

Technical Writing 9:30-10:45; English 3140 – Spring 2021	003	14301 9:30-10:45	Watt 316
	004	14300 11:00-12:15	

Instructor: Dr. Nancy Paxton-Wilson
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Course Description and Objectives

ENGLISH 3140: TECHNICAL WRITING

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:

Intensive, project-based application of principles of audience, context, purpose, and writing strategies of technical writing: proposals, reports, communication deliverables. Individual and team projects. Includes Honors sections. Prerequisite: Junior standing.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Master critical thinking skills and basic rhetorical concepts as they apply to professional environments and the ethical considerations within them

- Explore the dynamics in the technical writing environment and its discourse communities
- Understand the role of audience, purpose and context through communication models and related rhetorical frameworks
- Recognize ethical challenges that relate to workplace communication and chart the professional and personal principles that help answer them
- Foster cultural sensitivity to identify and negotiate the cultural variables that influence communication within and among organizations
- Acquire research skills to collect, analyze, document and report data ethically and professionally

2. Apply effective communications strategies to targeted readers

- Practice the iterative writing and production process, which includes careful planning and multiple revisions
- Use rhetorical strategies as you read, and as you design, organize, and deliver professional and persuasive communication
- Examine complex communicational challenges and develop effective solutions by: -identifying the stakeholders, their conflicting interests, and the contextual constraints-conducting audience and needs analysis using

primary and secondary research techniques-defining and clearly expressing the scope and purpose of professional documents

- Explore how writing technologies facilitate communication goals
- Plan, manage, and evaluate individual and team writing projects

3. Compose effectively in a variety of forms and media appropriate to the discipline

- Identify and adopt the industry's and its discourse communities' genre conventions and best writing practices. Genres may include reports, proposals, protocols, manuals, workplace messages, wikis, and more.
- Recognize and develop professional format and design features in presentations, print and digital publications, texts and visuals
- Practice the unique qualities of a professional writing style including conciseness, clarity, accuracy, readability, honesty
- Develop evaluative skills such as editing, proofreading, and usability testing
- Collaborate in person and online

Advanced Writing Outcomes:

- 1) Master critical reading skills and rhetorical concepts as they apply to professional environments and the ethical considerations within them (AW1)
- 2) Apply effective communication strategies to targeted readers (AW2)
- 3) Compose effectively in a variety of forms and media appropriate to the discipline (AW3)

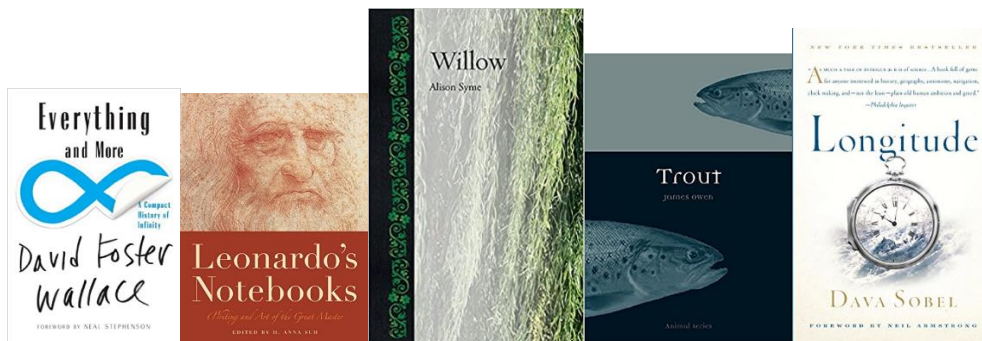


This Class is a Clemson Thinks2 Seminar

As a Clemson Thinks2 seminar (CT2), this course emphasizes the inculcation, development, and application of critical thinking skills. Cultivating critical thinking as both skillset and worldview is one of the primary goals we will strive toward through analysis of Tech Writing concerns, simultaneously reflecting the goals of the Advanced Writing program and CT.

Required Texts and Materials

Tebeaux, Elizabeth and Sam Dragga. *The Essentials of Technical Communication*, Fifth Edition Oxford University Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-19-753920-0



Short excerpts: *Everything and More* by David Foster Wallace; *Leonardo's Notebooks* ed. Anna Suh; *Willow* by Alison Syme; *Trout* by James Owen; *Longitude* by Dava Sobel

Assignments

Daily Writing Assignments – 10%

Chapter Presentation – 5%

Case Project: Short Recommendation Report on “Champlain Towers Engineering Report”– 10%

Cover Letter Project – 15%

Lay Audience Adobe Spark Page – 20%

Lay Audience Adobe Spark Page Presentation – 5%

Team Technical Report materials including Proposal, Gantt Chart, Progress Report – 10%

Final Technical Report – 20%

Final Technical Presentation – 5%

Assignment Details:

Daily Writing Assignments: Missed daily grades may not be made up.

Chapter Presentation (team project): 15 minute Powerpoint Presentation

Case Project: Short Recommendation Report (team project): This project asks you to analyze a rhetorical situation in a communication document and revise a document. “Champlain Towers Engineering Report”

Cover Letter Project: You will create a cover letter in response to a real-life job listing. By the end of the semester, you will have a decent draft of a cover letter you can adapt for future use. I will ask you to submit a resume, but the cover letter is what is graded.

The Resume will continue to deal with organizing and presenting information for purposeful readers, though in a much more highly structured format.

The Cover Letter will introduce you to fundamental rhetorical principles of technical writing but will focus on strategies for selecting and structuring information for decision-makers who have a well-defined purpose in reading your document.

Lay Audience Adobe Spark Page (team project): This project assignment will require you to design a spark page of your choice (or you can revise the example given). You will learn how to select and structure information in a concise and attractive manner, keeping your audience in mind. This assignment allows you to design an effective Adobe Spark Page layout, adapt information to readers’ knowledge levels, adapt your writing to readers’ purposes for reading, and convey information quickly and accurately. Additional Presentation Required.

Team Technical Report materials including Proposal, Gantt Chart, Progress

Final Technical Report (team project): This is the capstone team project for the semester. You will create a research, grant, or sales proposal.

The Technical Report will allow you to synthesize and apply all the skills covered in the course. In this project, you will conduct research and produce a report based on your findings. Additional Presentation Required.

Grading

Grades will be calculated on an A, B, C, D, F scale that utilizes plus and minus distinctions within a given grade range. Please refer to the "General Grading Criteria for Professional Writing Assignments" handout for more details about this scale.

In all collaborative work, you will be asked to evaluate your peers (and they you). I will use these evaluations in my determination of individual grades for collaborative projects. In general, all members of a group receive the same grade. However, I realize there are instance where one or more members of a group "slack off" or are otherwise unprofessional and unproductive. This will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to lower the grades of poorly performing individuals within a group.

It should go without saying that your work should be your own. Please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for the university's policy on academic honesty.

Email Guidelines

Since this is a course devoted to learning professional writing standards and strategies, I am going to be very particular about how you conduct email correspondence with me. Please pay close attention to creating a specific "Subject" line. This immediately lets your reader know what the email is about as well as separates from other emails with the same subject line that can get looped together in a thread. For example, instead of the subject being "Proposal," it should read "Your name, question about the Proposal."

Revisions

You may revise one assignment during the semester.

When I look at revisions, I am not just checking to see that you made some sort of change. Instead, I am assessing the rhetorical effectiveness of the changes that you made. If your revisions are not rhetorically effective, your grade for the assignment will remain unchanged. Similarly, if you implement effective changes in some areas but leave other significant issues unaddressed, your grade for the assignment will not improve as much as you would like. It is therefore vital for you to read all my comments on your original draft thoroughly and make sure that you understand them. If a comment is unclear, then you should email me or see after class about it.

The Writing Center (307 Academic Success Center building)



The Writing Center is a free tutoring service available to the entire student body, regardless of major or academic standing. It provides students opportunities to discuss questions or problems related to academic writing—from generating a topic and thesis to organizing a draft and integrating appropriate citations. The Writing Center's goal is to help Clemson students become confident and effective writers. As an English 3040 student, you should feel free to utilize the Writing Center to receive additional help or feedback on any course assignments or projects. You can make an appointment with a tutor by visiting the Writing Center's website (<http://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/writing/>), by calling them at 864-656-3280, or by simply stopping in.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

The following is Clemson's official statement on "Academic Integrity": "As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a 'high seminary of learning.' Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form."

A simple definition of plagiarism—one that we will expand upon this semester—is when someone presents another person's words, visuals, or ideas as his/her own. The instructor will deal with plagiarism on a case-by-case basis. The most serious offense within this category occurs when a student copies text from the Internet or from a collective file. *This type of academic dishonesty is a serious offense that will result in a failing grade for the course as well as the filing of a formal report to the university.*

See the Clemson site below for information about Academic Integrity and procedures regarding the violation of Clemson policies on scholastic dishonesty: <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/academic-integrity/>

Students with Disabilities

It is university policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services to discuss their individualized needs for accommodation. For more information visit <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/sds/index.html>

Title IX (Sexual Harassment) Statement

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>. Mr. Jerry Knighton is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator and is also the Director of Access and Equity. His office is located at 111 Holtzendorff Hall, 864.656.3181 (voice) or 864.565.0899 (TDD).

Office Hours

Please email me to set up a Zoom meeting at a time that is mutually convenient!

Grading Policy

Grading Policy

Your major assignments will receive individual grades, as well as individual attention from your classmates and me. These various assignments will be assigned a separate grade. These assignments help to track your progress as we move through the semester. They indicate your willingness to be a part of the course, and to collaborate with others in the class. As with any course, you will get out of it what you put into it. Your goal is to demonstrate your development toward mastery of the five learning outcomes for this course. These goals will be discussed throughout the course. While each writing situation may call for some adjustment in the overall criteria based on the rhetorical situation, the following descriptive rubric is consistent with the values of first-year composition at Clemson and describe very general indicators that both you and your instructor may take into consideration when assessing your work and progress in the course. While the final interpretation and assessment of your grade remains the responsibility of your teacher, the work that earns the grade falls entirely to you the student.

COVID-RELATED POLICIES

Attendance policy: Please do not come to class if you are feeling sick even if you don't have a test result yet. Absences will be excused for illness, the disruption of starting quarantine, urgent situations with family and friends, mental health days, job interviews, and etc. No proof is required, but in order to have your absence excused you must use the Student Notification of Absences form in Canvas (left hand menu at the bottom). You can use the "other" category for the reason for your absence if it does not fit one of the main choices and it is ok to fill out the form after the fact. But you must use the form for your absence to be excused. Students with more than 6 unexcused absences will have their final grade reduced by a full letter grade. Please discuss special circumstances with the professor.

Course Schedule

This syllabus and the schedule below provide a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary. Students are responsible for noting and abiding by all announced changes. By remaining enrolled in the course beyond the first day, you acknowledge that you understand and accept the policies outlined in this syllabus.

Date	Readings	In Class
Thursday January 13	Read Syllabus	Zoom – Introductions/Syllabus
Tuesday January 18	CT2 – Read Critical Thinking file	Zoom Canvas CT2 – Critical Thinking
Thursday January 20	Chapter 1 Introduction	Zoom In-Class Writing Assignment #1
Tuesday January 25	Chapter 2 Audience/Purpose	Zoom In-Class Writing Assignment #2
Thursday January 27	Chapter 2 Composing Process	Zoom In-Class Writing Assignment #3 About You and Your Writing Strategies
Tuesday February 1	Read “How to Write Email with Military Precision”	Zoom In-Class Writing Assignment #4
Thursday February 3	<i>Back in Classroom</i>	<i>Back in Classroom</i> Assign Teams
Tuesday February 8	Chapter 3 “Writing Ethically” Read “Purdue Pharma” file purdue-pharma-letter-doj-appeal.pdf (documentcloud.org)	Presentation Purdue Pharma Analysis Due
Thursday February 10	Chapter 4 “Achieving a Readable Style” Read “Champlain Towers Engineering Report” 8777-collins-ave---structural-field-survey-report.pdf (townofsurfsidefl.gov)	Presentation Introduction to Case Project: Short Recommendation Report
Tuesday February 15	Chapter 7 “E-mails, Texts, Memos, and Letters	Presentation Short Recommendation Report Revisions to Engineering Report
Thursday February 17	Chapter 5 “Designing Documents”	Presentation Short Recommendation Report Revisions Due Revision to Engineering report
Tuesday February 22	Chapter 12 Applying for a Job See Canvas “Cover Letters”	Presentation Intro to Cover Letter Project

	See Canvas “Characterizing Disciplinary and Conventions in Engineering resume Profiles”	Revision to Engineering Report Due
Thursday February 24	No Class	No Class
Tuesday March 1		Cover Letter Project -- Conferences
Thursday March 3		Cover Letter Project -- Conferences
Tuesday March 8		Cover Letter Project -- Conferences
Thursday March 10	Chapter 6 “Designing Illustrations”	Presentation In-Class Writing Assignment #5 Cover Letter Project Due
Tuesday March 15	Read Adobe Spark Page Prompt See Canvas for “Writing for lay Audiences: A challenge for scientists” See Canvas Technical Writing and Storytelling: “Technical Communication: Journal of the Society for Technical Communication November 2021”	Introduction to Adobe Spark Page (new team assignment): Creating Info for a Lay Audience Excerpts from Suh, Sobel. Syme, Owens
Thursday March 17		Conferences
March 21-25	SPRING BREAK	
Tuesday March 29		Adobe Spark Page
Thursday March 31		Adobe Spark Page
Tuesday April 5		Presentations Adobe Spark Page Due
Thursday April 7	Chapter 8 “Technical Reports”	Presentation Introduction to Final Project: Technical Report In-Class Writing Assignment #6
Tuesday April 12	Chapter 9 “Proposals and Progress Reports” See Canvas for Gantt Chart Example	Presentation Technical Report Workshop In-Class Writing Assignment #7
Thursday April 14	Chapter 11 “Oral Reports”	Proposal Due
Tuesday April 19		Gantt Chart Due
Thursday April 21		Progress Report Due
Tuesday April 26	Final Presentations	Final Technical Report Presentations
Thursday April 28	Final Presentations	Final Technical Report Presentations

Final Technical Reports Due at Exam Time



Nullius in verba

Latin for "on the word of no one" or "take nobody's word for it" -- the motto of the Royal Society, established around 1652.