

Participation

Participation is a crucial part of your success in this class. You will be expected to work in small groups, participate in group discussions, and complete various other activities. Writing workshops require that you provide constructive feedback about your peers' writing. In general, you are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

Preparation

It is required that you complete and bring all readings to class; electronic texts are acceptable where available, but it is strongly recommended that you use a device which allows you to take notes. You must also be prepared to discuss the readings in class. If you cannot complete the readings, then do not take this course. You should take notes and you should read every text closely. It is okay if you are confused; you are encouraged to ask questions, no matter how simple.

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class on the day listed on the syllabus (unless specified otherwise). Late papers will not be accepted (they will receive an automatic zero). Failure of technology is not an excuse.

Additionally, you are expected to use computer-generated visuals and formatting and to present such material in a professional manner. Treat this course like a job: if you turn in shoddy material for a real job, what will eventually happen to you?. All work presented for any component of this class is expected to arrive complete and edited, even for peer review.

Note: I reserve the right to institute quizzes in my class if it becomes apparent that students are not doing the work. These will individually be worth 5% of your grade and will be extremely difficult. They will not be announced.

Classroom Behavior
Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Likewise, some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and present controversial opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly, absence, from the class. You may criticize an idea in this course (indeed, you are encouraged to debate interpretations), as literary analysis is often about subjective interpretation, but you must remain civil and respectful.

Additionally, use of cell phones and other electronic devices for any purpose other than contributing to the class will not be tolerated. You may use laptops and you may do brief searches on the Internet to look for something we are discussing in class, but you may not text, take phone calls, hold separate discussions with your neighbors, surf the Internet, check your email, or any other activity which is not related to the course. Doing so is disruptive and may result in dismissal from the class, which will be counted as an absence.

Paper Format
Your papers must conform to basic MLA format. Your paper must meet the basic formatting guidelines:
  ➢ Double-spaced
  ➢ 12 point Times New Roman
  ➢ 1 inch margins
  ➢ MLA style headers w/ page numbers
  ➢ MLA-style citations (in-text and end-text)
  ➢ Your name and other relevant heading information
If you are not familiar with MLA format, find a copy of the *MLA Handbook* in the library or use Purdue's OWL website. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner.

All papers must be submitted in paper and electronic form by the beginning of class on the due date. You will be docked half a letter grade for each day your electronic copy is late; you will receive no credit whatsoever if your hard copy is not turned in at the start of class.

All papers submitted online must be in .doc (MS Word) or .rtf (Rich Text Format) and must be submitted via Sakai. Please do not send .docx files; while I do have the conversion pack for older versions of MS Word, .doc and .rtf are less buggy and quicker for my computer. **Staple** hard copies.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the <u>Student Honor Code</u>. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

> Plagiarism. 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):
>
> a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
>
> b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007 <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire <u>Student Honor Code</u>.

<u>Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the internet without providing the exact location from which it came.</u>

This course has a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism. If you plagiarize, you will fail the assignment; you may also fail the class and be reported to the University. It is better to cite something incorrectly than to not cite at all.

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material. *Do not throw away papers*.

General Education Requirement

Successful completion of ENC 2210, Technical Writing, satisfies the University of Florida's General Education Requirement for Composition (C).

(For more information regarding the University of Florida's General Education Requirement for Composition see: http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx)

University Policies

Disability Services

> The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with

disabilities in the classroom.
It is your responsibility to contact the school administration regarding any disability you may have, and to inform me so we can make any necessary arrangements. For more information, see:
http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

Academic Honesty
All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:
http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php

Harassment
UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:
http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041

ENC 3254 Schedule of Assignments: Weeks 1- 6

This schedule may change and is not a complete listing of all assignments. Students will be required to complete additional informal writing assignments in class or as homework.

Week 1 – Course Introduction, Memos, and Letters
M   - Introductions
           - Syllabus

T   - Ch. 1 (What is Technical Writing?)
           - Ch. 12 (Writing Memos and Email Correspondence)
           - Assign: Memo One
                     See http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/sdobrin/ENC2210Memo1.pdf

W   - Ch. 2 (Rhetoric and Technical Writing)
           - Ch. 13 (Writing Letters)
           - Due: Memo One
           - Assign: Letter One (Draft Due by 10 PM)

R   - No Class (HOLIDAY)

F   - Ch. 3 (Technical Writing and Electronic Technologies)
           - Ch. 4 (Ethics and Technical Writing)
           - Peer Review (Letter One)
           - Assign: Memo Two

Week 2 – Resumes, Design, and Technical Definitions
M   - Ch. 6 (Research and Technical Writing)
           - Ch. 14 (Job Application Materials)
           - Due: Letter One

- Due: Memo Two
- Assign: Job Application

T   - Ch. 7 (Organization, Drafting, and Technical Writing)
        - Ch. 9 (Layout and Design)

W   - Ch. 10 (Revising, Editing, and Rewriting)
        - Workshop (Job Application – bring rough drafts)
        - Assign: Memo Three

R   - Peer Review (Job Application)

F   - Ch. 15 (Technical Definitions)
        - Assign: Technical Definition
        - Assign: Letter Two
        - Due: Memo Three
        - Due: Job Application

Week 3 – Technical Definitions and Proposals
M   - Collaboration Station (Workshop / Exploratory Committee)
        - Due: Letter Two
        - Assign: Collaborative Projects
                Proposal, Manual, Progress Report, User Test/Report

T   - Ch. 20 (Proposals)
        - Continue Collaborations on Proposals

W   - Workshop (Technical Definitions – bring rough drafts)

R   - Peer Review (Technical Definitions)

F   - Continue Collaborations on Proposals (bring rough materials)
        - Due: Technical Definition

Week 4 – Manuals
M   - Ch. 18 (Technical Instructions)
        - Ch. 19 (Manuals)
        - Assign: Manual

T   - Ch. 11 (User Tests)
        - Manual Collaboration Workshop

W   - Ch. 21 and 22 (Reports)
        - Assign: Progress Report

R   - Workshops for Proposals (bring rough drafts)

F   - Peer Review (Proposals – bring full drafts)

Week 5 – Collaboration Station A

M   - Conferences (Manuals)
       - No Proper Class (see me during office hours for help)
       - **Due: Proposals**

T   - Workshop for Manuals (bring rough materials)

W   - Conferences (Manuals)
       - No Proper Class (see me during office hours for help)
       - **Due: Progress Report**

R   - Workshop for Manuals (bring revised materials)

F   - Peer Review (Manuals – bring revised drafts)
       - **Assign: Letter Three**

Week 6 – Collaboration Station B

M   - Workshop for User Tests (bring all Manual/User Test materials)

T   - Workshop for User Tests (bring revised Manual and User Test materials)

W   - Conferences
       - No Proper Class (see me during office hours for help)
       - **Due: Letter Three**

R   - Peer Review (bring final revisions of Manual and User Test)

F   - Conferences
       - No Proper Class (see me during offices hours for help)
       - **Due: Manuals and User Tests**