

# **TECM 4180.001 (Advanced Technical Communication)**

## **Course Description**

Professionals in all fields are increasingly called upon to evaluate processes, improve outcomes, and lead change. To make sound conclusions and to influence others, you need to gather information, ensure that it's valid and credible, and present your findings and recommendations in a clear compelling way. In this course, you'll gather information through interviews, surveys, and secondary research. You'll hone your critical thinking skills. You'll learn how to organize your content for maximum impact. And you'll develop memos, articles, reports, and graphs.

## **Course Structure**

This course takes place 100% online. We can have a couple video conferences using Zoom throughout the semester as needed, but other than that, your interaction with me and with your fellow students will take place in Canvas. There are 5 weeks of content that you will move through. I will open a new module each week.

## **Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to

- Conduct interviews to gather information for product improvement and development
- Work successfully in a group to solve problems
- Report results of research in audience-appropriate ways.

# **Major Units**

## **Critical Thinking**

Explore practical applications of critical thinking techniques. Use these skills while conducting research, forming conclusions, and recommending action.

## **Interviewing**

Develop your interview skills by conducting two interviews and writing recommendations based on your findings.

## **Secondary Research**

Conduct secondary research to explore a challenge or opportunity that is critical to the success of an organization or business. Synthesize information from multiple sources to report your findings and recommendations.

## Required Texts

Please buy these books right away:

- *Organizing Ideas* by Matthew Spence ISBN - 978-1495984938
- *Think Smarter, Critical Thinking to Improve Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills* by Michael Kallet ISBN - 978-1118729830

Additional reading assignments will be announced in class and listed in Canvas. You'll also do a self-selected reading, primarily for the Secondary Research assignment.

## Communication

- Instructor: Mrs. Thomas
- Office Hours via Canvas Conference: M/W/F 10AM - 11AM or by appointment
- Email: meesha.thomas@unt.edu
- Required Email Subject Line Formatting: Student Name-TECM 2700.501:
- General Technical Communication Office Phone Number: 940.565.4458

I want to make myself as available as possible to each of you. That said, I would prefer most general questions go through the Q & A forum in the Discussion Board area. If you have a general question about the course or assignments, please post it there. Either I will answer it, or one of your classmates will. This way we can all benefit from questions asked, and they can be answered in a venue the whole class can see.

If you have a private question, please contact me via email, and I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays (usually sooner). Please do not expect a response over the weekend.

Normally, I will return feedback on all written assignments within 1 week of the due date. However, if I see that I will be unable to return your feedback that quickly, I will post an Announcement to let everyone know when it can be expected.

## Course Grading

### Workshopping

As in many writing classes, this class includes a workshop component, in which students' writing samples are evaluated or discussed. For example, we will have peer review workshops, in which students evaluate one another's documents and provide written feedback. We also will have workshops in which the whole class looks at a selected document and discusses possible improvements.

### Grading

Each assignment will be graded according to the requirements and the quality criteria for the assignment.

Your final course grade will be based on the total points earned, minus any penalties for non-attendance (see Attendance).

- A: You earned 90-100% of the possible points.
- B: You earned 80-89.9% of the possible points OR your course grade was lowered to a B due to the Attendance Policy.
- C: 70-79.9% of the possible points OR your course grade was lowered to a C due to the Attendance Policy.
- D: You earned 60-69.9% of the possible points OR your course grade was lowered to a D due to the Attendance Policy.
- F: You earned less than 60% of the possible points OR your course grade was lowered to an F due to the Attendance Policy.

Typical criteria are provided below to help you understand the expectations. *Assignment-specific requirements and grading criteria will be included in Canvas within each assignment.*

## **Grade-related Policies**

### **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 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and provides documentation with 48 hours of the missed deadline.

### **Turnaround Time**

I aim to return graded work to you within one week of the due date. When this is not possible, I will send an announcement to the class.

### **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 seven days of receiving your grade, you also forfeit your right to a grade dispute.

### **Extra Credit**

There are no extra credit opportunities in this course.

# Course Policies & Technology Requirements

## Policies

### ADA

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will work with the Office of Disability Accommodation to help reasonably qualified students with disabilities. If you have such a disability, please advise me in writing of your needs no later than the second week of class.

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> (Links to an external site.). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

### Academic Honesty and Integrity

As a student enrolled in a senior-level university course, you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning and to uphold the highest academic standards at all times.

- Do your own work.
- Do new work for every assignment—do not reuse work that you created for other purposes.
- Do your best on every assignment—strive to meet professional standards.
- Follow the UNT Policy for Student Academic Integrity.

([https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003\\_StudentStandardsOfAcademicIntegrity\\_8\\_2017.pdf](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003_StudentStandardsOfAcademicIntegrity_8_2017.pdf) (Links to an external site.))

This policy defines the following forms of academic dishonesty:

- **Cheating:** intentionally 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.
- **Plagiarism:** the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.
- **Fabrication:** intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

- **Facilitating:** academic dishonesty intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

If any course material is submitted that violates this policy of academic dishonesty, the assignment will receive a grade of "F," and appropriate judicial action will be filed. This action includes a report of academic misconduct to your college Dean and possible dismissal from The University of North Texas. There are no first-offense warnings regarding plagiarism. As this is a senior-level course it is expected that plagiarism and the correct use (citation) of others' ideas (including print, digital, images, and other media) are fully understood. Contact me if you're ever confused about what constitutes academic dishonesty. Misunderstandings, miscommunication, oversights, or lack of comprehension as to what constitutes academic dishonesty is not accepted in this course.

## 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.
- As an adult enrolled in a senior-level university course, you are expected to take responsibility to learn how to submit assignments in Blackboard, to manage your time, to resolve technical issues, and to meet deadlines.
- 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 that you might experience with your computer, your Internet connection, Blackboard availability, etc.
- **If you are asked to bring a printed document for an in-class activity**, such as Peer Review, print the document before class begins and remember to bring the printed document to class. **Do not** ask to leave class to print the document. **Do not** bring your laptop or other device and expect other students to read your document on that device. If you do not bring a printed document when one is required, you will not be able to participate in the activity. You will be asked to leave the classroom and you will receive a daily grade of a zero for the workshop.
- **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.

## Religious Holidays

In accordance with State law, students absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations or complete assignments scheduled for the day missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Travel time required for religious observances shall also be excused. Please see the UNT Student Handbook for information on which holidays or holy days are covered by this policy. State law also requires that students notify their teachers at the beginning of the semester if they expect to miss class on a religious holyday during the semester but want to make up the work missed. Students will be allowed to make up the work **provided they have informed their teachers in writing within the first 15 days of the semester**.

## University-Authorized Activities

University policy requires that students provide their teachers with **an official notification card issued by the university** if they want to make up any in-class work they missed while they were involved in a university authorized activity.

## Technology Requirements

### Requirements

Please familiarize yourself with the technical requirements to complete this online course:

- [Hardware and Software requirements for Canvas \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Canvas Browser information and Help \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

## Skills

Minimum technology skills for successful completion of this course include:

- Sending and receiving email
- Creating, sending, and receiving Microsoft Word documents
- Posting to discussion boards
- Printing Word documents OR opening and printing pdf files (using free Adobe Acrobat Reader)
- Navigating Canvas
- Using LinkedIn Learning via your UNT credentials