Course Information:
Section: 010
CRN: 27120
Meetings: Asynchronous Course

Instructor Information:
Email: lmherman@miners.utep.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-2PM, or by appointment
  - Zoom meeting link
  - Zoom ID: 836 2020 6134
  - Password: VIRTUAL

Course Description
The primary goal of RWS 3359 is to develop students’ effective communication in technical writing within a variety of fields and contexts. This effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities and culture as well as knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process. The class presents an approach to communication that helps students determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media. You will produce a variety of documents and presentations to gain more confidence and fluency in visual, oral, and written communication.

As an online class, I use Blackboard for all aspects of our class. When in doubt, check Blackboard for course documents, announcements, email, assignment and course information. Blackboard will provide students with permanent access to the syllabus, supplemental reading materials, e-mail, and discussion groups. It is vital that students check and participate in the online environment consistently as it is an integral part of the course. Assignments will be presented, prepared and evaluated entirely on-line.

Another goal of RWS 3359 is to strengthen your self-learning skills. This means that you will be required to work independently to be fully prepared for class and for the writing projects you must complete. Blackboard will also help you work toward this goal.

Learning Outcomes
In this course you will:
  - Analyze the rhetorical situation and define the users and/or audience as well as the tasks that the information must support;
  - Apply rhetorical principles to plan and design effective technical documents for diverse media;
  - Research appropriate sources that inform your writing;
  - Compose content appropriate for the users and genre. Revise and edit written work for accuracy, clarity, coherence and appropriateness, and document resources in the health care environment;
  - Apply technological and visual rhetorical skills (e.g., document design, graphics, computer documentation, electronic editing, and content management
applications) in the composing process. Publish, deliver and archive the composed documents as required;
- Consider the ethical dimension of composing and working in a professional setting;
- Recognize and respect various cultural attitudes toward and conventions for technical communication;
- Work critically and collaboratively to complete projects.

**Texts and Materials**
- High speed Internet access
- Access to Blackboard (Bb) and OneDrive For Business (accessible through myutep.edu)
- Electronic storage capacity for all your documents; you are required to keep copies of all your **submitted** assignments until grades are posted.
- Additional readings and resources available through Blackboard.

**Course Assignments**
Specific directives for each graded event are available through Blackboard.
- Major/Field Exploration Memo = 25
- Design Critique Letter = 25
- Definition and Description = 50
- Instructions and Usability Test = 75
- Infographic = 50
- Usability Test Analysis = 50
- Document Conversion into Web Text = 100
- Proposal = 100
- Project Management Plan = 75
- Research Report = 150
- Presentation = 100
- Tech Connect + Reflect (x3) = 75 (25/assignment)
- Class Participation = 125

**Grade Distribution**
The number of points you earn determines your final grade; I do neither round up nor curve. There are 1000 total points for the course.
- 1000-900 = A
- 899-800 = B
- 799-700 = C
- 699-600 = D
- 599 and below = F

A note about grades: Since this is an upper-division, professional writing course, the expectation is that the writing will be appropriate for the audience, professional, and error-free.
- The students with work in the "A" range consistently produced exceptional work with little or no errors in their writing; students completed all of their work, followed the directions provided, and turned in all assignments on time.
- The work in the “B” range is mostly error-free and/or considers the appropriate
audience and professional nature of the writing situation; students have generally turned most, if not all of the work, and turn assignments in on time.

- Work that is in the “C” range generally has errors, may not fully consider the audience, or professional nature of the work; did not follow the directions provided, there may be missing participation assignments and work may have been turned in late.
- Work that is below a “C” is not effectively written, major assignments may be late or missing, guidelines were not followed, and student did not participate in class.

**Course Delivery**

For the Spring 2021 semester, RWS 3359 will be held fully online. The course is designed to engage students through discussions with your classmates and instructor utilizing Blackboard (Bb), UTEP’s Learning Management System (LMS). The course will rely extensively on Blackboard, though I will supplement it by incorporating other platforms (e.g. SharePoint, OneDrive, Zoom, etc.) and various media. In order to succeed in the course, you will need to have regular use of the internet and a stable, high-speed connection.

Although you can use the Blackboard App on your phone, it is highly recommended that you compose your work for class, and perform class activities, via a computer. If you don’t have a computer or reliable internet at home, the university can help you with resources: Technology Support – UTEP. Please speak with me immediately if you will need assistance. We want you to have the opportunity to succeed in class without concern about access. There are also computers available for you to use in the library on campus.

Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome are the most supported browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications with the LMS. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser. If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

**Course and Instructor Policies**

**Submitting Work:** All work will be submitted through the Bb course shell for this class. Since Bb comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, please submit all assignments in Microsoft Word following APA format, unless directed otherwise. Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your name and the title of the assignment.

Please label your documents like so:

lherman_rhetanalysis_draft; lherman_rhetanalysis_final

All assessments are due **before midnight** on the specified due date. Discussion Board posts are due before midnight each Sunday. **You cannot make up points for missed postings.**

**Late Work:** It is important to submit work before deadlines for full credit and timely feedback.

**Participation:** Because this class resides completely online, it’s important for you to self-motivate to keep up with your work. Each assignment, assessment, and
activity is designed to keep you on pace to develop your skills. You should plan to “log in” at least twice per week.

Classroom Etiquette and Netiquette:
- Debate, critical inquiry, and intellectual diversity are essential elements to higher education and a process of learning. There is the potential during this course for controversial and sensitive topics to be discussed during small group or whole class interaction (whether face-to-face or online), and to surface through discussion board postings. You are expected to demonstrate respect and courtesy for your peers and instructor when they express differing arguments, viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be permitted. Angry displays, whether in writing, online postings, or in class discussions will be handled as disruptions to the wellbeing of the class and responded to as negative participation.
- As a general rule: always consider audience, in class and online. As Virginia Shea writes in Netiquette, the first, or “golden,” rule of online practice is to “Remember the human.” Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading your postings. When reacting to someone else’s message (verbal or written), address the ideas, not the person and post only what anyone would comfortably state in a F2F situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for your RWS classmates and instructor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

Participation/Attendance: Attendance is determined by class participation online. Students must be prepared, participate in online discussions, and become familiar with the material in each of the modules consistently to understand and incorporate the rhetorical strategies and processes used to complete the projects. Class participation assignments cannot be made up.

Drop Policy: I do not automatically drop students even after they have missed major assignments or failed to log into Blackboard for a prolonged period of time (yes, I can tell when you last accessed the system). You must initiate the drop yourself, so be mindful of University policy regarding dropping classes and drop dates.

If you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

Incomplete Grade Policy: Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic Dishonesty is NEVER tolerated by UTEP. All cases are reported to the Dean of Students for Academic Sanctions. Sanctions may
include expulsion. All work submitted must be original; students may not submit
graded work from another course.

Forms of academic dishonesty include: Collusion—lending work to another person
to submit as his or her own; Fabrication—deliberately creating false information on
a works cited page, and Plagiarism—the presentation of another person’s work as
your own, whether meaning to or not (i.e. copying parts of or whole papers off the
Internet). See the Dean of Students’ website for more information.

Copyright and Fair Use: The University requires all members of its community to
follow copyright and fair use requirements. Students are individually and solely
responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither
protect nor defend students nor assume any responsibility for student violations of
fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject students to federal and
state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under
University policies.

Group Assignments: Group assignments can sometimes create tricky situations.
Some students don’t always “pull their weight” and this upsets group members that
are doing their work and being good contributors to the group. Despite this, group
assignments are valuable because they help students work together for a
common goal. Group work is a professional life reality and learning how to work in
a group will be central to projects in this class. Students who are not doing their
share of the group work can be voted out of their groups and may have to
complete the entire project on their own, or may fail the assignment.

Documentation Styles: We use APA style. For formatting guidelines, visit the Purdue
Online Writing Lab or schedule an appointment with the UTEP University Writing
Center.

Nature and Time Spent on Course: This course intends to help students develop a
wide variety of strategies for communicating in a technical environment and
communicating technical information to a variety of audiences and users. Success in this course requires dedication and focus.

Be sure to allocate sufficient time for the class projects and work. The general rule
for all classes is that students spend two hours working outside of class for each
class credit. Because this is a 3-hour class, expect to spend at least 6 hours doing
researching and writing each week. Further, as an online class preparing and
reading the materials delivered online may account for another 3 hours per week –
the same amount of time expected in the classroom.

Feedback: Regardless of your major, communicating effectively and professionally
is valued by myriad employers. My goal is to help you succeed and learn the
strategies to help you communicate in a variety of contexts and with a variety of
audiences. It is extremely important that you communicate with me immediately if
you are not receiving feedback either from me or your colleagues on drafts and
assignments. We can usually resolve issues quickly if we quickly address them.

You will receive feedback from two primary sources in class: your colleagues and
your instructor.
Your feedback to your colleagues will help in two ways: you will provide a new perspective to your colleagues’ writing and your own writing will be informed by both the strengths and weaknesses you identify in the writing you review. That will make you aware of your own composing process and strengthen your own review/revision process.

I will also assign in-class peer review teams for the semester. These teams will be responsible for reviewing, commenting and then reflecting on the peer reviewing process.

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

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**University Policies and Resources**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs. Visit the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#) page for more information on Academic integrity.

**Copyright and Fair Use:** As part of our course, we will examine Copyright and Fair Use practices. However, know that the University’s policy reads: “The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.” Additional information regarding Copyright and Fair Use within the classroom can be accessed through [UTEP's Lib Guide](#) on the subject.

**University Writing Center:** UTEP’s University Writing Center (UWC) offers free writing tutoring assistance for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help to understand any writing assignment and help work on comprehending difficult textbook material.

*Please note that for the Spring 2021 semester, the UWC will be operating fully online. Visit [University Writing Center - UTEP](#) to make an appointment with a writing center consultant.*

There are now two consultation options students can take advantage of: 1) Synchronous online assistance – students can go to our website (utep.edu/uwc) and use the link to log into Blackboard Collaborate. No appointment needed! We will review your paper with you live online! Visit our website for current hours and availability of Synchronous Sessions.
2) Email the UWC your paper – go to our website and choose the “Email” option. You can email your paper to us any time. We will review it during our next open hours of operation and return it to you with suggested revisions. Expect a 72-hour turnaround for emailed papers, so plan ahead!

Military Students: If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active) please visit the Military Student Success Center. I also recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Accommodations Policy: The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University.

Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

COVID-19 Precautions: You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu. For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms.

If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present.

University Resources: UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:
Technology Resources

- **Help Desk**: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources

- **UTEP Library**: Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.

- **University Writing Center (UWC)**: Seek assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources. For the Spring 2021 semester, synchronous and asynchronous consultations are available.

- **RefWorks**: A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.
## Important Dates for Spring 2021 Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 18th</td>
<td>Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – University Closed</td>
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<td>Jan 19th</td>
<td>Spring classes begin</td>
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<td>Jan 19th–22nd</td>
<td>Late Registration (Fees are incurred)</td>
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<td>Feb 3rd</td>
<td>Spring Census Day</td>
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<td>Note: This is the last day to register for classes. If payment is not received by this day, students will be dropped.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 15th</td>
<td>20th Class Day</td>
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<td>Note: Students who were given a payment deadline extension will be dropped at 5:00 pm if payment arrangements have not been made.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 19th</td>
<td>Graduation application deadline for degree conferral</td>
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<td>Mar 21st</td>
<td>Midterm Spring 2021 Grades Due</td>
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<td>Mar 15-19th</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 26th</td>
<td>Cesar Chavez Holiday – no classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 1st</td>
<td>Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline</td>
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<td>Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 2nd</td>
<td>Spring Study Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 16th</td>
<td>Deadline to submit candidates’ names for degree conferral</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6th</td>
<td>Spring – Last day of classes</td>
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<td>May 7th</td>
<td>Dead day</td>
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<td>May 10-14th</td>
<td>Spring Final Exams</td>
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<td>May 15-16th</td>
<td>Spring Commencement</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 19th</td>
<td>Grades are Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 20th</td>
<td>Grades are posted to student records; students are notified of grades and academic standing</td>
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### Course Calendar

Changes to the course calendar will be communicated through email and via announcement through our course’s Blackboard shell.

Text and activity denotations:
- **TC** = Technical Communication textbook selection
- **BB** = PDF accessible through Blackboard
- **DB** = Discussion Board
- **Link(s)** = Online resource(s)
- **Q** = Quiz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings/Resources</th>
<th>Activities and Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1: 1/19-1/24</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Technical Writing, Rhetorical Situation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Q:</strong> Syllabus Quiz&lt;br&gt;<strong>DB:</strong> Introduce Yourself! (DUE: 1/21) Major/Field Exploration Memo (DUE: 1/24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2: 1/25-1/31</strong></td>
<td><strong>Microsoft Office Suite, Writing Correspondence</strong></td>
<td><strong>DB:</strong> Netiquette Guide&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tech Connect + Reflect #1</strong> (DUE: 1/31)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3: 2/1-2/7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Audience Analysis, Design Considerations, Writing Constructive Feedback</strong></td>
<td><strong>DB:</strong> Product Review&lt;br&gt;<strong>Design Critique Letter</strong> (DUE: 2/7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4: 2/8-2/14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ethical and Legal Considerations</strong></td>
<td><strong>DB:</strong> RBG’s Collars and Rhetorical Choices</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5: 2/15-2/21</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing a Definition and Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>DB:</strong> Defining for the Ages Definition and Description (DUE: 2/21) Peer Review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6: 2/22-2/28</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing Instructions, Creating Graphics and Infographics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Q:</strong> Graphics Instructions and Usability Test (DUE: 2/27) Infographic (DUE: 3/1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7: 3/1-3/7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intercultural Communication, Usability Testing and Analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>DB:</strong> Intercultural Communication in the age of COVID-19 Usability Test Letter and Dissemination (DUE: 3/5)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Week 8: 3/8-3/12**                       | **Coding and Web Text, Archiving and Lifecycle of a Text**                         | **Document Conversion into Web Text** (DUE: 3/21) **Tech Connect + Reflect #2** (DUE: 3/21)
<p>| <strong>SPRING BREAK: 3/13-3/21</strong>                |                                                                                     |                                                                                             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9: 3/22-3/28</th>
<th>Class Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings/Resources</th>
<th>Activities and Assessments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 13: 4/19-4/25</td>
<td>Developing a Presentation</td>
<td>TC: chp. 21 Links: Access all links through the “Week 14” folder on BB</td>
<td>Presentation Outline (DUE: 5/2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14: 4/26-5/2</td>
<td>Collaboration Week</td>
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<td>Presentation (DUE: 5/6) Tech Connect + Reflect #3 (DUE: 5/6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINALS WEEK: 5/10-5/14</td>
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