

TECM 3010.001: The Profession of Technical Communication

Course Objectives

The goals of TECM 3010 are to:

- Introduce you to the career paths available in tech comm
- Introduce you to the kind of work each career path involves
- Provide you with a professional development plan based on the competencies and tool knowledge needed for each career path

The syllabus explains basic information about the course and your instructor's expectations.

Instructor Contact

My name is Adam Fout, and I am a lecturer in the Department of Technical Communication. You can call me Professor Fout.

Class time and location: T/R 9:35 AM to 10:55 AM, AUSB 312 (auditorium building)

Email: adam.fout@unt.edu

Term: Fall 2026

Office: LANG 105

Office hours: Tuesdays from 3:40 pm to 5:40 pm (by appointment only)

Required Books

The following books are required:

- *The Insider's Guide to Technical Writing* 2nd edition by Krista Van Laan
- *CliftonStrengths 34. Critical first step in understanding your strengths and weaknesses in the workplace.* You can buy it here: <https://store.gallup.com/product/cliftonstrengths-34/01tPa00000QhS6zIAF>. It's \$59.99

Time Commitment

This is an intense introduction to a professional field. You should expect to spend a **minimum of 8 hours per week** on this course; that includes at least 5 hours of course-related work beyond our 3-hours of class meeting time. You may work more than 5 hours outside of class during some weeks. To succeed, you will never work fewer than 5 hours.

Grading

Your course grade is earned through performance on several types of assignments:

- Portfolio Website (20%)
- Phase One Team Project (10%) Converting a whitepaper into a slide deck
- Phase Two Team Project (15%) Creating video instructions
- Phase Three Team Project (20%) Writing content for and designing a website (with card sort)
- Participation (15%)
- Attendance (10%)
- Career Fair Reflection (10%)

Note: Participation grades are determined by many ungraded course activities. **The most important part of participation is speaking during class discussion. Just be cool and speak and have fun with it.**

Each assignment will be discussed in class meetings. You will be asked to push yourself beyond your comfort zone by doing new things under time pressure. This simulates the work environment of those in the tech comm profession.

Because the course goals are broad rather than deep coverage, you should not expect to show mastery in completing major assignments. Rather, you will become familiar in a shallow way with many aspects of the profession. In particular, the learning experiences while completing the team projects are more important than the quality of the products you will deliver.

Course Structure

This course will be delivered completely in person. Modules will be opened up regularly.

Communication Expectations (IMPORTANT)

Emails should always be sent through Canvas. Emails sent in any other way often do not make it to me. If I don't respond to your emails, this might be one reason why.

All students must have a valid UNT email address as it is the only email address I can use to communicate with you. You can forward your UNT email to your regular account (Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.), should you not wish to directly check your UNT account. It is also your responsibility to check your email regularly. I often use email to send class emails, including notices, updates, and advisories.

Emails need to be written professionally. That means addressing me properly and using proper GSP. If they are written improperly (e.g., you've used slang, you don't write out your words properly (saying things like "u" instead of "you" or "i" instead of "I", etc.)), I will not respond, and I will wait for you to rewrite the email professionally and send it again.

Emails sent outside of business hours (9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday) are suuuuuuuuper unlikely to get a response.

Professionalism

These are the things you will be graded on:

- Participation (do you participate in the few discussions we have?)
- Respectfulness (do you speak to me/your classmates respectfully during discussions?)

Technical Requirements & Skills

Minimum Technology Requirements

As this is a junior-level course, you are expected to be familiar with the day-to-day operation of computers including UNT email (and sending attachments), Canvas, and standard software.

You are also expected to have regular access to computing technology, whether it be your computer at home or the computers provided by UNT. There are 14 computer labs on campus, including one 24-hour lab.

Hardware and Disk Media Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure that the computer(s) and disk(s) you use are functional and that you have backed up your data in the case of technological failure.

As a student at UNT, you can back up data through [OneDrive](#). A corrupted disk or crashed hard drive does not constitute an excuse for late or unsubmitted work. If you need to bring electronic files to class, please email them to yourself as attachments or use the OneDrive available through your EagleConnect account.

A Note on AI

In this class, the only time you may use AI is if I expressly tell you to use it as part of an assignment. If you use it otherwise, you will receive a failing grade for that assignment.

If you want to have any chance of succeeding in today's workplace, you need to have the skills to take the text an AI creates and enhance it. If you don't practice without AI and rely on AI, your employer will wonder why they need you in the first place.

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

Here are the technical skills you must have to succeed in the course:

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using spreadsheet programs
- Using presentation and graphics programs

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in email or any other communication.
- Always use your professors' proper title: Dr. or Prof., or if in doubt use Mr. or Ms.
- Unless specifically invited, don't refer to your instructor by first name.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar (this includes discussion boards).
- Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you."
- Use standard fonts such as Ariel, Calibri or Times new Roman and use a size 10 or 12 point font
- Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :) or ☺.
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or sound offensive.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and other's).
- Do not send confidential information via e-mail

See these [Engagement Guidelines](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (<https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips>) for more information.

Getting Help

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UNT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-) (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC->

[10554-4212710328](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center))

Student Support Services

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Other student support services offered by UNT include

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Center](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)
- [MathLab](https://math.unt.edu/mathlab) (<https://math.unt.edu/mathlab>)

Grading

Late Work

I will not accept late work in this course. All work turned in after the deadline will receive a grade of zero unless the student has a [university-excused absence](#) and provides documentation within 48 hours of the missed deadline. This course moves quickly—there is no time for grading late work. There are no make-ups available unless arrangements are made PRIOR to due dates. Any exceptional circumstances that cause you to miss deadlines should be documented with the Dean of Students: Union 409 or 940-565-2648. You should also alert me as soon as possible to these exceptional circumstances.

Turnaround Time

I aim to return graded work to you within one week of the due date, but I cannot make guarantees.

Grade Disputes

You are required to wait 24 hours before contacting me to dispute a grade. Within that time, I expect that you will review the assignment details and reflect on the quality of the work you turned in. If you would still like to meet, email me to set up a meeting (I cannot discuss grades over email). You should come to our scheduled meeting with specific examples that demonstrate that you earned a higher grade than you received. If you miss your scheduled meeting, you forfeit your right to a grade dispute. If you do not contact me to schedule a meeting within 7 days of receiving your grade, you also forfeit your right to a grade dispute.

Drop Dates

Please know deadlines and policies. Students can no longer receive a WF, and they can drop a course online without the instructor's signature. Students have 5 business days to decide if they want to be reinstated in a dropped course.

Grading Criteria

I assign letter grades for the course based on the total sum of points earned on the assignments listed above. Those letter grades correspond to the following levels of performance.

A (900-1000 points)	A manager/client 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 (800-899 points)	A manager/client would be satisfied with the job, but not especially impressed. This means that work is well written and well produced, and demonstrates 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 (700-799 points)	A manager/client would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite the work before allowing clients and others to see it. In other words, the work may have clear, but underdeveloped ideas, or it might not engage or affect the reader. The work may contain some errors in grammar, mechanics, or logic.
D (600-699 points)	A manager/client 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 work may

	contain incomplete information, have serious grammar and mechanical problems, lack clear organization, or be conceptually unclear.
F (599> points)	A manager/client would start looking for someone to replace you. In particular, the work fails to address the tasks of the assignment, is so underdeveloped as to demonstrate incompetence, and is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible.

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course.

Assignment Policy

Assignments must be turned in through Canvas. I do not accept paper copies of anything. If you complete your assignments by hand, you must take pictures and upload them to Canvas.

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, I may extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to me and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number. The UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in this course is mandatory and is worth 10% of your grade.

You do not get any excused absences. If you come into class after I arrive or leave without approval before I have dismissed class, you will be counted as late or absent at my discretion. This does not count emergencies, which you need to inform me of after the fact, or needing to use the bathroom, which you do NOT need to inform me of. If you have an ODA accommodation or a University-excused absence, you may leave whenever you are allowed to by that accommodation—though it is not required, I would appreciate if you tell me beforehand so I don't have to mark you absent/late and then undo it later.

Coming in late disrupts class for your fellow students and shows a lack of respect for their time and yours. Coming to the workplace late is not acceptable—neither is it acceptable in this class. Your attendance grade is counted as part of a whole, and lates count against you.

You'll be in group projects throughout most of this course. It is not fair for your classmates for you to not show up to class or show up so late you can't participate.

If you miss class because of [exceptional circumstances](#), it needs to be documented with the Dean of Students (see above). You also need to tell me as soon as possible so that your absence can be excused.

I will record your engagement and participation during all class meetings. That record serves as input when I determine professionalism scores at the end of the semester. In-class activities cannot be duplicated outside of

the class meeting. I do not review class meetings with students who miss class, so you should form a support network among your peers.

If you are having difficulties managing your course responsibilities, let me know early. There are many campus resources available to support you through the UNT [Dean of Students](#).

Phone and Computer Policy—Absences

If you are on your phone excessively during class, I will count you as absent. If you have a good reason to be on your phone, you need to tell me before class.

You need to bring a computer to class to succeed in this course. **If you are doing homework for other classes or doing something unrelated to this course, I will count you as absent.**

Syllabus Change Policy

As instructor, I reserve the right amend the syllabus, course information, due dates when necessary. My promise to you is that I will communicate the changes via a course announcement in Canvas. Please check for new announcements daily.

Curves Etc.

I do not curve grades. Do not expect a curve.

24/7 Rule

I encourage you to see me if you have questions about your performance on graded assignments. However, all students must wait 24 hours after receiving their grade. Any factual errors should be brought to my attention within 7 days after the grade is received. Make sure you know how to access comments in the Grades feature of Canvas.

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

If I see evidence you have cheated by using assistance not listed on our class schedule, plagiarized by using someone else's words, pictures or ideas without attribution, fabricated information, or assisted another student in any of these categories of academic dishonesty, you will earn no credit for the assignment, and you may be given an F in this course.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

All acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to UNT's Academic Integrity Office. You can read UNT's policy [here](#).

- Cheating: using/attempting to use unauthorized materials or information in any work submitted for credit or hours
- Plagiarism: deliberate reproduction of ideas or words of another person as one's own
- Forgery: altering a grade or official academic university record or forging the signature of an instructor or other student
- Fabrication: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise
- Facilitating academic dishonesty: Intentionally helping/attempting to help to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity
- Sabotage: preventing others from completing work/willfully disrupting their academic work

If you cheat, I will find out, and I will apply the maximum punishment I possibly can.

ADA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access website](#). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the

survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website \(http://spot.unt.edu/\)](http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance.

UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. (See UNT Policy 16.005)

UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website \(http://www.ecfr.gov/\)](http://www.ecfr.gov/). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See [UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002>).

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form.

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses

This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions. Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

Student Teams

I assign teams for projects based on the input you provide on a survey at the [CATME](#) site, which provides a system of secure, web-based tools that enable instructors to implement best practices in managing student teams. The tools and training are supported by the literature on teamwork and training, along with independent empirical research. Once assigned, you are expected to continue working together for the duration of the project. Their evaluation may be used to adjust your grade on the team-created major deliverables, where your point totals can be adjusted from 0% to 125% of the team grade based on your level of contribution.