# TECM 2700: Technical Writing

TECM 2700.038 - Tues/Thurs 9:30 – 10:50 - Audb 308

TECM 2700.009 - Tues/Thurs 11:00 – 12:20 - Audb 308

TECM 2700.011 - Tues/Thurs 2:00 – 3:20 - Audb 306

Instructor: Syd Coppersmith

[syd.coppersmith@unt.edu](mailto:syd.coppersmith@unt.edu)

Office: 105, Cube: 105D

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

## **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.

## Textbook

The required text for this course is [Professional and Technical Writing (Links to an external site.)](https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/54645-professional-and-technical-writing/1/view) 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.

# Course Objectives

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

All classroom/university policies relating to this course have been detailed in the course syllabus.

## Academic Integrity

Academic [integrity policies](http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity) at UNT clearly state expectations for original and honest work to be submitted in all courses. UNT has a zero-tolerance policy towards plagiarism.

## Netiquette Guidelines

Netiquette, or online etiquette, helps guide us in outlining expected classroom behaviors online. Please remember to remain respectful of your instructor and fellow classmates.

# Technical Requirements and Skills

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

* [Hardware and Software requirements for Canvas (Links to an external site.)](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10721-67952720328)
* [Canvas Browser information and Help (Links to an external site.)](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720)

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

# Student Support

## [Technology Help Desk (Links to an external site.)](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/students/)

If you have any questions regarding your use of this learning management system, please contact the student help desk at:

* Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
* Phone: 940.565.2324
* Hours: Monday- Thursday, 8am- midnight/ Friday, 8am- 8pm/ Saturday, 9am- 5pm/ Sunday, noon- midnight

## [Office of Disability Accommodation (Links to an external site.)](https://disability.unt.edu/)

Email: apply.ODA@unt.edu

Phone: 940.565.4323

## [Library Information (Links to an external site.)](http://www.library.unt.edu/)

UNT’s research library houses more than 6 million cataloged items and boasts a nationally recognized digital library program offering millions of pages of unique content. Visit the [UNT library (Links to an external site.)](http://www.library.unt.edu/) to find out what research services and other accommodations are provided for online students.

# Assignments

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment |  | Grade Weight |
| Technical Style Exam |  | 15% |
| Resume |  | 15% |
| Cover Letter & LinkedIn Summary |  | 10% |
| Project Management Software Report |  | 15% |
| Short Reports |  | 5% |
| Employment Outlook Report |  | 20% |
| LinkedIn Profile |  | 5% |
| Quizzes on Readings |  | 5% |
| Misc Quizzes, Drafts & In-Class Writing |  | 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.

### Lateness

You can be late to class up to 3 times with no impact.. The 4th time you are late, it will count as an absence. “Late” means you come into class after I’ve completed taking attendance.

### 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.

### 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.

## Course Schedule

**Week 1**

Aug 22: Course introduction and in-class writing assignment: Correspondence Case #2

Aug 24: Go over syllabus. Team-building exercise

**Week 2**

Aug 28: Editing exercise: Review responses to Correspondence Case #2 for tone, style and solutions.

Aug 31: Go over Email greetings & salutations. Snow Policy Activity

Sep 2: Complete Quiz: Units 3.1-3.6 and 17.8

**Week 3**

Sep 5: Technical style and editing practice

Sep 7: Complete Technical Style Edit & Justification email practice exam

**Week 4**

Sep 12: Review examples of technical instructions

Sep 14: Complete Technical Style Edit and Justification email (final)

Sep 17: Complete Quiz: Unit 9

**Week 5**

Sep 19: Students create a personal formatting guidelines document.

Sep 21: Complete Technical Style Edit and Justification email (final)

Sep 24: Complete Quiz: Units 6.1, 6.4 to 6.7, and 13.1 to 13.2.

**Week 6**

Sep 26: Discuss writing an effective resume; review examples

Sep 28: Continue reviewing resumes; review how (and where) to look for jobs

Oct 1: Complete Summary Drafts for Peer Review

**Week 7**

Oct 3: Review LinkedIn and cover letters

Oct 5: Cover letters and job interview questions

Oct 8: Complete Quiz: Units 6.2 to 6.3

**Week 8**

Oct 10: Working as a team; practice writing a team charter

Oct 12: Review structure of and IMR&D report

Oct 15: Turn in Final Resume & Cover Letter

Oct 15: Complete Quiz: Units 10.1 to 10.7

**Week 9**

Oct 17: Discuss user testing; complete team charter

Oct 19: Review details of Project Management assignment

Oct 22: Complete Quiz: Unit 14.3 (only read content related to “Usability”)

**Week 10**

Oct 24: Conduct software testing

Oct 26 Review IMR&D structure guidelines and draft a Results section

Oct 30: Complete PM software report draft and peer review

Oct 30: Complete Quiz: Unit 8

**Week 11**

Oct 31: Online & offline research

Nov 2: Discuss Employment Outlook Report

Nov 5: Complete the interview & gather 3 job postings

Nov 5: Complete Quiz: Unit 15

**Week 12**

Nov 7: Discuss source credibility. Look at Flat Earth website & Boguski email.

Nov 9: Review ethics guidelines for tech writers

Nov 12: Employment Outlook Draft due

**Week 13**

Nov 14: Peer review of Employment Outlook Draft

Nov 16: Discuss summarizing interviews

Nov 19: Primary Research Report due

**Week 14**

Nov 21: Winter Break-Dance like a fool

Nov 23: Winter Break-Visit home and overeat

**Week 15**

Nov 28: Review and practice document design principles

Nov 30: Review guidelines and examples of abstracts

Dec 3: Re-read Unit 13.2 (content on Creating Graphics)

**Week 16**

Dec 5: Complete team project

Dec 7: Evaluate team members; Correspondence Case Study (Final Exam)

Dec 10: Employment Outlook Report (final) due

Dec 10: LinkedIn Profile due