TECM 1700: Technical Writing
Course Information

Term: Spring 2020
Location: AudB 306

Instructor Information

Instructor: Meesha Thomas
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TECM 1700: Introduction to Professional, Science, and Technical Writing

This course meets the requirements for the University CORE and is a process-oriented introduction to writing, especially for science, pre-engineering, and business students. This summer, we will focus on understanding the writing situation and practice writing in response to professional, science, and technical situations. You will fulfill the following learning objectives by the end of this course:

- Learn effective study skills
- Learn to practice time management
- Learn to work as an effective member of a collaborative team
- Learn skills for evaluating effective writing
- Enhance grammar and punctuation skills
- Become familiar with the genres of writing common to technical disciplines
- Learn to apply the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, occasion) to the decision-making process when writing and learning.

Required Text

The required text for this course is

Lannon and Gurak's *Technical Communication*, 14 ed (2016). ISBN: 9780134271958.

Subscription to MyWritingLab is optional.

Supplemental readings will be available on Canvas.

Course Assignments

The assignments on this course are designed to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their writing abilities. As this is a writing intensive class, each assignment, whether individual or group, requires substantial contributions and solid evidence of audience analysis, ethical considerations, and problem-solving skills. Throughout the process this course requires review, revision and editing—all of which improve the effectiveness of your writing.

You will complete the following assignments in the class. Full assignment descriptions will be placed under the "assignments" tab in Canvas.

Assignment	Grade Weight
Correspondence Package	10%
Grammar Test	10%
iFixit Project	30%
Progress Report	10%
iFixit Project Presentations	10%
Quizzes, Homework, & Drafts	15%
Professionalism	5%
Final Exam	10%

Grading Scale

The following criteria serve as general guidelines for all assignments submitted in this course. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with these guidelines.

"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 papers 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 paper may have clear, but underdeveloped ideas, or the paper might not engage or affect the reader. The paper 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 paper 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.

Professionalism Policy

5% of your semester grade is based on professionalism. Your professionalism grade is comprised of three components:

- Attendance—number of unexcused absences. I only excuse absences for university sanctioned events, religious holidays, or ODA accommodations.
- Engagement—how actively you engage in class discussions, with your classmates, and with me, how actively you complete assignments.
- Contribution—how much you contribute to the success of yourself, your team, and every project you submission.

Attendance

You will receive three attendance grades—one at the end of each five-week period. Your grade will be calculated by how many absences you have during the 5 week period. At the beginning of each 5-week period your absences will reset. Following is the grade breakdown per absence:

You will be considered absent if,

- You do not come
- You are more than 10 minutes late
- You leave more than 10 minutes before the end of class without my approval

I understand that extenuating circumstance do exist, so if you feel an exception is needed in any of these cases, please come by my office hours, or contact me via email.

If you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for all material covered and all assignments made. However, you cannot make-up assignments completed during class. It is your responsibility to keep track of your own absences. If you have questions regarding your absence(s), please speak to me during office hours, or send me an email.

Engagement

Consistently effective participation that demonstrates knowledge of the course readings.	100
Typically effective participation that demonstrates knowledge of course material	80
Occasional participation that demonstrates some knowledge of the course material	70
Infrequent or ineffective participation	60
Failure to participate or demonstrate knowledge of the course readings	50

Contribution

Attends office hours (when needed), submits all work, and demonstrates full team engagement by participating actively both online and face-to-face.	100
Attends office hours (when needed), submits most work, demonstrates team engagement by participating both online and face-to-face	80
Occasionally attends office hours, submits some work, some team engagement	70
Never attended office hours, regularly fails to submit work, little team engagement	60
No engagement with instructor or team	50+/-

COVID-19 Impact on Attendance

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Class Materials for Remote Instruction

The UNT fall schedule requires this course to have fully remote instruction beginning November 28th. Additional remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a [webcam and microphone – faculty member to include what other basic equipment is needed] to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Additional required classroom materials for remote learning include: [list specific software, supplies, equipment or system requirements needed for the course]. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at https://online.unt.edu/learn.

Statement on Face Covering

Face coverings are required in all UNT facilities. Students are expected to wear face coverings during this class. If you are unable to wear a face covering due to a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Access to request an accommodation. UNT face covering requirements are subject to change due to community health guidelines. Any changes will be communicated via the instructor.

Assignment Submission

The assignment submission policy is designed to help you develop the skills and habits that employers want. The self-discipline of meeting deadlines is an important aspect of professionalism. Responsible students understand and appreciate this policy, which helps you to follow through on your educational goals.

- Take responsibility to submit every assignment on time. **On time means before the deadline**.
- The deadline for an assignment will be indicated in Canvas
- Daily assignments *will not* be accepted late. To earn more than 0 on these assignments, submit them before the deadline.
- For **each 24-hour period that a major assignment is late**, you will lose 10% of the total points possible for the assignment. After four 24-hour periods have passed, the paper receives an automatic "F."
  For example, if an assignment is due at 8 a.m. on Monday, and you submit it at 8:05 a.m. on Monday, you will lose 10% of the total points possible for the assignment.

- To avoid any negative impact from possible technical issues, you should develop the good habit of submitting your work at least 12 hours before the deadline. By doing so, you will give yourself time to resolve issues before the deadline.
- After submitting an assignment, verify that it is in Canvas and is available to the instructor for grading. It is your responsibility to use these tools correctly.
- **DO NOT** ask for "leeway." As in the workplace, there are consequences when a deadline is missed.
- Before submitting an assignment for grading, ensure that it meets the assignment requirements as listed on the assignment sheet. Also double-check your work against the quality criteria that were presented for the assignment.
- When an assignment is due for grading, **submit it through Canvas**. Plan ahead and allow plenty of time to resolve any issues you might experience with your computer, your Internet connection, Canvas availability, etc.
- **Turnitin Submissions:** Some written assignments will be submitted as Turnitin assignments. Turnitin is a third-party web-based plagiarism detection service. Before submitting your paper to Turnitin, please remove your name and other personal information from the document. After submitting an assignment, verify that it was submitted and that it is available to the instructor for grading.

Classroom Conduct

The classroom conduct policy is designed to help you develop the skills and habits that employers want. The self-discipline of respectful, responsible, and productive behavior is an important aspect of professionalism. Responsible students understand and appreciate this policy, which helps you to follow through on your educational goals.

As a student in a senior-level course, you are expected to take responsibility for following the UNT Student Code of Conduct (https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/07.012_CodeofConduct_2013_0.pdf (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.).

Off-task and disruptive behaviors: Even adults in a senior-level class sometimes need to be incentivized to stay on task. Therefore, 1 absence or a half-absence may be recorded if the instructor observes off-task behaviors such as smartphone use, computer use, side conversations, sleeping, doing work for other courses, etc., during lectures, small-group activities, or work periods.

Computer Lab Rules

This course takes place in a computer lab. Students must follow the lab rules.

- Make appropriate use of technology.
- Do not make disruptive, distracting, or off-task use of any technology during class.
- Do not use technology unless it is required for a classroom activity. For example, if there is a lecture or a class discussion, you should not be using your phone. Using your phone or using technology for "off-task" use can result in an absence.

- If you fail to comply with instructions concerning the use of computers, phones, tablets, or other technology, you may be asked to leave the classroom, and in that event, you will be counted as absent for the day.

Course Schedule

This is a tentative schedule for this section of 1700. The schedule is subject to change pending our progress this semester.

Date	Agenda	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 1			
	Lab orientation; review syllabus		Buy textbooks
	Grammar diagnostic; wrong word errors; homonym errors review diagnostic; spectrum of punctuation; missing comma in a series	Chapter 1	
Week 2			
	Review Diagnostic; Information hierarchy; The rhetorical situation; restrictive and non-restrictive clauses; assign correspondence package	Chapters 2 & 10	Ch. 2 reading quiz Ch. 10 reading quiz
	understanding readers and context of use; missing comma in a compound sentence; unnecessary or missing capitalization	Chapters 11 & 14	Ch. 11 reading quiz Ch. 14 reading quiz
Week 3			
	direct v indirect style; email etiquette; vague pronoun reference; comma splice	Chapters 6	Correspondence package (draft) Ch. 6 reading quiz
	How to write like an 8th grader; track changes; workshop; unnecessary or	Chapter 19	Correspondence package (final)

Date	Agenda	Readings Due	Assignments Due
	missing apostrophe (including *its/it's*); fragments		Ch. 19 reading quiz

Week 4

Date	Agenda	Readings Due	Assignments Due
	Lack of noun-antecedent agreement; fused (run-on) sentence; How's my writing?; unnecessary shift in verb tense; danglers	Chapter 5	Ch. 5 reading quiz

Week 5

Date	Agenda	Readings Due	Assignments Due
	Grammar review; mechanical error with a quotation;	Chapter 22	Ch. 22 reading quiz

Week 6

Date	Agenda	Readings Due	Assignments Due
	Process descriptions;Library research basics	Chapter 7	Ch. 7 reading quiz

Week 6

Date	Agenda	Readings Due	Assignments Due
	grammar test;Comparing documents; concision strategies; workshop; review for grammar test	Chapter 17	Grammar test (final); Ch. 17 reading quiz

Week 8

		Chapter 18	
	Fancy language; Inserting page numbers and section breaks; parallelism and passive voice	"Searching for Information with Field Research Methods" (Scratch drive)	Ch. 18 reading quiz

Week 9

	Introduction to Adobe Acrobat; usability testing;		

Week 10

	Workshop; primary research;		

Week 11

	PowerPoint design tips; slide Master		

Week 12

	SurveyMonkey exercise		Progress Report

Week 13

	Workshop		

Week 14

	Giving stellar presentations	Chapter 23	Ch. 23 reading quiz

Week 15

	Presentations		Presentations

Week 16
Final Exam Day

	Final exam		Final Exam

May

Course Policies

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.

General Technology Requirements

Computer Operations and Access Requirements

You are expected to be familiar with the day-to-day operation of computers including email (and sending attachments) and standard software. If you need to develop your computer skills, please consider signing up for the courses offered by the Computer and Information Technology Center.

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

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, in the case of technological failure, backed up your data.

As a student at UNT, you can back up data, up to 25 GB, through [SkyDrive](). 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 SkyDrive available through your EagleConnect account.

Small USB storage units called "jump drives" or "pen drives" are an excellent alternative. See Amazon for more information or visit our local computer stores and/or large retailers to purchase portable memory starting at around $30.00.

Email Requirement

All students must have a valid UNT email address. 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. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted.

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 *University Daily*, *USA Today*, *Sports Illustrated* supplement or any other printed matter.

Particularly, students who elect to surf the Internet rather than work on a class assignment or listen to the instructor/classmate will be asked to leave class and will be marked absent for that day.

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 brought all assignments due during that class period.

Academic Dishonesty

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment. Other sanctions may be issued, depending on the severity of the incident. All incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations
- dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments
- the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university
- dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s)

- any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage.

The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to:

- the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment
- the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

ADA Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.