

# TECM 5185

## Principles of Technical Communication

### Fall 2017 (8W2)

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<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Ryan Boettger
<b>Office Hours</b>	4-5:30pm Mondays and by appointment
<b>Office Location</b>	Aud 314
<b>E-mail Address</b>	<a href="mailto:ryan.boettger@unt.edu">ryan.boettger@unt.edu</a>
<b>Textbooks</b>	Rath, Tom. <i>StrengthsFinder 2.0</i> . Simon and Schuster, 2007.  Supplemental readings will be available on Blackboard.
<b>Course Purpose</b>	This intensive 8-week course includes an overview of issues in technical communication with a focus on content that is relevant to your future as a practitioner.
<b>Course Objectives</b>	You will engage in a range of practical and reflective activities that will enable you to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify the principles of technical communication as well as articulate how technological, political, and historical movements have evolved these principles to the 21st century;</li><li>• work collaboratively with a variety of audiences in conveying technical language for specific purposes and uses;</li><li>• conduct research on a focused technical communication problem using appropriate research methods and resources; and</li><li>• develop a sense of professional identity and value for participating in helping to shape the field's professional advancements.</li></ul>
<b>Projects</b>	The course projects are designed to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate and develop your writing abilities and critical thinking skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• iFixit Technical Writing Project, 50%<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Proposal, 5%</li><li>○ Troubleshooting Guides, 5%</li><li>○ Device Pages, 10%</li><li>○ Repair Guides, 15%</li><li>○ Usability Testing Plan and Results, 15%</li></ul></li><li>• Strengths Finder Activities, 20%</li><li>• Reading/In-Class Activities, 20%</li><li>• Professionalism, 10%</li></ul>

An overview of the projects is provided below. More specific instructions about each will be provided on Blackboard.

<b>iFixit Technical Writing Project</b>	In this course, all assignments are connected to a semester-long, project sponsored by a client in California named iFixit.
<i>Proposal</i>	Your team will complete a Proposal for adding content about your selected device to the iFixit.com website.
<i>Troubleshooting Guide</i>	Your team will create a Troubleshooting Guide for your selected device.
<i>Device Pages</i>	Your team will complete a Device Page for your selected device.
<i>Repair Guide Pages</i>	Your team will complete five (5) Repair Guides for your selected device.
<i>Usability Testing Plan and Results</i>	Your team will produce a testing plan and a results document which will help you identify aspects of your Repair Guides for revision.
<b>Strengths Finder Activities</b>	You will complete a series of activities related to the results of your Strengths Finder 2.0 assessment
<b>Reading Activities</b>	You will complete a series of activities related to the assigned readings and class activities
<b>Professionalism</b>	You will receive an overall professionalism grade, which is worth a total of 500 points. Professionalism includes your engagement, in-class participation, and attendance. I will assign a grade in this area every 2-3 weeks.
<b>Grading</b>	<p>Grading criteria serve as general guidelines for evaluating all assignments.</p> <p>"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.</p> <p>"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.</p> <p>"C" (70-79%): A manager would be disappointed and ask you to</p>

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.

## **Policies and Procedures**

These policies provide you with the formal regulations governing this section of TECM 5185. Submission of your first assignment indicates you have read and understood the policies.

- You may receive a grade of incomplete only if you are severely ill or an immediate family member is severely ill. To receive the incomplete, you must have completed and earned an 80% or higher on at least half of the course work.
- I accept late work only in cases of your extreme illness or the death of a family member.
- You are expected to write standard American English prose. Documents that do not use Standard American English prose may receive a grade of F.
- My classroom is a cell-phone-free and tablet-free zone: no texting, no surfing, and no talking on cell phones or tablets. Put your phone on silent (not vibrate) during class. Please respect your classmates by following this policy.
- Check your UNT email address and Blackboard for communication from me. I use only UNT email address to communicate with students.

## **General Technology Requirements**

This course also includes a series of general technology requirements

**Computer Operations and Access Requirements**

As this is a graduate-level course, you are expected to be familiar with the day-to-day operation of computers including UNT email (and sending attachments), Blackboard Learn, and standard software.

You are also expected to have regular access to computing technology, whether it be your computer at home or the computers provided by the Library. There are 14 computer labs on campus, including one 24-hour lab.

**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.

**Code of Conduct**

To create and maintain a classroom community that fosters learning, you are expected to follow the UNT Code of Conduct. If you behave in a way that interferes with teaching/learning, engage in disorderly or obscene conduct, breach the peace, fail to comply with a reasonable directive, or engage in disruptive activity, you will be asked to leave the classroom and report to the Dean of Students. (See **UNT Policy 18.1.11**)

**Academic Integrity**

Although there are many team-produced assignments in this course, there are also many which should represent your individual effort. If I suspect you have cheated by using assistance not listed on our class schedule, plagiarized by using someone else's words without attribution, fabricated information, or assisted another student in any of these categories of academic dishonesty, you will earn no credit for the assignment. If you exhibit academic dishonesty on more than one course assignment, you will earn an F in the course. (See **UNT Policy 18.1.16**)

**Accommodations (Special Arrangements)**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations.

UNT's Office of Disability Accommodations offers a variety of services but require qualified students to follow an application process. Please check their Web site for more information on these procedures and their deadlines.

*New ODA policy – The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens*

Students needing to miss class due to the observance of an officially recognized religious holy day are asked to consult with me in advance so we can schedule missed work accordingly.

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments Due	iFixit Deadlines (due Wed of designated week)
Week 1 Oct 23	Diagnostic, Strengths Finder	<p>“Technical communication” entry from <i>The Routledge Handbook</i> (Carliner)</p> <p>“Technical communication at a crossroads” (Carliner)</p>	<p>RA #1 (due Wednesday by 11:59pm)</p> <p>SF Response #1 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p>	
Week 2 Oct 30	Strengths Finder, team charters, iFixit project introduction	<p><i>Strengths Finder 2.0</i> (pp. 3–31)</p> <p>"Collaboration" handbook entry (on BB, week 2 folder)</p>	<p>Team Charter (due Sunday by 11:50pm)</p> <p>SF Response #2 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p>	Proposal
Week 3 Nov 6	Audience	<p>Excerpts from <i>Clout</i> (Jones)</p> <p>“Designing for pleasure” (Copper)</p>	<p>RA #2 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p> <p>SF Response #3 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p>	Troubleshooting Guide Page (Milestone #1)
Week 4 Nov 13	Editing and Style	<p>“The editor within the modern organization” (Corbin)</p> <p>“The file cabinet has a sex life: Insights of a professional writing consultant” (Jones)</p>	<p>RA #3 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p> <p>SF Response #4 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p>	Device Page (Milestone #2)
Week 5 Nov 20	Content	<p>“Content strategy: An integrative literature review” (Clark)</p> <p>“Quantitative content analysis: Its use in technical communication” (Boettger and Palmer)</p>	SF Response #5 (due Monday by 5:59pm)	Individual Repair Guide (Milestone #3)
Week 6 Nov 27	Design	“Cruel pies: The inhumanity of technical illustrations” (Dragga and Voss)	<p>RA #4 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p> <p>RA #5 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)</p>	Collaborative Repair Guides (Milestone #3)
Week 7 Dec 4	Usability	“Technical communication and usability: Intertwined strands and mutual influences” (Redish)	SF Response #6 (due Sunday by 5:59pm)	Usability Testing Plan & Results (Milestone #4, due Thursday by 11:59pm)

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments Due	iFixit Deadlines (due Wed of designated week)
		“More than a feeling: Understanding the desirability factor in user experience” (Barnum and Palmer)	RA #6 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)	
Week 8 Dec 11	Finals Week		RA #7 (due Sunday by 11:59pm)  SF #7 (due Wednesday by 11:59pm)	Final iFixIt Fixes