

## **ENGL 3100 – Technical and Professional Writing**

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### Textbooks:

Markel, Mike. *Technical Communication* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)

Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu. *Handbook of Technical Writing* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)

### **Course Objectives**

In this course, you will explore the role of technical writing in your chosen career. In general, you will develop the communication skills required to produce effective documents for workplace settings. You will also learn about the processes involved in developing, reviewing, and revising documents, and you will learn about principles of workplace communication and specific techniques appropriate to writing on the job.

More specifically, the course is designed to help you develop the skills and processes that will better enable you to communicate successfully in your professional work. The following objectives are incorporated into the ENGL 3100 curriculum:

Analyze the communication situation completely, assessing audiences, needs, purposes, uses, tasks, and constraints.

Plan and implement communications that solve workplace problems or help readers make decisions about workplace problems and solutions.

Develop the interpersonal skills required to work effectively on collaborative projects.

Gather, interpret, and document information logically, efficiently, and ethically.

Select appropriate media and genres for writing situations.

Organize and structure information effectively, displaying clear structural and organizational schemes for readers.

Design and format documents that are accessible, easy to navigate, and easy to read.

Develop rhetorical strategies and writing styles appropriate for different writing situations.

Use effective visual displays of information—tables, graphs, photographs, line drawings, etc.

Evaluate, edit, and revise workplace communications individually and collaboratively.

Use computer technology to research, plan, draft, and design technical documents.

Confer with your instructor about the goals of the assignments and about your progress toward achieving those goals. (This will simulate experience working with supervisors and professional consultants.)

In summary, the experience and expertise you will gain during this course will prepare you for the types of communication processes and practices you will encounter in the workplace.

### **Course Overview**

The emphasis of ENGL 3100 is on the more common applications of technical communication: letters, memos, proposals, reports, and instructions. In developing these projects, you will develop skills and strategies for writing analytical, descriptive, and instructional information for various audience groups, including general readers, executives, managers, and technical experts

### **Major Assignments (MA)**

The major course projects vary in scope and complexity but are designed to help students to explore these workplace genres:

Electronic résumé and introductory email for an actual job or internship in your profession. (Individual-10%)

Technical instructions for which you will conduct a complete task analysis, and write step-by-step instructions that incorporate graphics and technical descriptions and definitions appropriate for the identified users. (Individual-15%)

Proposal (based on the Topic Memo) to your client that provides a detailed presentation of your final recommendation report. (Collaborative-10%)

Progress Report to your ENGL 3100 instructor in which you provide your individual progress on the final report. (Individual-5%)

Recommendation report (final report) to a real client on which you will work collaboratively, using your team's collective subject knowledge to analyze a problem and recommend a solution or plan of action. (Collaborative-25%)

Oral Presentation to your ENGL 3100 class in which you will present the findings of your final recommendation report. You will need to adapt your information for this specific audience and prepare an informative presentation. (Collaborative-5%)

In addition to the major projects, you will be asked to complete several daily assignments (DA) to reinforce concepts we have learned in class. Also, expect quizzes (10%) over material covered in class or in the text.

### **Grades**

Your grade will be based on the quality of your work on the major assignments as well as on your daily work, class participation, and attendance. Final grades will be based on the following scale.

Scale for grades (%):

A+	=	98
A	=	95
A-	=	90
B+	=	88
B	=	85
B-	=	80
C+	=	78
C	=	75
C-	=	70
D+	=	68
D	=	65
D-	=	60
E	=	58 (and below)

## **Grading Criteria**

In addition to the general grading description and assignment requirements provided later in this section, the following list of grading criteria categories may be helpful for you to reference as you work through your drafting process. Although many of the categories overlap, they are organized here into nine main categories to help you use them more effectively as a drafting tool:

- Compliance with assignment requirements and standards
- Analysis of the rhetorical situation, including audience and purpose
- Structure, organization, and accessibility of information
- Development and usability of content and textual elements
- Writing style appropriate for the rhetorical situation
- Appropriate use of graphics
- Effective use of design features and formatting
- Correctness in grammatical mechanics
- Proper citation and documentation methods

Excellence in any technical document will depend upon your performance in these categories. It is our hope that through the semester you will learn to apply these criteria to your own work and to revise all your documents to meet and surpass the professional standards that you will encounter in your future career.

## General Grade Descriptions

A grade for an ENGL 3100 assignment is an evaluation of the rhetorical quality of the work: its ability to communicate effectively to an intended audience for a specific purpose situated within a specific context. In ENGL 3100, the following basic grade descriptions are used to distinguish a document's relative success in meeting the requirements of an assignment. I will provide specific criteria for each major assignment.

<b>A</b>	A superior document that meets and exceeds all standards. It conveys a superior understanding of audience, situation, and purpose. It is free from grammatical errors and has a style that is clear, concise, and forceful. The information is well-developed; it is thorough, comprehensive, accurate, and appropriate for the audience and context; and it includes appropriate examples and citations. The visual design is accessible and appealing. In short, your document represents your organization well, and your employer would be pleased to distribute it.
<b>B</b>	A very good document that meets the standards for the assignment and engages the audience. It may need improvement in style; it may contain minor flaws in grammar, format, or content that are easily correctable. It is well written and produced, and it exhibits a solid understanding of audience, situation, and purpose. The information is sufficiently developed and organized, and it contains appropriate examples and citations. In short, your document would represent the organization well, but your employer might recommend some ways to improve the document before distributing.
<b>C</b>	A competent document that meets the standards adequately but may contain several flaws in concept development, details, structure, grammar, design, accuracy, etc. For example, a document may fail to answer one or two significant questions or fail to identify a significant source; or it may need to be better developed or to be redesigned so that the information is more accessible and appealing. In short, your document could not be distributed to your organization's clients or users without a revision. Your performance on the task might give your supervisor doubts about your communication ability and motivation.
<b>D</b>	A marginally acceptable document that forces the reader to do too much work to understand or read the document because of serious problems in the document. The document may contain numerous and major errors in logic, grammar, or data. The document may meet some standards of the assignment but fails to meet an important requirement. Your organization would not send this document, and, in fact, your employer would probably seriously reconsider your future with the organization.
<b>E</b>	An unacceptable document that does not address the assignment. It either does not have enough information, contains major or excessive errors, or does not meet the standards of the assignment. Most likely, it is time for you to find another job or career.

## **Attendance Policy**

Your attendance is essential. I will provide quite a bit of class time for individual and group work. Missing class will hurt your grade. Please note that you are responsible for material covered in class regardless of your presence or absence.

## **Late Projects**

As in the workplace, most deadlines are based on other demands, requirements, and deadlines and, as such, are frequently inflexible. For example, if you were submitting a proposal for your company or client in response to a government request for proposals (RFPs), a late proposal would not be accepted. It would be unfair to competitors submitting their proposals on time, as well as litigious, to allow you extra time to prepare your response. Our circumstances are not as extreme, but there are penalties for late projects:

- For each day you submit a major project late, your final grade on that project will be reduced by one letter for each day it is submitted late.
- Submit all late projects electronically (to sthomas@weber.edu) and bring a print copy to the next class meeting.

Carefully weigh the consequences of submitting your projects late. Again, as in the workplace, it is best to discuss problems in meeting schedules before the deadlines. I will not accept late papers after one week.

**NOTE:** To receive credit for daily assignments, you must turn them in when I call for them during class. Daily assignments WILL NOT be accepted late.

## **Daily Assignments and Quizzes**

Daily Assignments are outlined in the schedule of assignments and are due on the date listed. Daily Assignments WILL NOT be accepted late. In addition, in-class work must be completed IN CLASS (not before, not after). In-class work cannot be made up. Finally, each reading assignment is due on the date listed; you are expected to be prepared to discuss the readings for that day. Expect quizzes over reading assignments and in-class presentations. In-class quizzes are worth 10% of your final grade and cannot be made up.

## **Incompletes**

Incompletes are given only in rare and extreme circumstances. University policy states "An 'Incomplete' may be given by an instructor only when the student, having satisfactorily completed approximately 80% of the required work, is unable to complete the class work for a legitimate reason (such as illness or accident) and, in the opinion of the instructor, could complete the required work without re-registering for the class"

(<http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/4-19.htm>).

## **Group Projects**

The major project for this course is a collaborative project that requires students to work as teams to produce a project proposal and a decision-making report based on the proposed project. On occasion, problems will arise with team projects. Each team is encouraged to attempt to handle within the team any interpersonal problems and problems with performance; however, if the team cannot satisfactorily resolve the issues in a timely manner, it is the responsibility of each team member to inform me. If any issue escalates to or appears initially to be of a serious nature, students should inform me at once.

Students are expected to report any significant issues (both resolved and unresolved) in periodic progress reports.

Each team member will receive the same grade for the final report.

**NOTE:** My evaluation of your report projects will not be lowered because your team encounters difficulties.

## **Plagiarism and Unethical Behavior**

Plagiarism and unethical behavior is not tolerated.

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which a person represents someone else's ideas or written works as if they were his or her own. Whenever you use someone else's writings, arguments, data, or designs (either directly quoted or paraphrased) in an assignment submitted for a class, you must clearly cite the appropriate references in a format previously approved by your instructor. You must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the assignment are not your own work. For instance, it would be plagiarism to credit someone else with the content of only one passage in a paper if in fact other passages from that person were included without giving credit. It is also plagiarism to collaborate on a paper or accept collaboration from another person without specific authorization to do so by your instructor.

Any case will result in the student receiving a failing grade for the course and further University disciplinary action according to the [Student Code, Section IV:D & X:A & B](#).

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) (SSD) in Room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

## **Electronic Devices**

During your scheduled ENGL 3100 class (electronic or otherwise) and during scheduled conferences, cell phones, ipods and any other electronic device that will distract you and others from class will be turned off (or to silent notification).

## **Electronic Classroom**

If the schedule permits, we will have workshops and demonstrations in an electronic classroom.

I recommend investing in a “click drive” or “thumb drive”; these are USB storage devices that you may purchase at the bookstore. These “click drives” hold much more information than a floppy and they are harder to damage. Keep one with you to save or access your work. Disk problems, printing problems, computer-related crashes, etc. ARE NOT excuses for late work. Remember to safeguard your work: BACKUP, BACKUP, BACKUP! (This means save your work in several places and keep hard copies.)

Remember, in order to print in an EC, you will need to bring your student ID.

Be prepared to work in the EC. If you are unaccustomed to working in group situations, bring in drafts to revise or handwritten copies to type. Lack of preparation for working in the EC will result in an absence (see above). Remember, the computers in the EC are for **working**. Any inappropriate computer activity will be dealt with according to University policy.