TECM 4500
Content Analysis in Technical Communication
Fall 2020

Instructor	Dr. Ryan Boettger
Location	This section of 4500 is *asynchronous*, which means we do NOT meet on a designated day and time each week. Course content can be accessed through Canvas (https://unt.instructure.com).
Office Hours	Mondays 10:30-11:30am; Wednesdays 2-4pm. Contact me through the **Chat** area in Canvas (we can also chat via Zoom).
	If you'd like to schedule an appointment, email me your availability.
Office Location	Zoom (https://unt.zoom.us/my/docboettger)
E-mail Address	ryan.boettger@unt.edu (email directly rather than through Canvas)
Textbooks	There is no required text for this course. Supplemental readings will be available on Canvas.
Course Summary	Content analysis is the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics. It includes both human-coded analyses and computer-aided text analysis. There has been a growing interest among commercial researchers and communication practitioners in applications of CA (Neuendorf 2017)

By the end of this course you should be able to—

- The building blocks of CA, including locating and cleaning content and designing a hypothesis-driven study that addresses validity and reliability.
- Human-coded and computer-aided analysis approaches. Create code books and analyze texts on linguistic and psychological dimensions.
- Data visualization skills to help tech comm practitioners understand the applicability of your CAs to workplace practices.
- Math isn't scary. Learn descriptive and basic inferential statistics to help communicate the significance of your results.
- Communicate your CAs in lay terms, emphasizing the value of your results to tech comm. Write up your results for practitioner-geared publications.

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, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Below is a brief description of the major assignments you will complete in this course and the assignment grade weights.

Complete assignment descriptions and assessment rubrics are available in Canvas.

Content Analysis of LinkedIn Profiles, 20%

Conduct a content analysis of LinkedIn profiles of practicing technical communicators who are employed in a subfield of interest. This will be a team assignment.

Federal Plain Language Report and Analysis, 25%

Conduct a plain language analysis of content produced by the US Federal Government. I will assign you one of 21 federal agencies as well as direct you to the content options you have for this analysis.

Content Analysis of Your Writing, 30%

Conduct a content analysis of your own writing using the tools and techniques we have learned. Submit a report of your findings as well as documentation of how you collected and analyzed data.

Case Activities, Discussion, and Professionalism, 25%

Complete activities – connected to the major assignments – that expand your data information literacies. Activities will include collecting and cleaning data, analyzing voice of customer data, understanding descripting statistics, designing codebooks and obtaining inter-rater reliability, and conducting sentiment analyses.

Complete assigned discussions as well as conduct yourself as a professional communicator.

Format and Deadlines

All assignments must be submitted through Canvas. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.

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.

Grading

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.

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 lesson, 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.

NOTE: When corresponding with your instructor and classmates, please use appropriate language and etiquette.

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
- Using spreadsheet programs
- Headset/Microphone (if required for synchronous chats)
- 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
- Hardware and software necessary to use Bb Learn
- 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).

Email Policies

To help make our interactions respectful, polite, and courteous, follow these guidelines when emailing me:

- I respond to email within 48 hours of receiving it. I only respond to email during business hours (8am-5pm) on Monday–Friday.
- You must have a valid UNT email address, and you must check this account regularly. I often use email to send class updates and advisories.
- I send my responses to the account where your email originated. Do not email me from one account, for example, and ask me to reply to another. You are responsible for managing your email accounts.
- Check the syllabus or assignment schedule before you send your email as I will not respond to requests for information contained in the course materials or texts.
- I do not discuss major assignment grades over email. Instead, please schedule an appointment with me. When contacting me, provide three possible dates/times when you are available to meet via Zoom.
- Do not SPAM me or your team members. I define *spamming* as sending multiple emails before the recipient has had an appropriate amount of time to respond. Think carefully before sending multiple emails (in *any* situation).
- Your email should address me by name. My name is Dr. Boettger (pronounced Bet-ger), so you can address me as Dr. Boettger.
- Your email should include a short, informative subject line (e.g., TECM 4500: Question about Plain Language Report). Do not leave the subject line blank.
- Keep email concise. If your question is short or direct, a one-sentence email (plus a greeting and a signature) is just fine and also preferred.

Academic Integrity

I follow UNT's academic integrity and dishonesty policies. UNT defines six acts of academic dishonesty (see UNT Policy 06.003). All acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to UNT's Academic Integrity Office.

Below is a brief description of these act and the related 2700 penalty for committing each act. Submission of your first major assignment certifies that you understand these policies and procedures.

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.

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
Nov 2	Last day to drop a course.
Nov 9	Beginning this date, a student who qualifies may request a grade of I, incomplete. (See "Grading system" in the Academics section of this catalog.)

Nov 20	Last day to withdraw from the semester. Process must be completed by 5 p.m. in the Dean of Students Office. Grades of W are assigned.

Accommodations (Special Arrangements)

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course.

You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://disability.unt.edu/. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

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.

Information on Returning to Campus

Stay updated on the University of North Texas' plans and policies for on campus safety pertaining to COVID-19.

This section of 4180 is *asynchronous*, which means we do NOT meet on a designated day and time each week. I cannot meet with you face-to-face; however, I will be available to you during my office hours and by email. We can also schedule one-on-one Zoom meeting for times that are convenient to your schedule. I'm here to help you be successful this semester, so don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions.

Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule for this section of 4500. The schedule is subject to change based on our progress over these next 16 weeks.

Unless otherwise noted, mid-week activities are due by 11:59pm on Wednesdays and end-of-week activities are due by 11:59pm on Sundays.

Module (Date)	Topic	Readings	Mid-Week Activities	End-of-Week Activities
Module 1 (Aug 24–Aug 30)	The content industry, analyzing reactions to different content presentations	▪ Jones, "Digital keeps diverting the road to success"	▪ "What are your content preferences?" discussion post	▪ Open-heart surgery content reaction ▪ Open-heart surgery CA
Module 2 (Aug 31–Sept 6)	Definition of CA, core competencies of a content analyst, Voyant Tools	▪ Jones, "Do content well or die"	▪ Introductions discussion post	▪ CA job analysis using Voyant
Module 3 (Sept 7–Sept 13)	Types of jobs in tech comm	▪ Brumberger and Lauer, "The evolution of tech comm: An analysis of industry job postings		▪ Case Activity 1: Identifying and retrieving content
Module 4 (Sept 14–Sept 20)	Coding, inventorying, and summarizing content; metadata	▪ Chapple, "What is metadata?" ▪ Heitman, "The top ten buzzwords we're using in the US"		▪ Case Activity 2: Building your content inventory
Module 5 (Sept 21–Sept 27)	Codebooks, inter-rater reliability	▪ Neuendorf, "Measurement and validity"	▪ Additional LinkedIn profile collection	▪ Case Activity 3: Creating a code book
Module 6 (Sept 28–Oct 4)	Reporting research, IMR&D organization	▪ "Writing analysis and results sections"	▪ Case Activity 4: Writing your methods section	▪ User testing of LinkedIn codebook
Module 7 (Oct 5–Oct 11)	Introduction to Plain Language	▪ Cutts, "Six writing myths explored and exploded"	▪ Update on results of LinkedIn profile CA	▪ LinkedIn profiles CA

Module (Date)	Topic	Readings	Mid-Week Activities	End-of-Week Activities
		▪ Cutts, "Writing short sentences and clear paragraphs"		
Module 8 (Oct 12–Oct 18)	Content vocabulary and readability	▪ Cutts, "Using vertical lists" ▪ Cutts, "Converting negative to positive"	▪ Readability activity	▪ Case Activity 5: Federal agency background
Module 9 (Oct 19–Oct 25)	Anatomy of an excellent homepage	▪ Center for Plain Language, "Five Steps to Plain Language" ▪ Cutts, "Clarity for the Web" ▪ Cutts, "Basics of clear layout"	▪ Case Activity 6: Content vocabulary and readability	
Module 10 (Oct 26–Nov 1)	Technical graphics		▪ Technical graphics activity	▪ Federal Plain Language analysis
Module 11 (Nov 2–Nov 8)	The 6 causes for poor communication, self-mentions, introduction to AntConc,	▪ Spence, "Introduction"	▪ AntConc activity	▪ Self-mentions activity
Module 12 (Nov 9–Nov 15)	Reporting verbs, hedges and boosters		▪ Reporting verbs activity ▪ Hedges and boosters activity	▪ Case Activity 7: Content compilation and inventory
Module 13 (Nov 16–Nov 22)	Federal report card, passive voice, transitions		▪ Writing style activity	▪ Final content question
Work on CA of Your Writing assignment (Nov 23–Nov 25)				

Module (Date)	Topic	Readings	Mid-Week Activities	End-of-Week Activities
Thanksgiving Break (Nov 26–Nov 29)				
Module 14 (Nov 30–Dec 3)	Revisiting your data-information literacies, sentiment analysis			▪ Sentiment analysis activity (**NOTE:** Due by 11:59 pm on Thursday, Dec 3)
Module 15 (Dec 5–Dec 11)	Final thoughts, sprinting toward the finish line			▪ CA of Your Writing (**NOTE:** Due by 11:59 pm on Friday, Dec 11)