

TECM 2700: Introduction to Technical Writing

Course Information

Term: Fall 2025
Location: Online via Canvas

Instructor Information

Instructor: Stephen M. Fonash
Office hours: Fridays, 12:00-1:00 PM, EST or by appointment. Through Zoom.
Zoom URL: <https://unt.zoom.us/my/fonash>
Email: Stephen.fonash@unt.edu

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.

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.

Textbook

The required textbook for this course is *Professional Business Writing: A Practical Approach*. It is a digital text available for purchase through the UNT bookstore.

<i>Professional Business Writing: A Practical Approach</i>	ISBN: 978-1-956963-53-3
--	-------------------------

Net price: \$30

Author: Julie Gathercole

In addition, students are required to complete work in the *Business Communication Simternship™*. The UNT Technical Communication Department has purchased your access to the *Simternship™* through course fees.

To Get Started:

Click the course link below and follow the instructions. You will not be asked to pay for the simulation as this is a free pilot for your course.

- <https://join.stukent.com/join/E2B-458>

Student Support Resources:

Stukent's Support Team can assist with basic courseware and technical needs. While they are Stukent Simternship experts, they are **not** subject matter experts.

The Stukent Support Team will assist you with:

- Login, registration, and access
- Simulation navigation
- Understanding simulation results
- Improving student confidence (your own personal cheerleader!)

Stukent support contact information:

- **email:** support@stukent.com (fastest method)
- **call:** (855) 788-5368
- **Support hours:** Monday-Thursday 9am-9pm CST, Friday 9am-8pm CST, and via email only Saturday 1-5pm CST.

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. Below is a brief description of the major assignments you will complete in this course and the assignment grade weights. More specific instructions about each will be provided in-class and on Canvas.

Technical Style Exam, 15%

Review and refine the style of a technical document, focusing on tone and professionalism. Edit the document in line with textbook recommendations. This is an open-note/open-book test. Ensure you reference your textbook and notes for style guidelines. Complete independently without AI assistance.

Resume and Elevator Pitch, 20%

Select an internship posting based on your current qualifications. If you're planning on graduating this year, approach this assignment as if you have your degree. Design and construct a resume based on this posting's desired qualifications. You will be evaluated on the content and appearance of the resume as well as how effectively it targets your audience. Resumes produced with existing templates will not be accepted. Additionally, create an Elevator Pitch that can function as a professional summary (on LinkedIn, for example).

Simternship™, 15%

The Stukent Business Communication Simternship™ is a simulation giving you hands-on, educational experiences with important business communication skills. You will take on the role of Taylor Williams, who is working with her university's career center to land a job after graduation. You will follow Taylor on her journey from a student to a professional and make key decisions on her behalf.

As you complete tasks for Taylor, you will also complete similar tasks, focusing on the job search process, for yourself.

During this simulation, you will complete the following:

- Identify references and craft messages to them
- Dissect job descriptions and apply results to job search activities
- Create resumes and cover messages
- Prepare for and participate in employment interviews
- Create post-interview messages
- Explore professionalism and communication best practices
- Construct personal pitches, business presentations, and informal proposals
- Conduct peer and self reviews
- Respond to questions about business communication

Employment Outlook Project, 20%

In assigned groups, research and report the employment outlook for your future profession. Each team member is responsible for locating and synthesizing data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook (Bureau of Labor Statistics) as well as 3 current job postings in his or her desired field and location. Each team member will also interview one relevant professional who works outside the university. Your team must use the project management tool you recommended in the project management report to communicate with one another.

The audience for the employment outlook report includes academic advisors and undergraduate directors who advise and recruit students into your major. The report will be assessed on your ability to analyze, synthesize, and visualize technical information.

LinkedIn Profile, 10%

Write the content necessary for an effective LinkedIn profile. If you don't wish to post these materials on LinkedIn, submit them via Canvas. The profile content should include a professional headshot as well as the following sections: summary, experience, courses, skills, and education. Organize these sections based on what we've discussed about hierarchy in class as well as the experiences that distinguish you from the competition.

Discussion, Drafts, Quizzes, and Participation, 20%

Complete discussion posts, in-class activities, short (or micro) writing, and assigned readings as well as conduct yourself as a professional communicator.

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.

Online Learning, Attendance, and Communication

This course has been developed to promote asynchronous learning. The instructor and students do NOT meet on a designated day and time each week.

For each module, there is a timeframe to complete all activities and assignments, and you may work at your own pace within that timeframe. However, you must adhere to the deadlines outlined on the calendar. You should log into the course daily to check for updates, review lessons, and participate in activities.

You can expect meaningful feedback on written assignments within 7–14 days of the deadline. Questions about grades or other individual issues should be emailed to the instructor, not posted on the discussion forum.

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 reinstated in a dropped course. Please be aware of the last day to drop the course for the summer sessions according to the [UNT academic calendar](#).

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>.

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 80% of the coursework and be passing at the time of the emergency or extenuating circumstances. 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 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
- Word Processor

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](#)

Netiquette Guide

When communicating online, you should

- Treat others with the same respect you would show in a face-to-face classroom.
- Err on the side of being too formal rather than too informal. You should take your cue for the right level from how your professor interacts with you and other students.
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as it can easily be misunderstood.
- Be careful with personal information (both your own and other people's).

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 either 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.

It is your responsibility to turn in your work on time. Computer-related excuses will not be accepted as per the above technology requirements.

Teamwork Policy

Value of Teamwork

Teamwork is an essential component of TECM 2700, 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 2700 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 acts 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.

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.

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.

Purpose of TECM 2700 Assignments

The primary aim of TECM 2700 assignments is to develop the writing and design skills you need to be successful in academic and career endeavors. This is why there are specific guidelines on the use of AI tools for these assignments.

Below are more specific guidelines on how AI should and should not be used for major assignments in TECM 2700:

Correspondence Case (and other general writing assignments)

Do not use AI tools to draft or conceptualize your responses. Instead, develop your response based on your understanding and skills.

Technical Style Edit Exam

Refrain from using AI to perform style analyses or suggest edits. The justification for style edits should be your own work.

Resume

While AI can offer insights on formatting and phrasing, the content in your resume should accurately represent your personal experiences, skills, and achievements. Do not use AI to fabricate or exaggerate any part of your resume.

Stukent Simternship™

The Simternship is designed to help you develop your professionalism, work ethic, and writing skills. Do not use generative AI to complete the Simternship™.

Employment Outlook Report

You can use AI for initial research on job market trends. However, fabricating interview subjects or responses, with or without AI assistance, is strictly prohibited.

Short Reports and Homework

Your short reports and other written assignments should genuinely reflect your contributions. Do not use AI to exaggerate or fabricate progress.

LinkedIn Profile

AI can assist in proofreading, but do not rely on it to generate content for your LinkedIn profile. Your profile should authentically represent your skills and experiences.

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. 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.

Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule for this section of 2700. The schedule is subject to change pending our progress this semester. Unless otherwise noted in Canvas, assignments are due Wednesdays at 11:59 pm or Sundays at 11:59 pm.

Module	Release Date	Assignments
Start Here	August 18	QUIZ: UNT Policies and Procedures QUIZ: Academic Integrity QUIZ: Course Policy Agreement DO: LockDown Browser Test Quiz DO: Course Quick-Start Tasks
Unit 1: Technical Style		
1	August 18	DO: Introduce Yourself DO: Professional Introduction DO: Practice Correspondence Case
2	August 25	QUIZ: Chap. 1 - Characteristics of Business Writing DO: The Five C's of Technical Writing QUIZ: Chap. 4 - Creating Your Writing Project QUIZ: Style in Written Communication DO: Peer Review - Professional Introduction
3	September 1	QUIZ: Ch. 2 - The Writing Process & Your Audience QUIZ: Ch. 3 - Prewriting & Planning Your Writing Project DO: Know Your Audience DO: You're the Audience
4	September 8	QUIZ: Ch. 6 - Briefing Notes, Memos, Reports, and Other Internal Documents QUIZ: Ch. 10 - Emails DO: Simternship - Round 1: Secure References DO: Simternship Status Update DO: Practice Exam - Technical Style

Module	Release Date	Assignments
5	September 15	QUIZ: Ch. 5 - Editing, Proofreading, and Reflecting DO: Reflect - Simternship Status Update Email DO: Technical Style Exam
Unit 2: Technical Design		
6	September 22	QUIZ: Ch 13 - Personal Business Writing DO: Simternship - Round 2: Analyze Job Descriptions QUIZ: Writing Qualifications
7	September 29	DO: Simternship - Round 3: Create a Resume & Cover Message DO: Draft - Resume
8	October 6	DO: Peer Review - Resume DO: Simternship - Round 4: Prepare for an Interview DO: Simternship - Round 5: Interview START: Employment Outlook Project - Step 1 DO: Email Your First Potential Participant
9	October 13	DO: Simternship - Round 6: Prepare for a Job DO: FINAL - Resume & Elevator Pitch START: Employment Outlook Project - Step 2
10	October 20	DO: Simternship - Round 7: Onboard DO: Team Roles & Learning Styles DO: Create Your Team Charter File CONTINUE: Employment Outlook Project - Step 1 CONTINUE: Employment Outlook Project - Step 2
Unit 3: Data Synthesis: The Employment Outlook Report		
11	October 27	DO: Simternship - Round 8: Construct Informative Communications DO: FINAL - Team Charter CONTINUE: Employment Outlook Project - Step 1 CONTINUE: Employment Outlook Project - Step 2
12	November 3	COMPLETE: Employment Outlook Project - Step 1 DO: EOR Primary Research DO: EOR Primary Research Interview Summary COMPLETE: Employment Outlook Project - Step 2 DO: EOR Secondary Research START: Employment Outlook Project - Step 3 DO: Create your team IMR&D Report Draft File
13	November 10	DO: Simternship - Round 9: Develop a Proposal DO: Simternship - Round 10: Construct Persuasive Communications DO: Simternship COMPLETE: Employment Outlook Project - Step 3 DO: DRAFT - Team IMR&D Report
14	November 17	DO: PEER REVIEW - Team IMR&D Report START: Employment Outlook Project - Step 4
Thanksgiving Break		

Module	Release Date	Assignments
15	December 1	DO: LinkedIn Profile DO: Correspondence Case DO: FINAL - Employment Outlook Project DO: Evaluate Your Teammates
16	December 8	DO: Optional - Evaluate This Course