

English 273 XXX
Technical and Scientific Writing
SAMPLE SYLLABUS
Department of English, SFASU

Professor: TBA
E-mail: TBA
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Office Hours: TBA
Meeting Times and Location: TBA

Description:

ENG 273. Technical and Scientific Writing – “Study of the rhetorical principles involved in technical and scientific workplace writing. Emphasis on the production of professional documents, such as analytical reports, in both traditional and online formats. Will not satisfy literature requirement; will not count toward an English major or minor (except for a minor in technical writing). Prerequisite: Six hours from ENG 131, ENG 132, or ENG 133.” *General Bulletin*, 2012-2013.

Additional Information:

In English 273 you will learn and practice the forms of written and oral communication used in science, business, engineering, and the workplace in general. You will analyze typical rhetorical situations, recognize conventional styles of presentation, and learn how to tailor your writing to a variety of audiences. You will study and practice the processes of written composition and the general principles of good communication, with the aim of becoming an efficient and effective writer and editor.

The business world is plagued by inefficient, incorrect, and sometimes unethical writing. By the time you finish this course, you’ll be part of the solution, not part of the problem. You’ll be able to write things that do what you need them to do without causing undue confusion, conflict, or offense.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:

In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the English Foundational Component Area in Communication Writing may be assessed. These objectives are:

1. Critical Thinking: Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. Communication Skills: Effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. Teamwork: The ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
4. Personal Responsibility: The ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

English Program Learning Outcomes

This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 273:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the recursive writing and social editing process and be able to write a variety of technical documents in an acceptable level of Standard American English. (This outcome aligns to the Core objectives for Communication Skills and Teamwork).
2. Write a variety of technical documents, demonstrating their awareness of audience and facility in addressing different audiences and stakeholders in complex rhetorical situations. (This outcome aligns to the Core objectives for Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).
3. Write technical and workplace documents by applying the appropriate categorical modes of rhetorical composition (descriptive, expository, scientific, etc.), integrating visuals with text, and presenting information in an oral format. (This outcome aligns to the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).
4. Work in groups to produce and critically evaluate documents, integrating different points of view. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility).
5. Use critical-thinking skills and exhibit technical proficiency in the invention and composing processes. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking and Communication Skills).
6. Understand ethical considerations in technical and professional writing, understanding the consequences of communication acts. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility).
7. Tailor communications to social and ethical frameworks, editing them to be effective and responsible in international and intercultural situations. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).
8. Adequately research a topic and use documented evidence to support a paper written in the style applicable to their individual field of study. (This outcome aligns with the Core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, and Personal Responsibility).

Required Text and Materials:

****(This is a sample entry; other texts may be used as per instructor discretion):

Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Communication: A Reader Centered Approach*. 7th ed. n.p: Wadsworth, 2011. Print.

A reliable way to store and transfer files (preferably a USB/Flash drive). Regular access to and ability to use D2L. Preferably, cloud backup of important files and projects.

Enough money to print and bind your instruction manual if you choose to present a paper copy (you may also turn it in as a .pdf file)—particularly important if you want to present it in color.

Strongly recommended – Any writing handbook, such as the one you may have been required to buy in English 131 and 132. Cheap older editions can be gotten from Amazon for very little.

Course Requirements: ****(This is a sample entry; specific requirements may be made as per instructor discretion)

All writing assignments prepared outside of class must be typed. The format will vary for each writing assignment, depending on its purpose and audience. Ideally, the topics for your major assignments will relate to your major field and/or future professional interests. All assignments will be graded for proper format, soundness of content, attention to rhetorical context, resourcefulness, grammar, and mechanics.

All assignments must be completed in the order in which they are given, and you must complete all the major assignments in order to pass this course. I will not accept any assignments more than one week late without an excuse, nor will I accept any assignments after the last class date.

You will be required to submit major assignments in a paper copy, and then online to the drop box on our D2L page). The process is easy and can be completed entirely in D2L, and I will carefully explain the process in class. For these assignments, you are expected to turn in both copies by the due date and time. I will NOT grade your assignment until you have submitted a copy to D2L.

Most major assignments except the final exam will include intermediate drafts and other materials.

All major assignments will be graded according to rubrics that help to define the various aspects of each assignment (i.e. style, content, grammar, etc.) and you will be familiarized with the rubrics before each assignment is due.

Grading Policy: ****(The following statement is an example and not intended to be a standardized grade guideline):

Grades will be computed in the following fashion: ****(Please note the inclusion of the Capstone Assignment).

Coursework and Respective Points:

Quizzes and daily work : TBD

Essays: TBD

Midterm exam: TBD

Final exam: TBD

****Course Capstone Essay: TBD

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TOTAL POINTS: TBD

Your running points/grade will be available on D2L (<http://d2l.sfasu.edu>); please advise me ASAP if you see anything that seems amiss. The final course grade will depend on the points earned: Scale TBD by individual instructor.

****Individual faculty members determine the number of exams and structure of exams, written assignments, and so on in specific sections of the course. Above is an example of how a faculty member might structure the course materials.

***** Students will write a course capstone essay in which students will be asked to develop a professional document of no fewer than 500 words that exhibits an understanding of core objectives as determined by the core assessment schedule; students will be assessed based on their use of critical thinking skills; grammar, vocabulary, and written style and effectiveness; teamwork; or, the effect of personal choices.

More information on written assignments will be forthcoming. Essays will be graded both on substance (quality and accuracy of ideas) as well as expression (tone, style, syntax). Exams may include M/C, short answer, and essay formats.

Grade Criteria:

Overall, your grade will be based on a total of TBA points. As such, to figure your grade out at any point in the semester, simply add up the number of points that you have and divide that by the number of points possible. This will give you an overall percentage.

Grading Standard:

A: 90-100: Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one's ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

B: 80-89: Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one's ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and expression.

C: 70-79: Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one's ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole), and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student's hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and a struggle to develop complex, critical thinking skills.

D: 60-69: Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and a lack of completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one's struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

F: 0-59: Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either not have completed the assignment, will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or will have completed the assignment and demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the

issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation. It is important to remember that a student can receive 0 out of 100 points. In the case that a student only partially completes an assignment or completes a work (in terms of page length, but not purpose) s/he may receive 0 points.

Attendance:

The attendance policy for this course is the official SFASU policy as stated at:

http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/class_attendance_excused_abs.asp.

In other words, regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which a student is registered. Valid excuses are limited to health, religious observation, family emergencies, and participation in certain SFASU-sponsored events. Students are responsible for providing written documentation for EVERY absence, from which a decision will be made regarding the absence's excusability. Without written documentation, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences to a maximum of three weeks of a semester when the nature of the work missed permits. However, no absences beyond the six that may be excused will be excused, and no student shall be allowed to pass the course whose unexcused absences exceed three (3)—this is not a correspondence course! Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, or in the case of a late add, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Note also that you must turn in both essays and take both exams to pass the course.

**Note regarding make-up and late work: Make-up tests and quizzes (which will be given only in the case of excused absences) must be taken during my office hours on your own initiative within one week of the absence, and they will be more challenging than the original versions. Late essays will lose one letter grade per business day of lateness. I will not accept the submission of material via e-mail without prior approval.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1):

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways, including instruction on the components of academic honesty as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the

words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at:

http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

Withheld Grades Policy (A-54):

The following is taken from SFASU's Policy Manual (2012), "Semester Grades Policy" (A-54). At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities:

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.

Course Calendar:

****This schedule and content will vary from instructor to instructor; this should be regarded as an example only:

The following schedule is tentative. No due dates will be moved up, and I'll try to keep changes to a minimum. The "assignments" file on D2L is always the authoritative source for assignments and due dates. Check here often. Daily work will be announced in class and listed on the "Assignments" file.

In addition to these due dates, I will be giving you frequent reading assignments (i.e. pages to read in the textbook) and short homework assignments. Other class activities (reading quizzes, collaborative activities, in-class writing) will be scheduled throughout the course, as well, though reading quizzes will always be unannounced.

**Please refer to COURSE GOALS above for alignment of topics noted below to CORE objectives.

Week 1

Introduction to course. Go over policies, difference between technical writing and academic writing. Write: a letter of introduction

Turn in letter of introduction. Review composition process. Academic writing review (required by your departments). Assign short diagnostic for academic writing review.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility)

Week 2

Review grammar and punctuation guide. Diagnostic due. Correspondence, letters, memo, email. Tone / word choice / audience. Memo and letter formats.

Bad complaint letter. Write complaint letter, audience memo, and response.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 3

Complaint letter assignment due. Look at complaint letter with rubric. Talk about grading. Read chapter 15 on job portfolio.

Look over prompts, talk about job portfolio. Find job ad. Write draft job letter.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 4

Bring in job ad and job letter. Get feedback. Go over resumes and resume styles. Write draft resumes.

Grade/critique sample resumes. Peer edit resumes. Review other documents. Write rough drafts

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 5

Rough Draft (RD) of job portfolio for peer edit,

Final Draft (FD) of job portfolio Talk about next assignment. Word choice day. Read chapter 9 (style).

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, and Teamwork).

Week 6

Writing style. Topics for report. Read on proposals. Pitch topics Wednesday.

Pitch topics. Talk about proposals. Proposals due next time. Read research chapter.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, and Teamwork).

Week 7

Proposals due. Talk about research. Look over AB prompt and example. Write out research questions in class.

Continue discussion of research. Begin AB work.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication).

Week 8

Look over citations. Work on research in class. Review appendix C in your book.

Turn in FD bibs.

Review decision making reports, talk about evaluating options, logic.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 9

Discuss sample report handout. Keep drafting report: write an intro for next time.

Review reports, look over rubric. Read material on graphics, page layout. Continue drafting, bring in another chunk.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility).

Week 10

Review further part. Brief style review.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, and Teamwork).

Week 11

Report RD due Peer edit report. Read chapter 20.

Report FD due. Bring sample instructions for next time.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 12

Talk about sample instructions. General instruction best practices. Work in class on practice instruction sets.

Review manual instructions, procedures, practices, styles. Write IM proposal for next time.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 13

Turn in IM proposal. Get head-nod. For next time: sample page of individual manual.

Individual manual page review, design lessons. For next time: task analysis.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 14

Task analysis due. Presentation instructions. Sign up for group presentations.

Group work for group presentations (continue working on manuals)

Group presentations

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week 15

Peer review manual

Turn in manual FD, any run-over presentations. Discuss final exam.

***Course Capstone Essay is due; students will turn in a hard copy to the instructor as well as upload this to the D2L course page in the appropriate designations.

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Teamwork).

Week Sixteen:

Final exam: TBA

(Alignment to Core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility).