

Course Contact Info

English 3351, Technical Writing

Instructor: Dr. Kevin Garrison

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Office hours: M/W 11 pm- 4 pm

*Fridays and other times not listed by appointment if necessary with sufficient notice.

Section: 3351.030 – MWF 9:00-9:50

Section: 3351.040 – MWF 10:00-10:50

Course Description

This course will introduce students to advanced writing skills for technical and scientific fields. Specifically, students will work with numerous forms of communication, such as letters, definitions, instructions, proposals, emails and more. Because this course is a technical writing class, this class will be informed by studies and critiques of technology, such as Jacques Ellul's work in *The Technological Society* or Andrew Feenberg's *Questioning Technology*. Because technological change is one of the key trademarks – indeed perhaps the most important trademark – of the 21st century, this class will focus on helping students understand both the social/political background of writing in technical fields *and* focus on how to engage with questions about technology through the use of numerous forms of communication.

Prerequisite: Sophomore literature

Course Objectives and Outcomes

- Objective #1: Develop skills in expressing yourself in technical writing.
- Objective #2: Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories of technical writing.
- Objective #3: Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by technical writers.

When you finish ENG 3351, you should be able to:

1. Analyze the communication situation fully and accurately: needs, audiences, uses, and constraints
2. Gather, interpret, and document information logically, efficiently, and ethically
3. Develop professional work and teamwork habits
4. Design usable, clear, persuasive, accessible documents
5. Select the appropriate media for presenting information
6. Organize information using reader-based principles

7. Use graphics effectively
8. Develop an effective, clear writing style
9. Communicate through oral presentations

CONNECT! Campus and Community Objective and Outcomes

This course contains a service-learning project, meaning that all students will complete a project for a community member while also receiving assignment credit. In addition to the above objectives and outcomes, you will also:

- Objective #4: Develop skills as a socially responsible citizen.

When you finish the assignment in ENG 3351, you should be able to:

10. Respond to a community need
11. Reflect on the relevance of engaging with another cultural group and articulate the relevance of a service-learning project for your life.

Course Assignments

Weight	Unit	Deliverable
15%	Unit 1: Writing for Other Cultures	Flyer
10%	Unit 2: Preparing for Graduate School	Resume/CV and Statement of Purpose
10%	Unit 3: Documenting Procedures	Set of Instructions
10%	Unit 4: Explaining Concepts	Technical Definition and Description
20%	Unit 5: Proposing Actions to Decision-Makers	Research Proposal
10%	Unit 6: Presenting Findings	Presentation
10%	Quizzes	
5%	Workshops	
10%	Final Exam	
100%	Total Percent	

Materials for this Class

- Dobrin, Keller, & Weisser *Technical Communication in the Twenty-First Century* (2010).
- Access to a computer which has an Internet connection, Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat Reader, and email access.
- A way to store files

Classroom Behaviors

- You will adhere to the standards set in the ASU Student Handbook, found here: http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf
- Adhere to standards of common courtesy (i.e. turn off cell phones, no reading newspapers in class, no studying for tests during class time). If your actions are disruptive or disrespectful, then I will ask you to stop and/or leave.
- As I will demonstrate and discuss on the first day of class, I have a high-frequency hearing impairment. While this should not detract from your learning experience, it means that you will engage with audience awareness.
 - Get my attention if you want to speak - I will never know who is talking unless I have a visual cue alerting me to who is speaking.
 - Speak at a volume that everyone in the class can hear - if you mumble or speak quietly, you will have to repeat yourself a number of times.
 - Look at the person you are addressing - I read lips, so don't cover your mouth or look at your shoelaces or chew on your pen.

Email Policy

I will only check my emails during regular business hours, so if you email me over the weekend, do not expect a reply until the following Monday. Also, I receive up to 100 emails a day, and as such, I will typically read and respond only to emails that have the following:

- A clear subject line, including the number "3351"
- A clear message
- Proper salutation, including my name and your name

Grading Policy

Grades on assignments will be determined according to the following criteria:

- **A (90-99%)** The document is superior. It exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The information is ethical, sophisticated, thorough, and ideally suited for the audience. The style is clear and appropriate to the subject, purpose, and audience. The organization and design of the document make the information understandable, accessible, and usable. The mechanics and grammar are correct.
- **B (80-89%)** The document is good. It meets the objectives of the assignment, but requires minor improvements or reveals easily correctable errors in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics.

- **C (70-79%)** The document is adequate. It omits useful information or requires significant improvement in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics. It may be formally correct but superficial in its discussion.
- **D (60-69%)** The document is disappointing. It meets some of the objectives of the assignment but ignores others; the discussion is inadequately developed, omits important information, or displays numerous or major errors in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics.
- **F (0-59%)** The document is unsatisfactory. It omits critical information, does something other than the assignment required, or displays major or excessive errors in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics.

Clarifications – If students would like clarification about assignment grades, I always enjoy discussing my comments and your work. Such serves as a learning experience for both of us - me to see your perspective, you to see mine. To discuss a grade, I do expect a few basic things: 1) re-read the grading policy, 2) schedule a time to meet in my office, 3) be prepared to discuss my comments (and if possible come with detailed notes and a clear understanding of what I stated), 4) be ready to enter into a dialogic exchange where you attempt to understand my perspective and I attempt to understand your perspective. I will not discuss your grades via email, however, since this would violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Late Penalties – Assignments (both major assignments and homework assignments) will be assessed a penalty of 10% if turned in after the submission time and 10% more for each additional day late. This includes weekends and holidays.

Grading – Grades on all written work depend on all elements of writing, which include but are not limited to: content; form; accuracy in grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.; logic; and neatness. In addition to grading for content and development, I will deduct points for each first occurrence of an error as follows:

Spelling.....5% each	Grammar.....5% each
Punctuation.....5% each	Formatting.....5% each

The *exceptions* to this list are your resume/CV and your statement of purpose assignment, which should be error-free. Because of the severe consequences for errors on these documents, each error costs 10%.

Incompletes – I will not give a grade of “I” (an incomplete) in this course.

Use – I reserve the right to use any of your assignments as samples for future courses.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas and not giving them credit through the use of an accepted citation style. In essence, it is the academic form of "shoplifting." The way to avoid plagiarism is to cite the information properly, using a citation style such as MLA or APA.

Because this class will ask for students to turn in non-traditional assignments, it is likely that the rules for citation will be blurred. See me if you have even the slightest doubt about what is correct and appropriate. If you are unfamiliar with how to cite sources on traditional assignments, then you have a number of options:

- See <http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf>
- Contact me
- Visit the [ASU Writing Center](#) for Instruction
- Purchase an [MLA](#) or [APA](#) Handbook
- Use online resources such as Purdue's Website on [MLA Guidelines](#)
- Read a detailed explanation of [Plagiarism](#)

What happens if you are caught plagiarizing? You will receive an automatic "0" on the assignment with an opportunity to revise for half-credit. We will sit down in my office, discuss the rules of citation, and make sure that it won't happen again.

If you are caught plagiarizing a second time, you will fail the course, and I will inform the academic integrity office to insure that the violation is placed on your permanent academic record.

Attendance Policy

There are two types of absences:

- Unexcused - you may miss three classes this semester, with no questions asked.
- Excused - after those two unexcused absences, the only absences that will be accepted are 1) notes from your doctor, 2) documentation proving a death in the family, 3) observance of a religious holiday, or 4) a university sanctioned event.

After you miss three classes, you will lose 3% of your overall grade for each day missed. Once you miss 10 total classes, you will receive an "F" for the course.

A few minutes after class begins, I will take attendance either by 1) passing around a sheet to sign, or 2) calling out names. If you are not there when attendance is taken, you may be counted absent.

If you miss class, work should be made up by contacting peers to find out what was missed.

Accommodations

Any student with a disability who may require special arrangements to meet course requirements must present to me the appropriate documentation as soon as possible. There is no requirement

that accommodations be made prior to completion of this standard university procedure. Contact Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center for more information.

Any student who misses class due to observance of a religious holiday should consult with me prior to the missed class period.

Tentative Schedule

Week	Day	Section	Topics
1	27-Aug	INTRODUCTION	Introducing Ourselves
	29-Aug	SECTION 1	Defining Technical Writing; Overview of Assignments
	31-Aug		The Process of Technical Writing: Content and Design (How vs. What)
2	3-Sep		HOLIDAY - NO CLASS
	5-Sep		Principles of Design
	7-Sep		Workshop on MS Publisher: Vectors vs. Pixels
3	10-Sep		Plagiarism in the Information Age
	12-Sep		Developing Content; Single-Sourcing; Awareness of Multicultural Audiences
	14-Sep		Workshop on Flyer
4	17-Sep	SECTION 2	Graduate Degrees vs. Undergraduate Degrees
	19-Sep		Conventions of Resumes and CVs
	21-Sep		Workshop on MS Word: Resumes and CVs
5	24-Sep		Conventions of a Statement of Purpose
	26-Sep		Workshop on the Statement of Purpose
	28-Sep		NO CLASS
6	1-Oct	SECTION 3	Instructions: The Age of eHow.com
	3-Oct		Conventions of Instructions
	5-Oct		Workshop on Developing Instructions
7	8-Oct		Usability Testing
	10-Oct		Practice Usability Test: Eye Tracker and Morae Usability
	12-Oct		Workshop: Usability Test of Instructions
8	15-Oct	SECTION 4	Technical Writers: The New Educators (or the Corrie Ten Boom Question)
	17-Oct		Conventions of Technical Definitions
	19-Oct		Workshop on Identifying a Term and Creating Text
9	22-Oct		Conventions of Technical Descriptions
	24-Oct		Practice: Describing Items
	26-Oct		Workshop on Adobe Photoshop: Creating an Original Graphic
10	29-Oct	SECTION 5	Proposal Conventions and Types
	31-Oct		Analyzing Proposals
	2-Nov		Workshop on MS Word: Proposals
11	5-Nov		Principles of Research
	7-Nov		Primary and Secondary Sources

	9-Nov		Workshop on Library Research
12	12-Nov		Using Graphics in a Proposal
	14-Nov		Using MLA and APA Style Guides
	16-Nov		Workshop on Citations
13	19-Nov	SECTION 6	Conventions of Presentations
	21-Nov		Workshop on MS PowerPoint
	23-Nov		HOLIDAY - NO CLASS
14	26-Nov		Presentations
	28-Nov		Presentations
	30-Nov		Presentations
15	3-Dec		Presentations
	5-Dec		Presentations
	7-Dec		Final Exam Information and Course Evaluations
16	10-Dec		Final Exam for 040 @ 10:30-12:30
	12-Dec		Final Exam for 030 @ 8:00-10:00