TECM 2700-023: Technical Writing

Course Information
Term: Fall 2025

Location: AudB 306, Friday 1 p.m. – 3:50 p.m.

Instructor Information
Instructor: Bernie Scheffler, M.A., Teaching Fellow

Office hours: Mondays, 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Office location: Virtual; From course calendar in Canvas, click "Find Appointment"

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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 team.

Textbook
The required text for this course is *Professional and Technical Writing* 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 writing 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 Edit and Justification Memo, 15%

Review and refine the style of a technical document, focusing on tone and professionalism. Edit the document in line with textbook recommendations. This is an open-note/open-book test. Ensure you reference your textbook and notes for style guidelines. Complete independently without AI assistance.

Resume and LinkedIn Headline/Summary, 20%

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. 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 Unit, 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 Unit, 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 a project management tool 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.

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.

Discussion, Drafts, and Quizzes, 10%

Complete homework, in-class activities, short (or micro) writing, and assigned readings as well as conduct yourself as a professional communicator.

Professionalism and Participation, 10%

This course is designed to simulate an authentic professional environment. All course-related behaviors, interactions, and communications are to be conducted professionally.

Professionalism and participation are worth 10% of your grade. Your instructor can lower your professionalism grade at any point in the semester for unprofessional behavior. Behavior that is especially egregious or disruptive will result in a zero for professionalism and participation.

Examples of professionalism:
- Coming to class on time
- Being ready to listen and work when class begins
- Having a device that is ready to use (not a phone)
- Notifying the instructor of extenuating circumstances leading to an absence or being tardy
- Being attentive to instruction
- Participating in all classroom activities
- Using an appropriate volume for speaking in class
- Staying on task
- Asking questions that are relevant to the task
- Cooperating with classmates in a polite manner
- Sending emails, Canvas messages, and comments on Canvas with a polite and professional tone

Reasons why your professionalism grade may be lowered:
- Tardiness

- Lack of communication for extenuating circumstances
- Lack of preparedness to work in class
- Listening to headphones or earbuds during class
- Personal phone use
- Sleeping
- Excessive or hostile questioning
- Working on coursework for other classes
- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Leaving the classroom for extended or repeated periods
- "Talking back" or talking with a hostile tone
- Foul or coarse language or gestures
- Being disruptive, uncooperative, or otherwise detracting from a positive learning experience
- Not following instructions or disobeying a directive from the instructor

Students who are disruptive or distracted will be told to leave class and marked absent for that day. Disruptive behaviors will be reported to the UNT Dean of Students Office.

Grading
The following 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.

Attendance
Your presence in this course is mandatory--not optional. You cannot perform well in this course unless you attend class. If you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for all material covered and all assignments completed. Should you miss more than 2 classes, your grade will be lowered by one letter. If you miss 4 classes, you will receive a grade of 'F' in the class.

Note that absences due to minor illnesses do count toward your total absences (in other words, sick days are not excused). Please help us keep our classroom environment healthy by saving your absences for days you are ill.

Limited absences may be excused for required military service, official university functions approved in advance by the Dean of Students Office, religious holidays, pregnancy/parenting, or extenuating circumstances documented by the Dean of Students Office. See UNT's student attendance policy for details: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039

Lates (tardies) may be logged and can result in a lowered grade should they begin to accumulate. If, for example, a participation grade or quiz is given during the first 15 minutes and a student arrives late, a grade of zero (0) will be received for that assignment.

Likewise, any student who leaves class before it has ended or without my prior approval will automatically receive an absence for that day.

For any expected absence or tardy, please let me know as early in the semester as possible, so that I can better help you keep up with coursework.

Drop Dates

Please be aware of the UNT Academic Calendar deadlines for dropping a class 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 reinstated in a dropped course.

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.

General Technology Requirements

Computer Operations and Access Requirements
As this is a sophomore-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 personal computer, or the computers provided by UNT. There are 14 computer labs on campus, including one 24-hour lab.

Device Requirements
Your TECM classroom is a collaborative BYOD lab (bring your own device). Therefore, you must either bring your own device to every class period or reserve a device from our TECM TechLab.

If you bring your own device, it must be equipped with a non-web-based word processor and internet access capabilities via the UNT Wifi network. Tablets or devices with cloud-based word processors, such as GoogleDocs, are not recommended because they do not give you the full capabilities required in this TECM course. As a UNT student, you can install a free version of MS Office Suite on your personal computer. Visit https://it.unt.edu/installoffice365 for more information.

For students who cannot bring a device to class, the TECM TechLab provides laptops that can be checked out at the main service desk in AUDB307. Reserve your device early and through the WebCheckout. If you think you will need a device

throughout the semester, WebCheckout allows you to make reoccurring reservations. These reservations are not to exceed your scheduled class time.

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, up to 25 GB, 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.

Email Requirement

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.

Assignment Submission and Grading

Format

Major assignments and drafts must be submitted through Canvas unless otherwise noted. Emailed assignments will not be accepted without advance approval.

Due Dates

Assignments must be completed and uploaded to Canvas by the beginning of the designated class period, unless specified otherwise. 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.

Lastly, 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.

Classroom Behavior

It is expected that discussions will occur in the classroom; consequently, it is important to be respectful and listen to the instructor and your classmates. "Listening" does not include answering a cell phone, texting, chatting to your

neighbor, checking email, surfing the Internet, or reading the *North Texas Daily* or any other printed matter.

Your preparedness in this course also falls under the subject of classroom behavior. You are expected to come to every class period with your textbook and appropriate note-taking materials. Likewise, you are expected to have completed all the assigned readings and all assignments due during that class period.

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 (UNT Policy 17.012). The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The Code applies to your interactions with everyone involved in this course: the instructor, classmates, your project teammates, and invited guests.

Teamwork Policy

Value of Teamwork

Teamwork is an essential component of TECM 2700, reflecting the reality of professional environments where collaboration is key to success. Throughout at least half of the semester, you will engage in team-based projects designed to mirror workplace dynamics. Your instructor will assign you to teams, often based on your academic background, to maximize diverse perspectives and skills.

In this course, you will develop project management strategies, including creating a team charter to guide collaboration and resolve conflicts. You will learn to balance academic, work, and personal commitments, enhancing your ability to work effectively in a team setting. This experience is invaluable for developing the interpersonal and organizational skills that employers highly value.

Teamwork Requirement

Participation in team projects is a mandatory aspect of TECM 2700 and not optional. Teamwork is a required component because it is a reality of the workplace and an assessed outcome of the Texas Core Curriculum. Your ability to work collaboratively will be evaluated and is essential for successfully completing the course. Failure to engage with your team may impact your grade and learning outcomes.

Academic Integrity

I follow UNT's academic integrity and dishonesty policies. UNT defines six acts of academic dishonesty (see UNT Policy 06.003). 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. 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.

AI-Assistance Policies

The emergence and advancement of AI-assisted tools can increase efficiency. Interestingly, by saving time on routine tasks, using these tools actually amplify our creative capacities.

By harnessing the power of AI, you have the opportunity to better connect your writing to its intended audience and purpose. However, it's essential to use AI responsibly and ethically.

General Use of AI

You can leverage AI tools for brainstorming, proofreading, and general research assistance. However, you should thoroughly review, edit, and understand any direct output from an AI tool before submitting it. Just like any other source, if you use insights or outputs from an AI, ensure you acknowledge or cite it appropriately.

AI tools, while powerful, can sometimes produce fabricated or inaccurate information. It's your responsibility to vet any content, AI-generated or otherwise, before submission.

Understand that actions, such as fabricating content or misrepresenting work would be considered breaches of academic integrity, with or without the use of AI. If you're unsure about the appropriateness of using AI for a specific task, consult your instructor before proceeding.

Purpose of TECM 2700 Assignments

The primary aim of TECM 2700 assignments is to develop the writing and design skills you need to be successful in academic and career endeavors. This is why there are specific guidelines on the use of AI tools for these assignments.

Below are more specific guidelines on how AI should and should not be used for major assignments in TECM 2700:

Correspondence Case (and other general writing assignments)

Do not use AI tools to draft or conceptualize your responses. Instead, develop your response based on your understanding and skills.

Technical Style Edit and Justification Memo

Refrain from using AI to perform style analyses or suggest edits. While you can use AI for grammar and spelling checks, the justification for style edits should be your own work.

Resume

While AI can offer insights on formatting and phrasing, the content in your resume should accurately represent your personal experiences, skills, and achievements. Do not use AI to fabricate or exaggerate any part of your resume.

Project Management Software Report

You can use AI for data collection and initial research about various software options. However, evaluations, comparisons, and final recommendations should be based on your understanding and analysis.

Employment Outlook Report

You can use AI for initial research on job market trends. However, fabricating interview subjects or responses, with or without AI assistance, is strictly prohibited.

Progress Report and Primary Research Report

Your short reports should genuinely reflect your contributions. Do not use AI to exaggerate or fabricate progress.

LinkedIn Profile

AI can assist in proofreading, but do not rely on it to generate content for your LinkedIn profile. Your profile should authentically represent your skills and experiences.

Trust your gut. If using an AI tool in a particular manner feels "wrong" or if you're unsure about its appropriateness, trust your instincts and seek guidance. Raising thoughtful questions or concerns with your instructor is encouraged. These discussions are not considered academic dishonesty; rather, they invite positive conversations about the value and potential drawbacks of AI tools.

Accommodations (Special Arrangements)

UNT Office of Disability Accommodations

In accordance with university policies and state and federal regulations, the university is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. To this end, all academic units are willing to make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies in order to facilitate equality of educational access for persons with disabilities.

To receive accommodations, you must [register with the ODA](#) and then [request a Reasonable Accommodation form](#), which you should present to me within the first two weeks of class (see UNT Policy 16.001). You can read UNT's policy on disability accommodation for students and academic units at https://tinyurl.com/y7jshaqx.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. 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 Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Contact 940-565-2648.

Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule for this section of 2700. The schedule is subject to change pending our progress this semester.

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Major Assignments Due
Week 1	Opening lab orientation, activity: What is TC?, syllabus, Practice Correspondence Case, academic integrity	Baker, Units 1.1-1.8	Practice Correspondence Case (completed in class) Baker, Units 1.1-1.8 Quiz
Unit 1. Technical Style			
2	Intro to technical style, Review correspondence case, Activity: Snow policy memo, style lecture (editing for clarity and concision)	Baker, Units 3.1-3.6, 17.8	Snow Policy Discussions Baker, Units 3.1-3.6, 17.8 Quiz
3	Editing for fluency, finding the exact words, adjusting tone, professional emails Technical Style Practice Exam	Baker, Units 5, 14.4	Technical Style Practice Exam (completed in class) Baker, Units 5, 14.4 Quiz

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Major Assignments Due
4	Technical style review Technical Style Exam	Baker, Unit 9,	Technical Style Exam (completed in class) Baker, Unit 9 Quiz
Unit 2. Technical Design			
5	Intro to Technical Design, Designing your professional brand, creating a resume "shell" with MS-Word tables, resume assessment activity	Reinforce Your Personal Brand: 10 Tips for Stronger Resume Branding Units 6.1 and 6.4-6.7 Baker, Units 13.1-13.2	Baker, Units 6.1 and 6.4-6.7, Unit 13.1-13.2 Quiz Creating a Resume Shell
6	Activity: Resume conventions, job posting analysis, design principles, LinkedIn 101: headline and summary	Palmer's "LinkedIn: Are you making the key connections?"	Resume conventions, resume draft and peer reviews, LinkedIn profile headline and summary draft and peer reviews
7	Guided workshop on cover letters, interviewing skills, portfolios, and references Intro to working in teams	Baker, Units 6.2-6.3	Resume and LinkedIn headline/summary (draft)

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Major Assignments Due
Unit 3. Project Management			
8	Team building activities Intro to Project Management Intro to Project Management Software Report (PMR)	Baker, Units 10.1-10.7	Resume and LinkedIn summary (final) Baker, Units 10.1-10.7 Quiz
9	Collaborating with a team, team roles, learning styles Creating a Team Charter Project Management Report (PMR) part 1		Team charter PMR Part 1
10	Intro to usability testing PMR Part 2 and peer reviews PMR Part 3 and peer reviews	Baker Unit 8 Baker, Units 14.3 (only read the content related to "Usability') "Usability test demo" (YouTube video linked on Canvas)	PMR parts 2 and 3 (draft report) Baker Unit 8 Quiz

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Major Assignments Due
Unit 4. Data Synthesis			
11	Intro to the Employment Outlook Report (EOR), developing interview questions, identify potential interviewees, Primary Research assigned	Baker, Units 8.1 and 15.1-15.6	Project management report final
12	EOR helpful video, Evaluating sources video, assign secondary research parts A and B	Baker, Unit 15.7 and 8.5-8.8	Employment outlook report assignments
13	Intro to summarizing interviews, summarizing interviews, Primary research part B, Intro to visuals and creating technical graphics, building a formal report template	Baker, Units 8.2-8.4 Baker, Unit 13.2 (reread content on "Creating Graphics")	Employment outlook report assignments
14	Progress report, writing the abstract, EOR draft and peer reviews		Employment outlook report assignments and the draft
Thanksgiving Break			
15	Team workday (first part of class), LinkedIn workshop, correspondence case		LinkedIn profile (draft) Employment outlook report (final, due at the end of class)

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Major Assignments Due
15 (cont.)			Correspondence case (completed in class) Team evaluations
16	Final exam period. We do not meet as a formal class on this day.		LinkedIn profile (final)