

TECM 4250: Writing Technical Procedures & Manuals

Spring Semester 2020

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Office Hours: 6pm-7:30pm Thursdays

Required Materials

Organizational Rhetoric: Situations and Strategies Mary F. Hoffman and Debra J. Ford

Writing Revisable Manuals

http://www.ewriting.narod.ru/SamplesAndWP/Writing_Revisible_Manuals.pdf

Course Overview

The goal of the course is to become adept in communicating technical information in a variety of written formats. Class discussions will play a pivotal role in sharing ideas regarding content project management, rhetoric and the role they both play in understanding and communicating with specific audiences. Before any assignment is due, we will take class time to have in depth discussions about the assignment and resolve any outstanding questions. The beginning of class will normally be dedicated to working on an individual or team assignment. The latter part of class will include a lecture/class discussion.

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 4 classes, your grade will be lowered one letter. If you miss 8 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
Jan 28	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).
Mar 30	Last day for a student to drop a course (student receives W).
Apr 6	Beginning this date, a student who qualifies (i.e., 75% complete and passing) may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I.
Apr 17	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 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.

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 one major team project. 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 [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.

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.

Assignments and Weights

Participation (attendance, in class discussions and Canvas discussions)	10%
Software Requirements	20%
Release Notes	10%
Quick Reference Guide	25%
Team Assignment	35%

Grading

TECM 4250 applies the following grading scale:

- A 89.5-100%

Note: To earn an A in the course, you must complete all course requirements!

- B 79.5-89.4%
- C 69.5-79.4%

- D 59.5-69.4%
- F 59.4% and below

Canvas

In addition to submitting assignments via Canvas, I'll also use the platform for announcements and discussion questions relevant to the reading for the week and the discipline of technical communication in general. I'll also provide written explanations of the guidelines used to grade the individual and team assignments prior to assignment due dates. Students are encouraged to check into to Canvas on a regular basis.

Individual Assignments

Software Requirements

The goal of this assignment is to examine a software application that you are familiar with and design the specifications for a feature that will improve efficiency and/or ease of use for the users of the software application. Your specifications must demonstrate an understanding of the existing users and their needs.

Release Notes

You were successful in getting your feature implemented. You must now communicate how your new feature works. The communication should address three key issues:

- Internal communication to everyone on the software team regarding the new feature
- Upcoming announcement to users regarding the feature
- Explicit instructions regarding the feature including value propositions, setup and how to use the feature

Quick Reference Guide

The goal of the quick reference guide is to create a tool that is the equivalent of 1-2 pages in length that provides all the components needed to go from an absolute beginner to an intermediate in any musical instrument. Some things to consider when developing this reference guide are:

- The average age of the beginner for the instrument in your quick reference guide
- Conventional wisdom regarding the agreed upon competencies that a beginner should learn
- Visual tools needed to further communicate basic ideas

Primary and Secondary research may be used to develop this reference guide.

Deconstructing Style Guides

This assignment will encompass a class discussion and a series of articles and websites that outline various corporate style guides. We'll review overarching ideas that are communicated consistently in corporate style guides and parse through approaches that are unique to specific companies. The goal is to understand corporate style guides and develop a benchmark for creating corporate style guides going forward.

Team Project

The goal of the team project is to develop a home health manual. The tools needed to do this include:

- The 2020 Final Rule For Home Health Agencies (found in the Federal Register here <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-11-08/pdf/2019-24026.pdf>)
- Personas that we will review in class as a tool in audience analysis
- Summaries, reviews and deconstructions of the Home Health Final Rule by reputable organizations such as the American Hospital Association, National Association of Home Care and other pertinent regulatory bodies

I will provide regular progress checkpoints and due dates throughout the class to review the status of the teams' work.

Course Schedule

January 14 Course Introduction

January 21 Overview of the Manual Development Process
Chapter 1 Writing Revisable Manuals (please read and prepare for class discussions)
Overview of Organizations and Rhetoric
Chapter 1 Organizational Rhetoric (please read and prepare for class discussions)
Develop Teams (discuss team assignment)

January 28 Review Software Requirements Individual Assignment

Overview of Manual Structure and Organization

Chapters 2 and 5 Writing Revisable Manuals (please read and prepare for class discussions)

Team Assignment Progress Check In

February 4

Software Requirements (work and ask questions)

Review Quick Reference Guide Individual Assignment

Chapters 2-4 Organizational Rhetoric (please read and prepare for class discussions)

February 11

Team Assignment

Chapter 6 Writing Revisable Manuals (please read and prepare for class discussions)

February 18

Software Requirements Due

Review Release Notes Individual Assignment

February 25

Chapters 5-6 Organizational Rhetoric (please read and prepare for class discussions)

Team Assignment Progress Check In

March 3

Release Notes Due

March 10

Spring Break – No Class

March 17

Deconstructing Corporate Style Guides

March 24

Team Assignment Progress Check In

Chapter 7 Organizational Rhetoric (please read and prepare for class discussions)

March 31

Team Assignment

Chapters 8-9 Organizational Rhetoric (please read and prepare for class discussions)

April 7

Team Assignment

Chapter 10 Organizational Rhetoric (please read and prepare for class discussions)

April 14

Team Assignment Due

Team Assignment Presentations

April 21

Team Assignment Presentations

April 28

Quick Reference Guide Assignment Due

May 5

Review Competencies
