# TECM 1700: Technical Writing

TECM 1700.003 - Tues/Thurs 3:30 - 4:50 - Audb 312

Instructor: Syd Coppersmith

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Office: 105, Cube: 105D

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 am - 2 pm, or by appointment

## **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, 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

## **Textbook**

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.

## **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.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment |  | Grade Weight |
| Editing Quiz |  | 5% |
| Comparison Report |  | 15% |
| iFixIt Editing Project |  | 10% |
| iFixIt Standard Project |  | 25% |
| Proposal |  | 15% |
| PowerPoint Presentation |  | 10% |
| Mid-Term Exam |  | 5% |
| Final Exam |  | 5% |
| Misc. Quizzes |  | 10% |

## **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

You must attend class. If you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for all material covered and all assignments completed. If you miss more than 3 classes, your grade will be lowered one letter. If you miss 6 classes, you will receive a grade of 'F' in the class.

*Cell Phones & Computer Screens*

Unless I have stated otherwise, cell phones are to be put away and computer screens are to be down during discussions. If you are continually sneaking looks at your phone during class, I will count each instance as an absence.

### Drop Dates

Please be aware of the below deadlines 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 re-instated in a dropped course.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Description |
| Sept 13 | Beginning this date, a student who wishes to drop a course must complete the drop process by submitting an online drop form to the Office of the Registrar (student receives W). |
| Nov 18 | Last day for a student to drop a course (student receives W). |
| Nov 19 | Beginning this date, a student who qualifies (i.e., 75% complete and passing) may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I. |

### Class Participation

### Class participation is not required but can greatly help your grade. If you participate regularly in class—a few comments each class that show you are engaged—your final course grade will be raised 1/3 letter grade. As an example, if all your papers, quizzes, etc. average to a B+ and you have good class participation, you will get an A- in the course.

### If your class participation is excellent—you make frequent comments each class—your course grade will be raised 2/3 of a letter grade. For example, that B+ is now an A.

### 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 link:  <http://checkout.unt.edu/patron>. 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](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/). 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.

### Due Dates

Assignments must be completed and uploaded to Canvas by due date. 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.

## **Teamwork Behavior**

You will complete two major projects in teams. I will assign these teams based on your shared academic interests. Before any teamwork begins, you will create a charter that is designed to improve communication. Your charter will include information on team goals and member roles, strategies for conflict resolution, and protocols for missing deadlines. If your team encounters any project management issues, consult the charter before asking me to intervene. You will evaluate yourself and each team member at the semester's end. These evaluations could influence your grade.

## **Academic Integrity**

I follow UNT’s academic integrity and dishonesty policies. UNT defines six acts of academic dishonesty (see [UNT Policy 06.003](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.AcadIntegrity.Final_.pdf)). 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. You can read UNT's policy at <http://tinyurl.com/nuwo42u>.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.

## **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](http://disability.unt.edu/services/apply) and then [request a Reasonable Accommodation form](http://disability.unt.edu/services/request), 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](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct) to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT’s Student Advocate. She can be reached through email at renee.mcnamara@unt.edu or by calling 940-565-2648.

### Religious Holidays

Students needing to miss class due to the observance of an officially recognized religious holy day are asked to consult with me at least one week in advance so we can schedule missed work accordingly.

## **Schedule**

Below is a highly tentative schedule for this section of 1700.

Aug 22: Course introduction and in-class writing assignment

Aug 24: Team building exercise

Aug 28: Editing exercise: Instructions. Focus on bullets vs. numbers, active verbs and concision.

Aug 31: Editing exercise: Class members create a formatting guidelines document. Go over Email greetings & salutations.

Sep 5: Comparison Report

Sep 7: Comparison Report

Sep 12: iFixIt project review

Sep 14: iFixIt proposal due

Sep 17: Comparison Report Due

Sep 19: iFixIt Standard project

Sep 21: iFixIt Standard project

Sep 26: iFixIt Standard project

Sep 28: iFixIt Standard project

Oct 3: iFixIt Editing project

Oct 5: iFixIt Editing project

 Oct 8: iFixIt Editing Project Due

Oct 10: iFixIt Standard project

Oct 12: iFixIt Milestone 1 due

Oct 17: Proposal

Oct 19: Proposal

Oct 24: Proposal

Oct 26 iFixIt Milestone 2 due

Oct 31: Proposal

Nov 2: iFixIt Standard project

 Nov 5: Proposal Due

Nov 7: iFixIt Standard project

Nov 9: iFixIt Milestone 3, First Guide due

Nov 14: iFixIt Milestone 3, All Guides due

Nov 16: iFixIt Standard project

Nov 21: Winter Break

Nov 23: Winter Break

Nov 28: iFixIt Milestone 4 due

Nov 30: PowerPoint presentation

Dec 5: PowerPoint presentation

Dec 7: Review

 Dec 10: PowerPoint slides due