Syllabus TECM 4250

**TECM Proposal Writing**

**Term: Spring 2025**

**Date & Time**:

Sec 001: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00 – 3:20

**Room**: 306 Audb

**Instructor**: Syd Coppersmith

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

**Office**: Audb 105, Cube 105D (First floor of Auditorium building right underneath the classroom)

**Office Hours**: Monday 12:30 - 2:00

**Course Summary**

Whether you’re a technical writer, computer scientist or engineer, in your career you will be tasked with explaining How To. The first half of this course will focus on writing instructions for individual tasks, with heavy emphasis on process analysis, concise wording, formatting, user testing and graphics. We will move to manuals in the second half of the course.

At the end of the course, you will have a portfolio of written work to demonstrate to potential employers your willingness and ability to write.

**Textbook**

There is no textbook required for this course. The instructor will assign online readings from time to time.

**Grading** (**From Official Department Syllabus**)

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

"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.

**Assignments**

You will complete the following assignments in the class.

**Assignment Grade Weight**

Instructions Comments & Re-write 15%

TBD Instructions 15%

Formatting Exercise 5%

Field-Relevant Instructions 20%

Existing Manual Critique 15%

3D Polyprinter Manual 25%

Final (last day of class) 5%

**Late Assignments**

You have until one week after the due date to turn a paper in. You can’t learn what you’re supposed to be learning if you don’t turn in assignments, so I would rather get them late than not at all. Late papers are downgraded one letter grade.

**Revisions**

After assignments are graded, you have the option to revise. This will apply to all assignments (but not quizzes) over the course of the semester. If you are submitting a revision, you must specify REVISION in the comments section. You must also either highlight the changes you made in yellow or describe them in the comments section.

**Note**: The overall course grade shown in Canvas will be an accurate average of your paper grades, but it won’t account for class participation, lateness and absences.

**Attendance & Class Guidelines**

You must attend class. You get 3 free absences. These free absences include when your car doesn’t start, you get stuck in traffic, you don’t feel well (exceptions made for Covid and communicable diseases, as described below), you have a sick relative, you couldn’t find a parking space, etc.

If you have Covid and can prove it with a doctor’s note, that will not count towards your absences. However, I reserve the right to make you submit your note to the Dean’s office for verification of your condition.

**Number of Absences and Consequences**

* 3 Absences: No impact on final grade
* 4 Absences: Final grade lowered 1/3 of a letter grade
* 5 Absences: Final grade lowered one full letter grade
* 6 Absences: You will not pass the class

If you miss 4 classes, your final grade with be downgraded 1/3 of a letter grade. If you miss 5 classes, your final grade will be downgraded a full letter grade. If you miss 6 classes, you will not pass this class.

If you leave before the end of class without permission, it will count as an absence.

**Canvas will assign you a grade based on the attendance entered. IGNORE THIS. I have the Canvas attendance grade set to 0% of your grade because I follow the guidelines above.**

**Lateness**

You can be late to class up to 4 times with no consequences. Five latenesses will count as an absence. If you continue to be late after that, every two tardies will count as an absence. When you come in late, it is your responsibility to tell me after class that you’re here. Otherwise, you will remain listed as absent for the day.

If you are more than 30 minutes late to class, it will count as an absence.

**Cell Phones & Computer Screens**

Unless I have stated otherwise, cell phones are to be put away and computer screens are to be down during lectures and discussions.

**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 your papers and other course activities average to a B+ and you have good class participation, you will get an A- in the course.](file:///C:\courses\96505\files\23192174%3fwrap=1) This will show up as an A on your report card as UNT does not use plusses and minuses for final grades.

[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.](file:///C:\courses\96505\files\23192174%3fwrap=1)

**Classroom Behavior**

***From the TECM Official Syllabus***

It is expected that lectures 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, putting your head down on your desk, surfing the Internet, or reading printed matter.

Your preparedness in this course also falls under the subject of classroom behavior. You are expected to come to every class period with 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 classroom, 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.

**Drop Dates**

Please be aware of the drop 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.

**Technical Requirements and Skills**

**Requirements**

See below for links to 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)

**Device Requirements**

* You are required to bring a PC to class (not a tablet, not a phone). If you don’t have one, just go to the TECM TechLab in Audb 307 and sign one out.
* As a UNT student, you can—and for this class, must—install a free version of MS Office Suite on your personal computer. Most assignments will be turned in using Microsoft Word, and you will also need PowerPoint. Visit <https://it.unt.edu/installoffice365> for more information. The tech support people in Audb 307 can help you with this.
* I highly recommend backing up all your files on the UNT OneDrive. Not only will you not lose work if your files are backed up, but you’ll also be able to access your files if, say, you forget your laptop and need to borrow one from the Tech Lab.

**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

**Academic Integrity**

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>.

**Religious Holidays**

Students needing to miss class due to the observance of an officially recognized religious holy day should let me know one week in advance so we can schedule missed work accordingly. Absences due to religious holidays will not be counted so long as you let me know beforehand.