

TECM 1700: Introduction to Professional, Science, and Technical Writing

Course Information

Term: Fall 2026
Location: AUSB 308
Time: 11:10am - 12:30pm

Instructor Information

Instructor: Maureen Trussell
Office hours: Office hours will be held by appointment only. If you would like to schedule a meeting, please email me.
Office location: GAB 543
Email: maureen.trussell@unt.edu

This is a writing course. You are expected to practice writing using your own words. You should use a word processor (like Microsoft Word or Google Docs) to check your work for spelling and grammar mistakes.

WARNING: Your instructor will check for unethical use of AI. Unethical AI use will result in academic penalties and will be reported to the UNT Office of Academic Integrity.

[Jump to the Schedule](#)

Course Summary

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. We will focus on understanding the writing situation and practice writing in response to professional, scientific, 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

Textbook

The required text for this course is:

Lannon and Gurak's Technical Communication, 16 ed (2016). ISBN 13: 8220145133865.

You may purchase the print or digital 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.

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

Correspondence Package	Individual and Group	10%
Applied Research and Writing Package	Individual and Group	10%
iFixit Standard Project: Proposal	Group	5%
iFixit Standard Project: Milestone 1	Group	5%
iFixit Standard Project: Milestone 2	Group	5%
iFixit Standard Project: Milestone 3	Group	15%
iFixit Milestone 4: Peer Review	Group	5%
Group Contribution Grade	Individual	5%
Quizzes, Homework, Drafts, and Participation	Individual	20%
Final Exam Practice	Individual	5%
Final Exam	Individual	15%

Grading

The below grading criteria serve as general guidelines for evaluating all assignments.

Assignment-specific rubrics will be housed on Canvas.

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

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

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

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

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

Course Policies and Procedures

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

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 4 classes, your grade will be **lowered by one letter**. For example: If you miss 5 classes = B, 6 classes = C, 7 classes = D, and so on.

If you miss 6 classes, you will receive a **grade of 'F' in the class. No exceptions.**

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. **Late Arrival Policy:**

If you are between 5-9 min late, you will be recorded as "late." If you arrive *after* attendance has been taken, you will be recorded as *absent* unless you inform me *during class* that you were present. NOTE: ****Accumulating too many late arrivals may lower your attendance grade. Attendance will not be corrected after class or at a later date.****

If you are 10 or more minutes late, then you will automatically be counted as absent for that day. No exceptions.

Any student who leaves class before it has ended or without my prior approval will automatically receive an absence for that day. Any student who is asked to leave class, “kicked out,” or otherwise disruptive enough to detract from other students’ learning will receive an absence for the day.

Drop Dates

Please be aware of the [UNT academic calendar](#). Please review [UNT Drop Dates and Deadlines](#) for more information about dropping a 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.

Requesting an Incomplete

Students facing an emergency or extenuating circumstances at the end of the semester may request an “incomplete” grade. In order to be eligible for an incomplete, a student must have completed at least three-fourths of the semester and be passing at the time of the emergency or extenuating circumstances. Refer to the UNT Academic Calendar for when an incomplete can be requested. The student must request the incomplete in writing and provide documentation of the emergency or extenuating circumstances. The instructor will then request departmental approval for an incomplete on behalf of the student.

Technology Requirements

To successfully complete this course, you should have access to a reliable internet source. You should have access to two devices (a laptop and a phone) to take exams outside of class. An iPad will not work with the course settings for the LockDown Browser.

You should also have these technical skills:

- Using the Canvas learning management system
- Using email with attachments
- Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing program formats
- Copying and pasting
- Downloading and installing software (including the [LockDown Browser](#))
- Using spreadsheet programs (Microsoft Excel)
- Using a word processor (Microsoft Word)

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

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

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

- [UNT Help Desk](#)
- [Browser requirements](#)
- [Computer and Internet Literacy](#)

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. 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 AUIDB307. Reserve your device early and through the WebCheckout link: <http://checkout.unt.edu/patron>. If you think you will need a device throughout the semester, WebCheckout allows you to make recurring reservations. These reservations are not to exceed your scheduled class time.

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. It is also your responsibility to check your email regularly. I often use email to send class emails, including notices, updates, and advisories.

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, etc. 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 classrooms, 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.

Assignment Submission and Grading

Format

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

Due Dates

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

Late/Missed Assignments

If you are unable to submit your assignment(s) on time or take your exam(s) on time, you must notify the professor ASAP in order to arrange a make-up exam. You will not be allowed to make-up exams for reasons other than illness, UNT functions, or religious holidays. Make-up assignments may also be determined on a case-by-case basis, and may be granted provided that you have maintained communication with your instructor regarding why you need an extension on your assignment(s). ***IMPORTANT NOTE: if you need to make up an exam, you will only have 1 week to make up your exam from the original exam date. For example, if your first exam is Oct. 9, you will have until Oct. 15 to make up the exam.

If you submit your essay or assignment(s) after the deadline, you will lose a letter grade for every school day that passes. For example:

- 1 day late = B (at most)
- 2 days late = C (at most)
- 3 days late = D (at most)

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.

Teamwork Policy

Value of Teamwork

Teamwork is an essential component of TECM 1700, 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 1700 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 1700 penalty for committing each act:

- *Cheating —using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves cheating.*
- *Plagiarism — the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves plagiarism.*
- *Forgery — altering a score, grade, or official academic university record or forging the signature of an instructor or other student. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of forgery.*
- *Fabrication — intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves fabrication.*
- *Facilitating academic dishonesty — intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves facilitating academic dishonesty.*
- *Sabotage — acting to prevent others from completing their work or willfully disrupting the academic work of others. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of sabotage.*

All acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to UNT's Academic Integrity Office. You should read [UNT's Academic Integrity Policy](#). 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. Your instructor will use tools (ex. Turnitin, Canvas logs, and version histories) to check for plagiarism and unauthorized AI assistance.

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. Do not submit AI-generated content as your own work.

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.

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>.

Federal Regulation for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

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 at <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.

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.

Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule for this section of 1700. The schedule is subject to change pending our progress this semester. Unless otherwise noted in Canvas, assignments are due before the next class.

Date	Agenda	Readings Due	Assignments
Week 1			
Aug 17	Class introduction Review syllabus Lab Orientation Introduction to Teamwork Writing diagnostic		Buy textbook
Aug 19	Intro to Technical and Professional Writing Grammar review: Faulty agreement Writing technical descriptions		
Week 2			
Aug 24	What is technical communication? Building unity through teamwork Grammar review: Sentence Structure	Chapter 1: Introduction to Technical Communication Appendix B.1 Grammar: pp. 651-658	Ch. 1 reading quiz
Aug 26	Attending to Audience Document Design Lists Introduction to Correspondence Punctuation and Mechanics	Chapter 2: Meeting the Needs of Specific Audiences Appendix B.2 Punctuation: pp. 659-665 Appendix B.3 Mechanics: pp. 666-669	Ch. 2 reading quiz
Week 3			
Aug 31	The Writing Process & Document Design Grammar review: Agreement Individual Correspondence Case Practice	Chapters 6: An Overview of the Technical Writing Process Chapter 13: Designing Pages and Documents Appendix B.4 Usage: p. 670 Appendix B.5 Transitions: p. 671	Ch. 6 reading quiz Ch. 13 reading quiz
Sep 2	Workplace Emails, Memos, and Letters Team Correspondence Case Mechanics review: Punctuation	Chapter 14: Email, Texts, and Instant Messaging Chapter 15: Workplace Memos and Letters	Ch. 14 reading quiz Ch. 15 reading quiz

		Appendix B.6 Lists: p. 671	
Week 4			
Sep 7	No Class: Labor Day Holiday Coursework will be assigned on Canvas and due before the next class Organizing for Readers Mechanics review: Usage Individual Correspondence Case (Requires the Lockdown Browser)	Chapter 10: Organizing for Readers Appendix A Documentation: pp. 618-626	Ch. 10 reading quiz
Sep 9	Editing for a Professional Style and Tone Paraphrasing vs. Plagiarism Introduction to Applied Research Package: Researching a Problem	iFixit Paraphrasing vs. Plagiarism Chapter 11: Editing for a Professional Style and Tone Chapter 12: Designing Visual Information	Ch. 11 reading quiz Ch. 12 reading quiz
Week 5			
Sep 14	Proposals Wikis, Web Pages, and other Online Content Applied Research: Designing a Survey and Visualizing Results	Chapter 22: Proposals Chapter 24: Web Pages and Social Media	Ch. 22 reading quiz Ch. 24 reading quiz
Sep 16	Teamwork and Global Considerations Applied Research Proposal: Writing a Report with Qualitative and Quantitative Data	Chapter 5: Teamwork and Global Considerations	Ch. 5 reading quiz
Week 6			
Sep 21	Thinking Critically about the Research Process Applied Research Proposal: Writing a Report with Qualitative and Quantitative Data	Chapter 7: Thinking Critically about the Research Process Chapter 20: Informal Reports How to Take Awesome Photos	Ch. 7 reading quiz Ch. 20 reading quiz
Sep 23	Technical Definitions Introduction to iFixit: Sign up for a team, create a profile iFixit Photograph orientation How to Take Awesome Photos Game	Chapter 17: Technical Definitions Common Student Mistakes	Ch. 17 reading quiz Common Student Mistakes
Week 7			
Sep 28	Technical Descriptions, Specification, and Marketing Materials LEGO® device page, troubleshooting page,	Chapter 18: Technical Descriptions, Specifications, and	Ch. 18 reading quiz

	device repair guide	Marketing Materials Project Safety	
Oct 30	Instructions and Procedures Team Charter “Unboxing” Day Getting Started iFixit: Proposal draft	Chapter 19: Instructions and Procedures Tools and Materials	Ch. 19 reading quiz Tools and Materials Quiz
Week 8			
Oct 5	iFixit: Proposal Final iFixit Milestone 1: Orientation	Tech Writing Handbook Chapters 0 and 1	iFixit Standard Project iFixit Final Proposal
Oct 7	iFixit Milestone 1: Workshop	Tech Writing Handbook Chapters 2 and 3	iFixit Troubleshooting Page Draft
Week 9			
Oct 12	Instructions and Procedures iFixit Milestone 1: Due iFixit Milestone 2: Orientation	Tech Writing Handbook Chapters 4 and 5	iFixit Troubleshooting Page Final
Oct 14	iFixit Milestone 2: Workshop	Tech Writing Handbook Chapters 6 and 7	iFixit Troubleshooting Page Changes Due iFixit Device Page Draft
Week 10			
Oct 19	iFixit Milestone 2: Due iFixit Milestone 3: Orientation	Tech Writing Handbook Chapters 8 and 9	iFixit Final Device Page
Oct 21	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop	Tech Writing Handbook Chapters 10 and 11	
Week 11			
Oct 26	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop		
Oct 28	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop		
Week 12			
Nov 2	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop		First Guide Draft
Nov 4	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop		Submit Final First Guide Draft to iFixit
Week 13			
Nov 9	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop		
Nov 11	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop		
Week 14			
Nov 16	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop		
Nov 18	iFixit Milestone 3: Workshop Group evaluation form		Submit Final Guides to iFixit
THANKSGIVING BREAK: November 23-27			
Week 15			
Nov 30	Milestone 4: Peer Review Make revisions based on Peer Review		
Dec 2	Practice Final Exam		Evaluations
Week 16			

	No class: FINAL EXAM The exam is available online. The LockDown Browser is required.		FINAL EXAM
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