English 273: Technical and Scientific Writing  
Spring 2016

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” William Butler Yeats

Instructor: Dr. Ken Untiedt, Professor, Department of English  
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Office Phone: 468-4407  
Email: untiedtkl@sfasu.edu  
Office Hours: MW 10:00-12:00, TTh 8:15-9:15 and 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

Schedule:  
This class is Section 090, and it meets Monday and Wednesday from 1:00 to 2:15 in Ferguson 378.

Telephone Partners:  
Name 1: Phone: Email:  
Name 2: Phone: Email:

Course Description: 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 writing). Prerequisite: six hours of freshman English.

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.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes for Communication:  
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses:

- Critical Thinking: Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information;
- Communication Skills: Effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication;
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills: Manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions;
- Teamwork: Ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal;
- Social Responsibility: Intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities; and,
- Personal Responsibility: The ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives, and this assessment will be based on student work from all core curriculum courses.
This student work will be collected in d2l through LiveText, the assessment management system selected by SFA to collect student work for core assessment. LiveText accounts will be provided to all students enrolled in core courses through the university technology fee. Students are responsible for registering their LiveText accounts, in accordance with the instructions provided through their SFA email accounts. For questions regarding LiveText, call ext. 1267 or email an administrator at SFALiveText@sfasu.edu. Assignments that address the various objectives will be given throughout the semester, and not all assignments will be required to be submitted to LiveText.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
This course introduces the essential elements of technical and scientific writing in a practical and progressive structure designed to prepare students for entry into the “real world.” This course is reading- and writing-intensive. You will be required to produce a wide range of documents, from a university-level research paper to various documents commonly found in the workplace. Many professions now require people to work collaboratively; therefore, you will at times be expected to work as part of a team, providing analysis, criticism, and revision of texts in order to produce documents that are rhetorically sound. You will also be expected to present some of the findings from these documents in an oral presentation.

**Writing Enhanced Course Guidelines:**
This course is designated as Writing Enhanced. Therefore, the following criteria must be met:
- Each student will write a minimum of 3000 words or 10 pages throughout the semester
- The course will include instruction in discipline-based writing among its objectives
- Each student will be required to revise and re-submit at least one assignment during the term
- Out-of-class writing assignments will count for a minimum of 20% of the course grade

**Required Texts and Materials:**
You are required to purchase a three-ring binder, preferably 2 to 3”. You will use this binder to create a Resource Binder, essentially your own technical writing textbook, composed of sample documents provided in assignment prompts (memos, letters, etc.), as well as the following texts:


You may purchase each of these texts at a minimal price anywhere on the Internet. By the end of the semester, your binder should be filled with useful information and sample documents for future use. I will offer suggestions for arranging the materials in the binder, but ultimately, it should be organized in a way that is most effective to you. I will check the Resource Binder periodically for a grade.

**Course Requirements:**
All writing assignments done outside of class must be typed, and they must be printed prior to coming to class; the printer in the classroom is for in-class assignments only. The format will vary for each writing assignment, depending on the type of document being prepared. The writing assignments should follow a common theme in your major or area of interest, beginning with the Research Paper and culminating with an analytical report in your future field.

The final analytical report will serve as a Core Capstone Essay and should evidence a semester’s worth of preparation and development of technical writing skills, as well as demonstrate competence in critical thinking skills; grammar, vocabulary, and written style; and effective development, interpretation of collected data, and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.
Your grade will be directly reflective of the amount of effort you exhibit. I have established a high standard for excellence in this course, and I expect you to meet that standard in order to excel academically. Your final grade in this course is entirely up to you. However, you must take the assignments seriously—the skills you will be required to learn are not difficult, but a mastery of them is necessary. All assignments will be graded for proper format, soundness of content, resourcefulness, and grammar and mechanics, according to the rubric.

Course Policies:

Attendance and Behavior: You are expected to be on time, thus minimizing disruptions, repeated instructions, and missed assignments. Being tardy five times counts as one absence. You may be counted absent even if you attend class, if you: do not bring your textbooks or other required assignments, use the computers inappropriately, or are otherwise disruptive to the classroom environment. After three unexcused absences, five percent of your final grade (50 points) will be deducted for each additional absence. Absences will be excused at my discretion (with adequate documentation), according to the University Policy and Procedures Manual.

If you are absent, you are responsible for determining what you missed (preferably, from your phone partners). If you miss an excessive amount of classes—or fail to turn in assignments—I may refer you to the Early Alert Program, which provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed. For specific information regarding attendance and excused absences, see policy 6.7.

I will not allow any disruptive behavior to interfere with my ability to teach or conduct class, or with the ability of your classmates to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated, and if you interfere with the learning environment I will insist that you leave the class; you will also be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. I have full discretion over what is considered unacceptable or inappropriate behavior, but a simple rule of thumb is to use common sense about language, attire, and showing respect and courtesy to others. At the very least, turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during the scheduled class time. If you repeatedly use your cell phone or other electronic devices improperly during class time, I will take the device until after the class. For further reference, see the Student Code of Conduct, policy 10.4.

Grammar and Mechanics: This is a college English course, and your work must evidence college-level work. If I discover five (5) or more simple, unique, sentence-level grammatical and/or mechanical errors on a single page of any formal written assignment, I will draw a line across the paper and stop grading for such errors, and give the assignment a 50%. I will continue to read the assignment so that I can offer comments on content, organization, or basic structure, and I will return it to you with the opportunity to revise the work for an averaged grade.

An example is a 50 the first time (for an assignment worth 100 points), and a 90 for the revised work; the combined total is 140, and the averaged grade would be a 70. However, if you revise the paper and I still must “draw the line,” I will lower the grade to a zero. You will be given only two opportunities to revise work of that quality. Any subsequent assignments with five or more errors on a page will simply receive 50% with no opportunity for revision. You will not be allowed to revise the Core Capstone Essay.

Academic Integrity: Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. In part, the following is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section A-9.1 of Academic Affairs:

Academic integrity is a 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.

**[Documented proof of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.]**

**Deadlines:** Technical writing in the workplace is deadline-oriented, as companies’ operations are dependent upon information and directives delineated in documents such as memos and reports. To emulate this atmosphere, students are highly encouraged to turn in all assignments on time, and failure to do so will result in a slight grade reduction. Major assignments (the Research Paper and the Core Capstone Essay) turned in after the due date can receive no higher than 70%.

**Difficulties:** If you do not understand an instruction, or if you are having any type of difficulties with the reading or writing assignments, please contact me as soon as possible. I will provide individual tutoring (for this course) during my office hours to any student who asks for assistance. I am very understanding (and more considerate than most people assume), but you must make your individual concerns known to me.

**Withheld Grades:** The following information on Withheld Grades is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section 5.5:

At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, 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, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Grade Determination:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Interaction (group work, oral presentations)</td>
<td>(150)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Work (critical analysis exercises, written assignments)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field-Specific Research</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper (7-10 pages, field-specific format, 12 point font in Times New Roman)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workplace Documents (letters, résumé, proposal)</td>
<td>(150)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical Report (the Core Capstone Essay)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>(100)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>(1000)</td>
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**Grading Rubric**

These are the standards for an A:

*Conception and Thesis:* The main point is clearly stated, and it contains some new, perhaps surprising element, some angle that is uncommonly thoughtful and insightful. The writer is not simply restating other people’s ideas; he or she presents more critical analysis and commentary than an average intelligent person might. The explicit and implicit assumptions of the topic are exposed and challenged. If research is included, the sources have not merely been cited—they have been analyzed, using what supports the argument, and acknowledging and addressing what challenges it.
**Organization:** The organization flows smoothly. Opposition to the argument is addressed and worked through at the beginning, and the rest of the time is spent building a strong case, supported with evidence that moves from weaker points to stronger ones.

**Style:** The argument is not only clearly stated and supported well, but it is done in an impressive way. The language used is sophisticated but not unnecessarily showy. The presentation style matches the content of the paper, perhaps through a sustained metaphor, or a particularly apt example that is carried through the entire paper.

**Format:** The paper adheres to the standard format for that type of document (memo, business letter, proposal, etc.). If visuals are incorporated, they enhance the text and look professional. Documentation of sources adheres to some recognizable style guide (MLA, APA, Chicago, or an equivalent).

**Grammar and Mechanics:** The paper is relatively clean and free (3 or fewer) of grammatical and mechanical errors.

These are the standards for a B:

**Conception and Thesis:** The idea is better than average and is still clearly stated, but the writer may have overlooked, or not acknowledged or challenged the assumptions that inform it.

**Organization:** The organization is strong, but the signaling might be a bit clunky—the there may be a lot of directional phrases used to force transition points ("As I said earlier..." "Firstly, secondly, thirdly...").

**Style:** It’s clean and readable, there is a consistent sense of voice, and there aren’t any places where a reader has to go back and reread a sentence just to understand its structure.

**Format:** The paper adheres to the basic standards for that type of document. If visuals are incorporated, they are used for filler only, or do not look professional. There may be minor errors or inconsistencies in documentation mechanics.

**Grammar and Mechanics:** There are very few (5 or fewer) errors.

These are the standards for a C:

**Conception and Thesis:** The main idea for the paper shows that the writer understands the topic and has thought about it, but the argument is either overly simplistic or one that is commonly stated. The main point may be clearly stated and defended with appropriate evidence, but the analysis is not very deep.

**Organization:** The paper uses a simple "5 Paragraph Essay" approach, perhaps even having only five paragraphs—an introduction, three supporting points, and a conclusion which merely restates the introduction. Transitions between paragraphs are competently handled but do not "flow."

**Style:** The style is simple, and there may be some word choice errors, especially where the writer uses "big" words incorrectly because he or she is trying to sound more impressive than necessary.

**Format:** Rules for that particular type of document are not closely followed: page numbers are missing or incorrect, margins are inconsistent, font size is too small or difficult to read, etc. Visuals look "cheap" or are badly integrated into the text. Sources are documented inconsistently or unclearly.

**Grammar and Mechanics:** The paper contains several distracting grammatical or mechanical errors, but they are repetitive (multiple comma splices) or are uncommon errors of a more complicated nature (and have not yet been discussed during the course).

These are the standards for a D:

**Conception and Thesis:** The main point of the paper is not clear at all, and very little evidence is used to support any kind of argument.

**Organization:** The focus shifts from one point to another, with little transition in between.

**Style:** The paper reads like a casual chat with friends, rather than a smart, academic paper.

**Format:** The document format is recognizable but clearly not correct. Visuals are not included when necessary, or they are not clear or otherwise inappropriate for the document. Documentation of sources does not adhere to a recognizable style guide.
Grammar and Mechanics: The paper contains multiple grammatical and mechanical errors (over 10), with consistent problems in sentence structure. There is little evidence of proofreading.

These are the standards for an F:
The writer fails to adequately fulfill the minimum requirements of the assignment: research or page requirements are not met, format is not correct, sources are inadequately documented, etc.

Conception and Thesis: No clear idea governs the words on the page.
Organization: No plan is evident, much less achieved.
Style: The paper contains many inappropriate or incorrect word choices, and does not read like a college-level paper.
Format: The basic format for that type of document is unrecognizable. There is no correct documentation of sources.

Grammar and Mechanics: There are multiple grammatical and mechanical errors on each page, as well as consistent problems in sentence structure. There is apparently no attempt at proofreading.

Statement Regarding 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, Room 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/.

Schedule:
In order to facilitate classroom discussion and group projects, all reading assignments are to be done prior to the class date indicated. Many assignments are indicated in bold on their due dates. Other graded homework will be assigned throughout the semester. In-class projects are italicized, thereby indicating the strong need for diligent attendance.

Note the abbreviations for reading assignments:

*English Simplified (ES)*; *Research Writing Simplified (RSW)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| 1    | 01-20| Introduction to course: review of Syllabus  
*Collaborative Project* |
| 2    | 01-25| Review of Syllabus  
Communicating in the Technical Workplace |
|      | 01-27| Working Collaboratively  
The Writing Process, Rhetorical Appeals *ES* 63-65, 67 |
| 3    | 02-01| **Research Paper Abstract due**  
Understanding Audience, Persuasion  
*Plagiarism* RWS 20-23, *ES* 70  
*Collaborative Project* |
|      | 02-03| *Library Lab*  
The Research Process *RWS* 1-10 |
**Week 4** 02-08  
**Annotated Bibliography due**  
Summaries *RWS* 28, Paraphrases *RWS* 37, and Direct Quotes *RWS* 42  
Managing and Citing Sources *ES* 67-76, *RWS* 20-26  
Citing Direct Quotations *RWS* 42-45  

02-10  
Grammar and Mechanics *ES* 19-23, 43-45 and *RWS* 67-69  
Ethics in the Professional Workplace  
Drafting and Organizing, Paragraph Structure *ES* 60-62  
Writing with Precision: Elements of the Essay *RWS* 67  

**Week 5** 02-15  
**Style** *ES* 24-30, 50-59  
Revising and Editing *ES* 65-67  
Reading critically, Grammar and Mechanics  
*Collaborative Project*  

02-17  
**Draft of Research Paper due**  
*Peer Critique*  

**Week 6** 02-22  
**Research Paper due**  
Letters, Memos, and Email *ES* 63  

02-24  
Letters  
*Collaborative Project*  

**Week 7** 02-29  
Beginning Your Career  
Document Design Principles  

03-02  
**Inquiry Letter due**  
Document Design Principles  
*Collaborative Project*  

**Week 8** 03-07  
Creating and Integrating Visuals  

03-09  
**Résumé and Application Letter due**  
Visual Presentations  
*Collaborative Project*  

**Week 9** 03-14  
Spring Break  

03-16  
Spring Break  

**Week 10** 03-21  
**Page Design Exercise due**  
Creating Technical Descriptions and Instructions  

03-23  
**Acceptance Letter due**  
Instructions, Documentation  

**Week 11** 03-28  
**No class: University holiday**  

03-30  
**Instruction Sheet due**  
Proposals
| Week 12 | 04-04 | **Project Proposal due**  
Proposals |
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<td></td>
<td>04-06</td>
<td>Analytical Reports</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>04-11</td>
<td>Critical Analysis of Documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>04-13</td>
<td>Analytical Reports</td>
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</table>
| Week 14 | 04-18 | Preparing and Giving Presentations  
*In-class Exercise* |
|         | 04-20 | **Analytical Report Outline due**  
*Oral Presentations* |
| Week 15 | 04-25 | *Oral Presentations* |
|         | 04-27 | *Oral Presentations* |
| Week 16 | 05-02 | **Response to Oral Presentations due** |
|         | 05-04 | **Analytical Report (Core Capstone Essay) due**  
Wrap-up, Exam review |