

TECM 3550: Content Strategy in Technical Communication

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Office Hours:	5–6 pm Monday/Wednesday or by appointment
Office Location:	AUDB 305
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Meeting Time:	Monday/Wednesday, 3:30–4:50 p.m.
Meeting Place:	AUDB 308

Description

This class will cover various aspects of content strategy, including web content strategy and content management. By the end of this course you should be able to

- understand the importance of developing high quality web content
- write content that follows best practices for usability
- understand cultural and linguistic differences that shape global content strategy
- communicate content strategy deliverables in written and visual reports
- understand principles of content management, including content reuse using technologies such as XML, DITA, and MadCap Flare

Texts

You have four required texts for this course:

- Halvorson, Kristina & Rach, Melissa. *Content Strategy for the Web*. 2nd edition. ISBN-13: 978-0321808301.
- Sheffield, Richard. *The Web Content Strategist's Bible*. ISBN-13: 978-1441482624
- Swisher, Val. *Global Content Strategy: A Primer*. ISBN-13: 978-1937434403
- Redish, Janice. *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works*. 2nd edition. ISBN-13: 978-0123859303

Assignments

Individual (600 pts)	CMS Comparison	You will research three popular CMS and respond to a manager about their costs and benefits	100
	Transcreation Analysis	You will analyze transcreated websites.	100
	Content Reuse	You will complete several content reuse activities that help you get familiar with XML, DITA, single sourcing, and MadCap Flare.	100
	Exams	You have two exams (mid and final) based on the readings.	200
	Professionalism	You will demonstrate professionalism by remaining 1) respectful to the instructor and other students through your actions and words (25 pts); 2) responsive to the instructor and other students (25 pts); 3) timely in delivering your work and coming to class (25 pts); and 4) knowledgeable of course policies and procedures (25 pts).	100
Team (400 pts)	Letting Go of the Words Presentation	You will present a lesson on effective web content. Teams of 4.	50
	Content Audit	You will complete a qualitative and quantitative audit of a website's content and make recommendations. Teams of 4.	100
	Competitive Review	You will analyze competing websites and make recommendations based on your findings. Teams of 4.	100
	Content Strategy	You will recommend changes for the content of a website based on your previous analyses, including a stated content strategy, a description of personas, a sitemap, content changes, and a social media strategy. Teams of 4.	150

Grading and Evaluation

Assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late (including weekend days) and will not be accepted if they are more than four days late. **Corrupted or lost files do not constitute an excuse for late or unsubmitted work.**

For the major assignments, I assign ratings 1–4 for four criteria—Design (10%), Organization (30%), Content (40%), Sentences (15%), and Delivery (5%). The following scale demonstrates the meaning behind the 1–4 ratings:

- A** The document is impressive in meeting this criteria, with no or minimal error or flaw.
- B** The document meets this criteria, but it has some errors or flaws.
- C** The document meets this criteria in certain ways, but overall, it falls short of it.
- D** The document does not meet this criteria, though it shows potential or attempt.
- F** The document does not meet this criteria at all.

For exams, Canvas will calculate your grade based on how you answered the close-ended questions (multiple choice, multiple answer, true/false, and matching).

Policies

These policies describe formal regulations governing Dr. Robles' sections of TECM 3550.

Assignment Submission

- Follow all assignment submission specifications: file name, file type, and submission location.
- 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, unimpressive documents.

Attendance and Tardiness

The attendance policy is the following:

- **Absences:** Missing more than 3 class meetings will lower your grade. Each absence after 3 results in a half-letter grade deduction to your final grade total (50 point increments). Thus 5 absences can result in a one-letter grade reduction (100 points). I don't enforce this policy after the one-letter grade reduction. Missing during group work or on the day of a presentation means taking an F for that activity or assignment, unless for one of the excused issues listed previously, in which case we will work together to allow you to complete the requirements for these activities or assignments in a reasonable timeframe.
- **Excused Absences:** To attend *an official university function, to observe a religious holiday, to attend a job interview, or to attend to a medical emergency* does not count toward your absence total. You must present any accompanying documentation, however, to be excused. You will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment you miss within a reasonable period after the absence. However, I may take appropriate action if you fail to satisfactorily complete an assignment within a reasonable time.
- **Tardies:** You receive a tardy if you arrive 15 minutes or more after class begins. Two tardies will result in an absence. If you are more than 30 minutes late or if you leave 30 minutes early (in both cases without permission), you will be counted absent.

General Technology Requirements

You are expected to be familiar with the day-to-day operation of computers including email, standard software, and Canvas. If you need to develop your computer skills, please consider consulting with the University Information Technology (<https://it.unt.edu/uit>).

- You are also expected to have regular access to computers whether it be your computer or the computers provided by the university.
- Ensure that the computer(s) and storage device(s) you use are functional and that you have, in the case of technological failure, backed up your data. As a student at UNT, you can back up data on OneDrive.
- All students must have a valid UNT email address. You must check your email regularly. I often use email to send class emails.

Device Requirements

Your TECM classroom is a collaborative BYOD (bring your own device) lab. 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 AUIDB307. 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.

Acceptable Student Behavior

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. 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 of Student Conduct can be found at <http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

Academic Dishonesty & Integrity

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

In this course, I will enforce a policy against plagiarizing work that is not yours. Further, I will enforce a policy against any cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, bribery, or sabotage. First, I will invite you to visit with me in my office to discuss the issue privately. Then I will notify and consult with the chair or assistant chair of the department of technical communication in order to discuss consequences, which could be failure of the assignment and/or consultation with the Dean of Students. Further consequences may result from consultation with the Dean of Students.

Students with Disabilities

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://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

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. The federal Title IX law makes it clear

that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. 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). **I am a mandatory reporter of any signs or reports of sexual harassment. I cannot guarantee confidence, by law.** Visit <http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct> to learn about UNT's 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.

Carrying of Concealed Handguns on Campus

The University of North Texas is committed to providing a safe environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, and to respecting the right of individuals who are licensed to carry a **concealed handgun** where permitted by law. Individuals who are licensed to carry may do so on campus premises except in locations and at activities prohibited by law or by this policy. To learn more, read the complete policy (https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/04.001_CarryingOfConcealedHandgunsOnCampus_2016.pdf).

Retention of Student Records

I maintain student records pertaining to this course in a secure location. All records such as assignments and activities submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed through the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about students' records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy.

Critical Campus Conditions

Stay connected to university news sources. When a decision is made to close the university or if another critical incident arises, UNT will notify you by:

- sending an Eagle Alert message
- providing the information to campus telephone operators
- posting a message to the university web site
- posting a message on the UNT Facebook page
- tweeting a message from [@UNTEagleAlert](https://twitter.com/UNTEagleAlert)
- sending campus emails
- informing news media

Course Schedule

CS=Content Strategy for the Web; WCSB=Web Content Strategist's Bible; GCS=Global Content Strategy; LGW=Letting Go of the Words

Week	Date	Topics	Reading/Assignment Due
1	8/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus 10 Definitions of Content Strategy
	8/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web Content Management Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding content management systems (CMS) 10 CMSs LGW, Ch. 1
2	9/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor Day (no class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
	9/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content Strategy and Buy-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCSB, Intro-1 CS, Ch. 1-4
3	9/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Content Audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CS, Ch. 5 WCSB, Ch. 3
	9/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative Content Audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCSB, p. 67-73
4	9/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGW, Ch. 2 CS, p. 69-85
	9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User Research (Personas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
5	9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CS, p. 85-90 WCSB, p. 73-77 How to Analyze Your Competitors' Content Strategy CMS Comparison (midnight)
	9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Media Design for Easy Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Media for Nonprofits, Intro-1 Best times to post on social media LGW, Ch. 3
6	9/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCSB, Ch. 9 A Simple 7-Step SEO Tutorial for Beginners SEO Foundations, Intro-3
	10/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web Analytics Home and Pathway Pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web Analytics Basics How to Use Google Analytics LGW, Ch. 4-5
7	10/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Content Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCSB, Ch. 8 GCS, Ch. 1-4
	10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Content Strategy Breaking up and Organizing Content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCS, Ch. 5-8 LGW, Ch. 6

Week	Date	Topics	Reading/Assignment Due
8	10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CS, Ch. 7
	10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Content Conversations and Key Messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CS, Ch. 8 WCSB, Ch. 5–6 LGW, Ch. 7
9	10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CS, Ch. 9 WCSB, Ch. 7 Transcreation Analysis (midnight)
	10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm Exam Headlines and Headings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGW, Ch. 8–9
10	10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> XML 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
	10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> XML Lists and Tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGW, Ch. 11
11	11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DITA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to DITA Content Audit (midnight)
	11/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DITA Meaningful Links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGW, Ch. 12
12	11/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MadCap Flare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MadCap Flare 12 Essential Training, Intro–2 Madcap Flare: The Technical Writing Tool for Technical Communicators
	11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madcap Flare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MadCap Flare 12 Essential Training, 3
13	11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MadCap Flare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MadCap Flare 12 Essential Training, 4 Competitive Review (midnight)
	11/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MadCap Flare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MadCap Flare 12 Essential Training, 5–6
14	11/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
	11/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content Reuse (midnight)
15	12/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Exam Review/Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
	12/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Exam Review/Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
16	12/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Exam (1:30–3:30 p.m.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content Strategy (midnight)