TECM 2700: Technical Writing

Course Information
Term: Fall 2019

Location: AudB 306

Instructor Information
Instructor: Dr. Ryan Boettger

Office hours: M–W 10am–12pm

Office location: AudB 314

Email: ryan.boettger@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 text for this course is Lannon and Gurak's *Technical Communication.*

This semester, you may use either the 14th or 15th edition. The Department of Technical Communication encourages you to rent the text from Voertman's bookstore or an online retailer. Voertman's rental and ISBN information is listed below:

- Rental of the 14th edition without MLA Update for $26 (978-0134118499)
- Rental of the 14th edition with the MLA Update for $34 (978-0134678825)

- Rental of the 15th edition paperback Pearson Rental ONLY title for about $45 (978-0135164785)

The textbook will assist you with successfully completing chapter quizzes and major assignments. Supplemental readings will also be assigned and posted to 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%

Identify the style weaknesses in the provided statements and then revise them for clarity and conciseness. Next, edit a technical document using the style recommendations in Chapter 11 and justify those edits via a memo. This is an open-book, open-note test that you will have 80 minutes to complete.

Resume and LinkedIn Headline/Summary, 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. Additionally, write a LinkedIn headline and summary, which would appeal to recruiters and hiring managers. The headline and summary will be assessed on its content and persuasiveness.

Project Management Software Report, 15%

In assigned groups, research and assess the efficacy of two free project management tools such as Asana, Dropbox, Google Drive, GoToMeeting, or Slack. After your team has selected its tools, you will perform a usability test. Your team will then synthesize your findings in an IMR&D (Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion) report.

Employment Outlook Report, 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.

Short Reports, 10%

Submit two 1-page reports (in memo format) on your individual contributions to the employment outlook report. These reports should update me on your preliminary research findings and describe how this research contributes to the construction of the final report.

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.

Professionalism, Homework, and Quizzes, 10%
Complete homework, quizzes, in-class activities, and assigned readings as well as conduct yourself as a professional communicator. You will receive an overall professionalism grade, which is worth a total of 500 points. Professionalism includes your engagement, participation, and attendance (see general grading criteria below). Professionalism grades will be assigned throughout the semester.

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 3 classes, your grade will be lowered one letter. If you miss 6 classes, you will receive a grade of 'F' in the class.

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 10	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 4	Last day for a student to drop a course (student receives W).
Nov 11	Beginning this date, a student who qualifies (i.e., 75% complete and passing) may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I.
Nov 22	Last day to withdraw (drop all classes—student receives W).

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. 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 the beginning of the designated class period, unless specified otherwise. 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 — these don't encourage you to learn the programs and generally result in dull, unpersuasive documents.

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, surfing the Internet, or reading the *North Texas Daily* or any other 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 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 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.

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](#)). 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 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.

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 <u>on-campus and off-campus resources</u> 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 tentative schedule for this section of 2700. The schedule is subject to change pending our progress this semester.

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Aug 26	Opening lab orientation, Activity: What is TC?, review syllabus		
Aug 28	Correspondence case (completed in-class), opening lab orientation	Ch. 1 Ch. 15	Correspondence case (completed in class)
Aug 30	Review correspondence case, academic integrity		
Unit 1. Technical Style			
Sept 2	Labor Day (NO CLASSES)		
Sept 4	Activity: Snow policy memo, assign style exam		Academic integrity quiz
Sept 6	Style lecture (editing for clarity and concision)	Ch. 11, pp. 202–214	
Sept 9	Style lecture (editing for fluency, finding the exact words	Ch. 11, pp. 215–235	Ch. 11 reading quiz
Sept 11	Style lecture (adjusting your tone), memos and letters		
Sept 13	Practice style exam (part 1)	Ch. 14	Part 1 of the practice style exam (completed in class)

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Sept 16	Practice style exam (part 2)		Part 2 of the practice style exam (completed in class)
Sept 18	In-class review of practice style exam	Ch. 19	Ch. 19 reading quiz
Sept 20	Style exam (part 1)		Part 1 of the final style exam (completed in class)
Unit 2. Technical Design			
Sept 23	Style exam (part 2),	"How to create a personal branding resume"	Part 2 of the final style exam (completed in class)
Sept 25	Designing your professional brand Activity: Resume assessment, assign resume and LinkedIn headline/summary	Ch. 16 (pp. 367-377)	
Sept 27	Resume types, Activity: Resume conventions		
Sept 30	Job posting analysis, design principles: typography, alignment, and repetition	Ch. 13	2-3 internship job postings

Ch. 13 reading quiz |
| Oct 2 | Creating a resume "shell" with MS-Word tables, LinkedIn 101 | Ch. 25

Palmer's "LinkedIn: Are you making the key connections?" | Ch. 25 reading quiz |
Oct 4	Guided workshop on resume		Resume (draft)
Oct 7	Guided workshop on LinkedIn headline/summary		LinkedIn headline/summary (draft)
Oct 9	Cover letters and interviewing skills		Resume and LinkedIn headline/summary (final)
Oct 11	Portfolios and professional references	Ch. 16, pp. 378–385	Ch. 16 reading quiz

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Unit 3. Project Management			
Oct 14	Activity: Working with a team and writing a team charter, Team roles, Learning styles,	Ch. 5 "Guidelines for managing a collaborative project" pp. 83–84	Ch. 5 reading quiz
Oct 16	IMR&D reports, assign project management report	"Writing Reader-Centered Empirical Reports" (.pdf file on Canvas)	Team charter
Oct 18	Activity: Creating user-test scenarios		
Oct 21	Draft methods section of report, Activity: User-test guidelines	"Usability test demo" (YouTube video linked on Canvas)	
Oct 23	Activity: User-test guidelines (cont.)		
Oct 25	Draft results section of report		
Oct 28	Assign employment outlook report, team brainstorming	Ch. 21	Project management report (final) Ch. 21 reading quiz
Unit 4. Data Synthesis			
Oct 30	Exploring primary and secondary sources, assign primary research report	Ch. 7	Ch. 7 reading quiz
Nov 1	Interviews and surveys, team workday		
Nov 4	Team workday		
Nov 6	Evaluating sources (online information and evidence)	Ch. 8	
Nov 8	Evaluating information for ethical reasoning, acknowledging limits of research		Primary research report (final)

Date	In-Class Activities	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Nov 11	Progress reports, assign LinkedIn profile	Ch. 20, pp 471-475	
Nov 13	Summarizing research findings	Ch. 9	Ch. 9 reading quiz
Nov 15	Activity: Interview summary		
Nov 18	Team workday		Progress report (final)
Nov 20	Designing visual information, Activity: Technical graphics	Ch. 12	Ch. 12 reading quiz
Nov 22	Building a formal report template		
Nov 25	Writing abstracts, team workday		
Nov 27	MS-Word styles, bookmarking in Adobe Acrobat, team workday		
Nov 28–29	Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASSES)		
Dec 2	Team workday, complete team evaluations		Employment outlook report (final, due at the end of class) Team evaluations (due by 11:59pm)
Dec 4	LinkedIn workshop	Review Ch. 16	LinkedIn profile (draft)
Dec X	Correspondences case (completed in class)		Correspondences case (completed in class) LinkedIn profile (final)