**TECM 2700.321: Introduction to Technical Writing**

**Course Information**

Term: Spring 2022

Location: canvas.unt.edu

Instructor: Dr. Ana Krahmer

Office hours: Monday/Wednesday, 10:00AM-1:00PM, or by appointment

Zoom meeting room: https://unt.zoom.us/j/86487518401

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**Course Summary**

Every profession, regardless of the field, requires solid communication skills: the ability to communicate with an audience inside and outside of the profession. The effective professional has a keen sense of audience and purpose, a command of the language, and an ability to adapt to a variety of communication tasks. Technical Writing introduces students to the genres, style, and design of technical documents that are used in various professional fields including engineering, science, business, and criminal justice.

By the end of this course, you should be able to

* analyze communication contexts rhetorically by understanding audiences, purposes, and situations
* create technical documents that solve problems and improve a reader’s access to information
* write effective technical prose design convincing and usable documents
* research, synthesize, articulate, and graphically represent technical data
* write collaboratively and work as a member of a professional team

**Textbook**

The required text for this course is [*Professional and Technical Writing* (Links to an external site.)](https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/54645-professional-and-technical-writing/1/view) 2019 by Suzie Baker.

This textbook is free and produced under license “Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0." You will need to create a free account with the publisher in order to download a PDF copy of the textbook.

Supplemental readings will be available on Canvas.

**Assignments**

The assignments in this course are designed to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate and develop your professional communication abilities. As this is a writing-intensive course, each assignment, whether individual or group, requires substantial contribution and solid evidence of audience analysis, ethical considerations, and problem-solving skills.

Below is a brief description of the major assignments you will complete in this course and the assignment grade weights. More specific instructions about each will be provided in-class and on Canvas.

**Technical Style Exam, 15%**

Identify the style weaknesses in technical document and then edit the document using the style recommendations in textbook. This is an open-note/open-book exam.

**Resume and LinkedIn Headline/Summary, 15%**

Select an internship posting based on your current qualifications. If you're planning on graduating this year, approach this assignment as if you have your degree. Design and construct a resume based on this posting’s desired qualifications. You will be evaluated on the content and appearance of the resume as well as how effectively it targets your audience. Resumes produced with existing templates will not be accepted.

Additionally, write a LinkedIn headline and summary, which would appeal to recruiters and hiring managers. The headline and summary will be assessed on its content and persuasiveness.

**Project Management Software Report, 15%**

In assigned groups, research and assess the efficacy of two free project management tools such as Asana, Dropbox, Google Drive, GoToMeeting, or Slack. After your team has selected its tools, you will perform a usability test. Your team will then synthesize your findings in an IMR&D (Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion) report.

**Employment Outlook Report, 20%**

In assigned groups, research and report the employment outlook for your future profession. Each team member is responsible for locating and synthesizing data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook (Bureau of Labor Statistics) as well as 3 current job postings in his or her desired field and location. Each team member will also interview one relevant professional who works outside the university. Your team must use the project management tool you recommended in the project management report to communicate with one another.

The audiences for the employment outlook report are academic advisors and undergraduate directors who advise and recruit students into your major. The report will be assessed on your ability to analyze, synthesize, and visualize technical information.

**Short Reports, 10%**

Submit two 1-page reports (in memo format) on your individual contributions to the employment outlook report. These reports should update me on your preliminary research findings and describe how this research contributes to the construction of the final report.

**LinkedIn Profile, 10%**

Write the content necessary for an effective LinkedIn profile. If you don’t wish to post these materials on LinkedIn, submit them via Canvas. The profile content should include a professional headshot as well as the following sections: summary, experience, courses, skills, and education. Organize these sections based on what we’ve discussed about hierarchy in class as well as the experiences that distinguish you from the competition.

**Professionalism, Discussion Posts, and Quizzes, 15%**

Complete discussion posts, in-class activities, quizzes, and assigned readings as well as conduct yourself as a professional communicator.

**Grading**

The below grading criteria serve as general guidelines for evaluating all assignments. Assignment-specific rubrics will be housed on Canvas.

"A" (90-100%): A manager would be very impressed and would remember the work when a promotion is discussed. In this course, that means work that is a pleasure to read, with excellent content, grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and visual design. In addition, work is thorough, complete, coherent, well organized, supported sufficiently, and demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.

"B" (80-89%): A manager would be satisfied with the job, but not especially impressed. This means that documents are well written and well produced, and demonstrate a substantial addition to the learning process. Work is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and demonstrates a solid understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.

"C" (70-79%): A manager would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing clients and others to see the work. In other words, the document may have clear, but underdeveloped ideas, or it might not engage or affect the reader. The documents may contain some errors in grammar, mechanics, or logic.

"D" (60-69%): A manager would be troubled by the poor quality of work. This level of work forces the reader to work too hard to understand the main ideas. The documents may contain incomplete information, have serious grammar and mechanical problems, lack clear organization, or be conceptually unclear.

"F" (0-59%): A manager would start looking for someone to replace you. In particular, work fails to address the tasks of the assignment, is so underdeveloped as to demonstrate incompetence, and is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible. This grade will also be assigned for any evidence of plagiarism.

**Course Policies and Procedures**

These policies provide you with the formal regulations governing this course. Submission of your first assignment indicates you have read, understood, and agreed to these policies.

**Online Learning, Attendance, and Communication**

This course has been developed to promote asynchronous learning. The instructor and students will not meet on a required basis, but there will be bi-weekly Zoom meetings on Thursday nights from 6:30-7:30, where the professor will introduce major assignments and go over course activities.

For each module, there is a timeframe to complete all activities and assignments, and you may work at your own pace within that timeframe. However, you must adhere to the deadlines outlined on the calendar. You should log into the course daily to check for updates, review lessons, and participate in activities.

You can expect meaningful feedback on written assignments within 7–14 days of the deadline. Questions about grades or other individual issues should be emailed to Dr. Krahmer, not posted on the discussion forum.

**Drop Dates**

Please be aware of the below deadlines as well as the changes in grading policies. UNT students can no longer receive a grade of WF, and they can drop a course online without the instructor’s signature. However, students have 5 business days to decide if they want to be re-instated in a dropped course.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Description |
| April 8 | Last day to drop a course with a grade of W. |
| April 9 | Beginning this date, a student who qualifies may request a grade of I, incomplete. (See “Grading system” in the Academics section of the catalog.) |

**Medical Withdrawals**

If a student must withdraw due to medical reasons, prior to the withdrawal deadline as indicated in the academic calendar, a student may do so through the regular withdrawal process. If a student is incapacitated or unable to make the request on his/her own, please contact the Dean of Students Office for assistance at 940-565-2648. For details regarding the withdrawal process, go to <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/withdrawals>.

**Technology Requirements**

To successfully complete this course, you should have access to a reliable internet source. You should also have these technical skills:

* Using the Canvas learning management system
* Using email with attachments
* Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing program formats
* Copying and pasting
* Downloading and installing software
* Using spreadsheet programs
* Word Processor

Remember that your password is the only thing protecting you from pranks or more serious harm.

* Don’t share your password with anyone.
* Change your password if you think someone else might know it.
* Always log out when you are finished using Canvas.

The following information has been provided to assist you with the technological aspect of the course.

* [UNT Help Desk](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm)
* [UNT TECM Comm Lab](https://sites.google.com/view/tecmcommlab/home)
* [UNT Libraries Technology & Computing Overview](https://library.unt.edu/services/technology-computing/)

**Netiquette Guide**

When communicating online, you should

* Treat others with the same respect you would show in a face-to-face classroom.
* Err on the side of being too formal rather than too informal. You should take your cue for the right level from how your professor interacts with you and other students.
* Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as it can easily be misunderstood.
* Be careful with personal information (both your own and other people’s).

**Email Policy**

Email professionalism is a skill that correlates with the most successful workplace communicators.  Please read this policy carefully prior to sending an email to me.

* I want you to be successful in this course, and I am looking forward to our interactions. To help make our interactions respectful, polite, and courteous, follow these guidelines when emailing me:
* Your email should address me by name. My name is Dr. Krahmer, so you can address me as Dr. Krahmer.
* Your email should include a short, informative subject line (e.g., TECM 2700: Question about Student Interview Assignment). Do not leave the subject line blank.
* Keep your email concise. If your question is short or direct, a one-sentence email (plus a greeting and a signature) will be just fine and also preferred.
* I respond to email within 24 hours of receiving it. I generally only respond to email on weekdays, so if you are emailing me with a crisis on the weekend, I will not be available to answer until Monday.
* You must have a valid UNT email address, and you must check this account regularly. I often use email to send class updates and advisories.
* I send my responses to the account where your email originated. Do not email me from one account, for example, and ask me to reply to another. You are responsible for managing your email accounts.
* Check the syllabus or assignment schedule before you send your email as I will not respond to requests for information contained in the course materials or texts.
* I do not discuss major assignment grades over email or Canvas Chat. Instead, please schedule an appointment with me. When contacting me, provide three possible dates/times when you are available to meet via Zoom.
* Do not SPAM me or your team members. I define spamming as sending multiple emails before the recipient has had an appropriate amount of time to respond. Think carefully before sending multiple emails (in any situation).

**Assignment Submission and Grading**

**Format**

Major assignments and drafts must be submitted through Canvas unless otherwise noted. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. You may not use program templates (e.g., Word templates) to format any of your documents — these don't encourage you to learn the programs and generally result in dull, unpersuasive documents.

**Due Dates**

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due either by 11:59pm on Wednesdays or 11:59pm on Sundays. Please refer to the calendar in Canvas for detailed information. I do not accept late work unless you have documented extenuating circumstances related to university events or the observance of a recognized holy day.

It is your responsibility to turn in your work on time. Computer-related excuses will not be accepted as per the above technology requirements.

**Teamwork Behavior**

You will complete major projects in teams. I will assign these teams based on your shared academic interests. Before any teamwork begins, you will create a charter that is designed to improve communication. Your charter will include information on team goals and member roles, strategies for conflict resolution, and protocols for missing deadlines. If your team encounters any project management issues, consult the charter before asking me to intervene. You will evaluate yourself and each team member at the semester's end. These evaluations could influence your grade.

**Academic Integrity**

I follow UNT’s academic integrity and dishonesty policies. UNT defines six acts of academic dishonesty. Below is a brief description of these act and the related 2700 penalty for committing each act:

* *Cheating* —using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves cheating.

* *Plagiarism* — the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves plagiarism.

* *Forgery* — altering a score, grade, or official academic university record or forging the signature of an instructor or other student. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of forgery.

* *Fabrication* — intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves fabrication.

* *Facilitating academic dishonesty* — intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves facilitating academic dishonesty.

* *Sabotage* — acting to prevent others from completing their work or willfully disrupting the academic work of others. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of sabotage.

All acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to UNT’s Academic Integrity Office. You can read UNT's policy at <http://tinyurl.com/nuwo42u>.At the beginning of the semester, we will review the six acts of academic dishonesty and their related penalties. You must also complete a quiz on the subject, which will certify that you understand the policies and procedures.

**Accommodations (Special Arrangements)**

**UNT Office of Disability Accommodations**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations.

UNT’s Office of Disability Accommodations offers a variety of services but require qualified students to follow an application process. Please check their Web site for more information on these procedures and their deadlines.

New ODA policy – *The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.*

**Religious Holidays**

Students needing to miss class due to the observance of an officially recognized religious holy day are asked to consult with me in advance so we can schedule missed work accordingly.