

TECHNICAL WRITING

RWS 3359 Course Syllabus

COURSE INFO: CRN 14655 // Fall 2020

INSTRUCTOR INFO: Mr. Lohani // slohani@miners.utep.edu

OFFICE INFO: Tuesday 12:00pm – 3:00pm // Blackboard Collaborate

This course introduces you to the principles and methods of technical writing and provides you with the skills to improve your ability to communicate through a variety of technical documents and media. Together, we will examine (analyze) a number of writing and design principles and practice (produce) a variety of technical genres. Successful completion of this course will improve your ability to:

- Analyze the rhetorical situation and define the users and/or audience as well as tasks that the information must support;
- Apply rhetorical principles to plan and design effective technical documents for diverse media;
- Direct, manage, and monitor the publication cycle of small- and large-scale texts, such as articles, manuals, and websites;
- Compose content appropriate for the users and genres, revise and edit written work for accuracy, clarity, coherence, and appropriateness, and document resources as defined by a specific field;
- Apply technological and visual rhetorical skills (e.g., document design, graphics, computer documentation, electronic editing, and content management applications) in the composing process and publish, deliver, and archive as required; and
- Work critically and collaboratively to complete projects.

1.1 COURSE INTERFACE & SYLLABUS

This course will use Blackboard as the primary online interface. In addition to posting and course communication, Blackboard will also serve as a private and secure space for students to access up-to-date grades. If you need help working with Blackboard, please seek help at one of the University's computer labs.

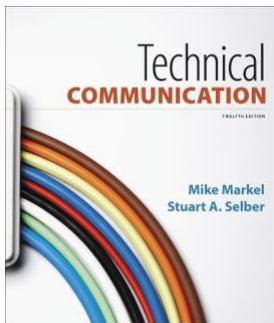
This syllabus is available on Blackboard. **While this syllabus is a binding document, portions, such as the course calendar, are subject to change by written notice. A current draft of the syllabus and calendar will always be available on Blackboard. Any modifications to the syllabus will be announced on Blackboard, as well.**

1.2 ATTENDANCE

Logging in regularly is a must for an online course. I recommend logging in at least once per day as there may be updates. Since you signed up for an online course, it is assumed you have internet access. Missing more than three weeks' worth of postings will result in automatic failure of the course, regardless of your progress on major assignments. Students who do not log on or post to Blackboard by the end of Week Three will be dropped from the course.

1.3 REQUIRED TEXT

This course will use Markel's *Technical Communication* (12th edition) as the guiding textbook. All assignments and reading will be listed in the course calendar. You will need the textbook for the third week of classes. Please plan for shipping times if ordering online as no extensions or exceptions will be made if you do not have a textbook by the third week.



Markel, M. (2018). *Technical Communication* (12th ed.) Bedford/St. Martin's: Boston, MA.

ISBN: 978-1319058616

[Link to text on Amazon.com](#)

1.4 ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS

Assignments sheets will be posted to Blackboard before the class in which the assignment is introduced. All assignments are to be submitted via the Blackboard "assignments" section by midnight of the due date (see course calendar). **All assignments are required to be submitted in PDF formats unless otherwise noted.**

This course works on 1,000 point scale and final grades will be determined using the scale below. Grades will be posted to Blackboard. Please communicate with me if you wish to discuss your grades.

A=900-1,000 points

B=800-899 points

C=700-799 points

D=600-699 points

F=599 or below

This course's assignments and their associated point value are as follows:

Participation (Discussion Board Posts/Activities

150

Chapter Responses	200
Website Analysis Report	100
Instructions Project Proposal	100
Instructions Project	150
Final Project Proposal	100
Final Project	150
Course Assessment Memo	50

1.5 COMPOSITIONS

Your written work is a reflection of your capabilities and efforts and comprises the majority of your final grade. You are therefore expected to produce high-quality, sophisticated documents. A part of that quality is the appearance of your work. Neatness, visual appeal, and mechanical and grammatical correctness are important, although they do not, alone, guarantee a well-made text (or a good grade). Your written documents should have appropriate margins, spacing, pagination, and formatting. Your productions in electronic and other media should be well-designed. In short: **take pride in your writing and aim to produce high quality documents.**

1.6 ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

1.6.1 PARTICIPATION (DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS/ACTIVITIES) - 150 POINTS

You must post to the discussion board by the dates indicated in the modules. Discussion board posts are formal, electronic writing assignments, so you do need to attend to sentence and paragraph construction as well as to spelling and grammar. In addition, you will need to format your writing for the online environment by writing multiple, short paragraphs. A good rule of thumb is to keep your paragraphs under five sentences or under seven lines long.

In addition, discussion board posts ask you to either respond to a formal prompt or to find an issue in the reading that interests you and to critically comment on it and to discuss it with your peers. Posts should be between 250-300 words.

1.6.2 CHAPTER REPOSES - 200 POINTS

For each assigned chapter, you are required to post a response to the chapter. You will be prompted to post these responses in each module when they are required. These chapter responses help to ensure that you are fully engaged with the text and also help you internalize the material which we are embarking upon.

For each assigned chapter, unless otherwise indicated, you must create a two-part response:

1. Summarize the chapter and its key points in about 150 words, and
2. Critically reflect upon the chapter in about 150 words. Consider: Was this chapter useful to your career? Academic endeavors? Life? How so? If not, why not? Etc.

These responses are due at the end of the week, Saturday at 11:59 p.m. of each respective week.

1.6.4 OTHER COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The rest of the course assignments will be explained and discussed at length as the course progresses. You will be given assignment sheets for each assignment as the assignment approaches and the topics are discussed.

1.7 SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Submit assignments to the “Assignments” link in Blackboard. There will also be links to submit your assignments under the respective week’s module. Please make sure to upload your assignments in PDF file format.

1.8 LATE WORK/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Late work is not accepted. Additionally, **I will not grade any assignments submitted via email.** You must submit all assignments to the appropriate section on Blackboard. Emailing an assignment is never an option.

1.9 NETIQUETTE

Since this is an online course, it is important that you familiarize yourself with netiquette--or online etiquette. Please review “[The Core Rules of Netiquette](#)” by Virginia Shea.

We will be talking about audience a lot in this course and I want you to keep in mind that you’re speaking to a professional audience. Additionally, this is a professional writing course and you should take this into account in all writing you do for this course (postings, responses, assignments, and even emails). When you email me, this is how it should be formatted:

Dear Mr. Lohani:

Write the contents of your email here. Make sure you have proofread for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Do not use IM language (“2” for “to,” “u” for “you,” etc.).

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Course & CRN

Please make sure you are emailing the correct email address slohani@miners.utep.edu).

1.10 COURSE POLICIES

Please refer to the following policies for this course. If you have any questions, please send me an email and I will be happy to help.

- UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER (UWC): I encourage you to make use of the UWC during the planning, drafting, and/or revising phases of writing any assignment in this class. The trained writing consultants can help give you a fresh perspective on ideas and help you with things like correctness, formatting, etc. The UWC is located on the main floor of the library, to the right of the elevators and computer lab. For further information on how the writing center will operate in the fall: <https://www.utep.edu/uwc/>
- RESOLVING ISSUES: It is your responsibility to manage your workload, complete all assignments, and stay on top of your grades. It is also your responsibility to communicate with me to discuss questions/concerns. The earlier you contact me with questions/concerns, the better we can deal with them.

PLAGIARISM is an issue I take very seriously. An act of plagiarism (or other form of academic dishonesty) will result in an 'F' for the course, and may include other University disciplinary action, such as suspension or expulsion. You should become familiar with the ethical guidelines for conduct spelled out in the Student Affairs section of the [Handbook for Operating Procedures](#). Additionally, please be aware that you may not submit work for this class that was produced for another class. You must produce your own original work in this class and appropriately identify any portion of your work

- which is collaborative with others, borrowed from others, or which is your own work from other contexts. Always cite your information. If you have doubts as to whether or not you are using your own or others' work legally and ethically, ask me. Follow this primary principle: Be upfront and honest.
- ADA: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you suspect that you have a disability and need accommodation, please contact The Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) at (915)747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu. The CASS office is located in Room 106, Union East. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor with any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.

COURSE CALENDAR			
<i>These dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.</i>			
Week	Dates	Agenda/Topic	Weekly Readings/Assignments

1	08/24 to 08/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the Course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Course Syllabus • Read "The Nature of an Online Course" • Buy your book
2	08/31 to 09/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Technical Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read "Intro to Technical Communication" Slideshow
3	09/07 to 09/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and Designing Technical Documents and Websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 3: Writing Technical Documents • Read Chapter 11: Designing Print and Online Documents
4	09/14 to 09/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 17: Writing Informational Reports • Website Analysis Report Due
5	09/21 to 09/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Proposals and Correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 14: Corresponding in Print and Online • Read Chapter 16: Writing Proposals
6	09/28 to 10/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Effective Sentences & Documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 10: Writing Correct and Effective Sentences • Instructions Project Proposal Due
7	10/05 to 10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Instructions & Creating Graphics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 12: Creating Graphics • Read Chapter 20: Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions
8	10/12 to 10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching Your Subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 6: Researching Your Subject
9	10/19 to 10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing & Editing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 13: Evaluating and Testing Technical Documents • Instructions Project Due
10	10/26 to 11/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating Persuasively & Audience/Purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 8: Communicating Persuasively • Read Chapter 5: Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose

11	11/02 to 11/08	• Oral Presentations	• Read Chapter 21: Making Oral Presentations
12	11/09 to 11/15	• The Final Project	• Final Project Proposal Due
13	11/16 to 11/22	• Documenting Your Sources	• See module on Blackboard
14	11/23 to 11/29	• Organizing Your Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 4: Writing Collaboratively • Read Chapter 7: Organizing Your Information
15	11/30 to 12/06	• Writing Memos & Writing Collaboratively	• Final Project Due
16	12/07 to 12/13	• Finals Week	• Course Assessment Memo Due