Texas A&M University – Texarkana

English 350: Technical Writing

Course Syllabus

Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Corrine Hinton

Meeting Time: MW, 3:00-4:15pm
E-mail Address: Corrine.Hinton@TAMUT.edu
Phone Number: 903.223.3124
Location: UC 242
Office: UC 300B
Office Hours: MW 1-3pm
T 3-4pm; or by appointment

COURSE NUMBER: ENG 350.001

CREDITS: 3SCH
COURSE TITLE: Technical Writing

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course emphasizes the principles of composition, document design, and rhetoric applied to primary genres within scientific, technical, and professional writing.

PREREQUISITES:
Lvl UG ENGL 1301 Min Grade C or Lvl UG ENGL 1401 Min Grade C and Lvl ENGL 1302 Min Grade C or Lvl UG ENGL 1402 Min Grade C

REQUIRED TEXT:
Technical Communication Today, 4th edition (Pearson/Longman, 2012) by Richard Johnson-Sheehan (ISBN 9780321846235)

RECOMMENDED:
An APA style manual (6th edition)

E-MAIL ACCOUNT:
Upon application to Texas A&M University-Texarkana, an individual will be assigned an A&M-Texarkana e-mail account. This e-mail account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university e-mail account and is expected to check the official A&M-Texarkana e-mail account on a frequent and consistent basis. Faculty and students are required to utilize the university e-mail account when communicating about coursework.

STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES:
Upon successful completion of ENG 350, students will be able to

1. Understand and demonstrate composing processes through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation as evidenced in satisfactory completion of all the written, visual, web-based, and oral discourses to be submitted in this course.
2. Analyze audiences and learn how to fulfill a specific rhetorical purpose by adapting writing and document design principles (platform, style, tone, graphics, page design) for particular audiences.

3. Identify and implement appropriate research methods for each communicative task.
4. Create various products most frequently used in scientific and technical communication.
5. Understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development of technical communication tasks as evidenced in the satisfactory completion of all written, visual, web-based, and oral discourses to be submitted in this course.
6. Apply the conventions of standard American English in all written, visual, web-based, and oral discourses to be submitted in this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Produce technical and professional communication that demonstrates an awareness of audience, genre expectations, rhetorical situation, and edited professional communication through both individual and collaborative writing experiences.
2. Understand and apply concepts in visual rhetoric to the task of document design.
3. Create and integrate graphics appropriately for a rhetorical situation.
4. Practice revising and editing techniques for clarity, conciseness, usability, and correct use of language.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Methods of instruction in this course seek to develop students' analytical and critical thinking skills and to refine their skills in producing effective technical communication. To that end, the course instruction includes lecture, discussion, and in-class research and production activities.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

To pass this course, students ***must complete major assignments*** (items II through VIII) as listed below, including the final exam.

I. Reading Responses (15 @ 15 points each) = **225 points**

Students are required to submit fifteen reading responses connected to the weekly assigned readings. These responses should include ***both*** a summary of the reading (in the author's own words) and an analysis of the material (e.g. anticipated application of the principles expressed or discussion of the value of the material). Responses should be typed, double-spaced, and at least 300 words.

II. Technical Description Report = 150 points

Students are required to complete a Technical Description document on a component of their choice (instructor approval required). This report should include the integration of at least one graphic (with explanation). ***The final Technical Description report must be submitted to TurnItIn.com no later than 11:59pm the evening prior to its in-class due date.***

III. Instructional Analysis & Presentation = 200 points

Students are required to complete a thorough user analysis of a set of instructions of their choice (within limitations, as discussed in the project prompt to be provided separately) or using one provided by the instructor employing the principles of instructions from the textbook and class discussions. Students will also be required to present their analyses to the rest of the class. ***The final Instructional Analysis report must be submitted to TurnItIn.com no later than 11:59pm the evening prior to its in-class due date.***

IV. Collaborative Proposal Project = 300 points

Working in a team consisting of no more than three total students, students will complete a collaborative proposal project consisting of both a written and oral presentation of the team's proposal. Students will be evaluated in two ways: individual accomplishment and team effort. A separate project prompt will be provided to students detailing the terms of the project. ***The final proposal must be submitted to TurnItIn.com no later than 11:59pm the evening prior to its in-class due date.***

V. Activity Report = 200 points

Students are required to write an activity report (specifically, a white paper) on an organization, program, product, or related topic of their choice (with instructor approval). The white paper should employ a user-friendly organization and integrate graphics when appropriate. ***The final activity report must be submitted to TurnItIn.com no later than 11:59pm the evening prior to its in-class due date.***

VI. Analytical Report & Poster Presentation = 300 points

Students are required to design a research study, employ it, and write an analytical report detailing the findings of that study. In conjunction, students must also design a poster highlighting the IMRaD components of that study and report. Students will present their posters at the Interdisciplinary Student Poster Session on Friday, November 21 (4-7pm) and should ensure their availability. ***The final analytical report must be submitted to TurnItIn.com no later than 11:59pm the evening prior to its in-class due date.***

VII. Website Design = 200 points

Students are required to design and launch a website adhering to principles of web design as presented in the text and in class discussions. Additional details on this project will be provided later in the semester.

VIII. Expository Paper: Principles of Technical Communication = 100 points

Students are required to submit an expository essay detailing the basic principles of technical communication as they understand them based on classroom lectures, activities, and course readings. Each student is expected to integrate secondary resources into the final product, referencing all evidence using the appropriate documentation style. This essay will be written in-class as a final exam.

IX. Portfolio - 225 points

Students will keep all course materials in a folder. Organize the folder's contents using the following sections: syllabus, response papers, notes/handouts, and each of your evaluated projects, papers, and presentations (website not included). For your collaborative project, ensure each group member has a copy of the project and the instructor evaluation. A progress statement (explaining what improvements in personal writing have been made throughout the semester) will serve as the portfolio's introduction. This statement must range between 500 and 1,000 words in length. Submit this collection of papers to the instructor for a grade on the final day of class.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS & POINTS AVAILABLE

Reading Responses	225 points
Description & Specs project	150 points
Instructional Analysis & presentation	200 points
Collaborative Proposal project	300 points

Activity Report	200 points
Analytical Report & Poster presentation	300 points
Website	200 points
In-class final exam	100 points
Portfolio	225 points

TOTAL POINTS: 1900

Grading Scale:
1700-1900 points = A
1510-1699 points = B
1320-1509 points = C
1130-1319 points = D
940-1129 points = F

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity:
Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and/or undocumented use of materials from any source, constitute academic dishonesty. **Any submitted assignments discovered to have violated academic integrity will receive a zero (no exceptions) and may be grounds for a grade of "F" in the course and/or further disciplinary actions.** For additional information see the university catalog.

Disability Accommodations:
Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Texarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

Attendance Policy:
A strict attendance policy is in force in this class and for good reason. Class attendance includes coming to class on time. Students more than 10 minutes late will be counted tardy. For every three tardies, students will receive one absence. If students miss more than three days, they seriously endanger their ability to pass this course.

Homework will be collected ***at the beginning*** of each class meeting. You must attend the full class period to submit homework due. You may not send it with another student, email it to me in lieu of a hardcopy, or submit it at the beginning of class and then leave. Participation means interaction with other students and the instructor, not just presence in class. Class comments will reflect reading and honest consideration of the viewpoints of the other students. Students are expected to deal with one another and the instructor in a professional, courteous manner.

There will be **no cell phone use during class time**. If you have an emergency and are expecting a phone call, notify your professor before class begins, set your phone to vibrate, then get up and leave the room to talk on your phone.

Extra Credit:
If you utilize the Student Success Center and receive feedback from a tutor on your major projects or papers (items II through VI above) at least 3 days prior to the assignment due date, and you include a

complete proof sheet with your final project, you will receive 10 extra credit points toward that assignment. (Maximum of 50 points)

This year, the university has several events tied together under a common theme: Environmental Issues. Throughout the semester, there will be speakers on campus, community service projects, faculty Super Lectures, and other events. If you attend and/or participate in one of these events and complete a two-page (single-spaced) white paper summarizing the event/activity, its importance regionally, nationally, and/or globally, and what you learned from the event/activity, you will be eligible for 50 extra credit points that will be tacked on to your end of the semester point total. There is a 150 point maximum accumulation. *The eligible events are as follows*: "The Future of Water in Texas" symposium on September 30, Dr. Nick Norwood's poetry reading on October 6, Dr. Richard Primack's talk on October 22, Will Allen's talk on November 3, iServe week Nov. 17-21, and either of the two Super Lectures (dates and speakers TBD).

Drop Policy

Effective beginning Summer 2014. Beginning with the first class day of the semester, faculty should report to the Registrar's Office via the preliminary class roster and/or email communication, by a date established by the Registrar's Office, any student who is not attending their class or who has not logged into Blackboard for an online class.

Faculty members shall automatically initiate an administrative drop for any student who has not been in attendance (face to face class) or has not reported in (web or web enhanced class) by the due date of the preliminary class roster as established by the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office will notify students by certified mail and/or email that the instructor has initiated the drop process and will instruct them to contact the instructor immediately. If the instructor does not rescind the request in writing within seven (7) days of documentable receipt of the notification, the Registrar's Office will drop the student from the class. Faculty who fail to submit an administrative drop by the established deadline, should record the grade earned by the student at the end of the semester. Faculty submitting a grade of F for a student will be required to enter the last date of attendance during the grading cycle. Subsequent to the census date final roster, all drops during the semester must be *student initiated*.

Students may find the drop/withdraw form on the "**Dropping/Withdraw a Class**" page of the **Registrar** Web site. Any student who is registered in a developmental education course and fails to attend that course will be administratively dropped/withdrawn from ***all*** university courses.

Drop/Withdraw deadlines for the Fall 2014 semester		
Session	**Drop without a grade**	**Last day drop/withdraw**
Full Term (16 week)	Wednesday, September 10	Friday, November 14
1st 8 week	September 2	October 9
2nd 8 week	October 27	November 21

COURSE CALENDAR, FALL 2014

The instructor reserves the right to alter the course calendar in any way deemed appropriate based upon the needs of the course and its students. Students will be notified of any changes to this calendar.

WEEK 1: Welcome to Technical Writing

Monday, August 25

- Instructor, student, and course introductions
- Syllabus review

Homework

- Review syllabus and bring any questions to class on Wednesday
- Read Chapter 1, "Communicating in the Technical Workplace" (pp. 1-16)

Wednesday, August 27

- Lecture & discussion: What is technical communication?

Homework

- Read Chapter 6, "Technical Descriptions and Specifications" (pp. 132-155)
- Complete Reading Response 1

WEEK 2: Descriptions and Specifications

Monday, September 1

NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

Wednesday, September 3

- **Reading Response 1 due**
- Discussion: Descriptions and Specifications
- Small group activity
- Introduction to Technical Description Project

Homework

- Read Chapter 7, "Instructions and Documentation" (pp. 165-180)
- Complete Reading Response 2

WEEK 3: Instructions & Instructional Analyses

Monday, September 8

- **Reading Response 2 due**
- Discussion: Understanding instructions
- Introduce Instructional Analysis project

Homework
- Read Chapter 7, "Instructions and Documentation" (pp. 181-201)
- Complete Reading Response 3

Wednesday, September 10
- **Reading Response 3 due**
- Analyzing instructions
- Small group activity

Homework
- Read Chapter 2, "Readers and Contexts of Use" (pp. 19-38)
- Read Chapter 21, "Preparing and Giving Presentations" (pp. 573-581)
- **Finalize Technical Description project (e-version due to TurnItIn.com by 11:59pm on Sunday; hardcopy due in class on Monday)**

WEEK 4: Getting Started: Audience Analysis & Project Planning

Monday, September 15
- **Technical Description project due**
- Audience Analysis
- Activity

Homework
- Read Chapter 21, "Preparing and Giving Presentations" (pp. 582-593)
- Read Chapter 12, "Strategic Planning, Being Creative" (pp. 352-363)
- Complete Reading Response 4

Wednesday, September 17
- **Reading Response 4 due**
- Discussion: Project Planning
- Giving Presentations
- Sign up for presentation slots

Homework
- Read Chapter 3, "Working in Teams" (pp. 44-65)
- Read Chapter 21, "Preparing and Giving Presentations" (pp. 594-608)
- **Finalize Instructional Analysis project and Presentation (e-version due to TurnItIn.com by 11:59pm on Sunday; hardcopy due in class on Monday)**

WEEK 5: Presentations & Collaborating

Monday, September 22
- **Instructional Analysis project and presentation due**
- Introduce Collaborative Proposal project

- Presentations

Homework
- Read Chapter 8, "Proposals" (pp. 205-214)
- Complete Reading Response 5
- Set up a project planning meeting with your CP team members, assign tasks, and set up a time line

Wednesday, September 24
- **Reading Response 5 due**
- Presentations
- Lecture: Proposals, Part I

Homework
- Read Chapter 8, "Proposals" (pp. 214-234)
- Start working on your CPs

WEEK 6: Proposals

Monday, September 29
- Lecture: Proposals, Part II

Homework
- Read Chapter 13, "Persuading Others" (pp. 366-382)
- Complete Reading Response 6
- Continue working on your Collaborative Proposal projects

Wednesday, October 1
- **Reading Response 6 due**
- Group in-class work day

Homework
- Read Chapter 16, "Organizing and Drafting" (pp. 424-451)
- Start finalizing your Collaborative Proposals and begin working on presentations

WEEK 7: Finalizing Collaborative Proposal Projects & Presentations

Monday, October 6
- Applying organizational principles to writing proposals
- Final CP breakouts
- Sign up for presentation slots

Homework
- Read Chapter 17, "Using Plan and Persuasive Style" (pp. 454-478)
- Complete Reading Response 7

- **Finalize your proposal and presentation (e-version due to TurnItIn.com by 11:59pm Tuesday; hardcopy due in class on Wednesday)**

Wednesday, October 8

- **Reading Response 7 due**
- **Collaborative Proposal and presentation due**
- Presentations

Homework

- Read Chapter 9, "Activity Reports" (pp. 246-266)

WEEK 8: Activity Reports & Document Design

Monday, October 13

- Presentations, cont.
- Introduction to Activity Report

Homework

- Read Chapter 18, "Designing Documents and Interfaces" (pp. 481-499)
- Complete Reading Response 8
- Choose topic for activity report and bring Wednesday; project planning

Wednesday, October 15

- **Reading Response 8 due**
- Discussion: Activity Reports
- Topic review for Activity reports
- Principles of document design

Homework

- Read Chapter 18, "Designing Documents and Interfaces" (pp. 500-516)
- Start researching for Activity Report

WEEK 9: Document Design & Researching

Monday, October 20

- Document Design
- Small group design activity

Homework

- Read Chapter 14, "Researching & Research Methods" (pp. 385-399)
- Complete Reading Response 9
- Finalize research for Activity Report & start drafting

Wednesday, October 22

- **Reading Response 9 due**
- Gathering Primary Source data – Empirical studies

Homework

- Read Chapter 10, "Analytical Reports" (pp. 269-285)
- Read Chapter 15, "Documenting Sources" (pp. 413-415)
- Review Appendix C, "APA Documentation Style" (pp. A25-A30)
- Continue drafting Activity Report

WEEK 10: Analytical Reports

Monday, October 27

- Introduction to Analytical Report project & poster
- APA Style: Document Formatting & Style

Homework

- Read Chapter 10, "Analytical Reports" (pp. 286-310)
- Complete Reading Response 10
- Finish drafting Activity Report
- Start thinking of a research question for analytical report

Wednesday, October 29

- **Reading Response 10 due**
- Discussion: Analytical Reports
- APA Style: In-text Citations & References page

Homework

- Read Chapter 19, "Creating and Using Graphics" (pp. 522-531)
- **Finalize Activity report (e-version due to TurnItIn.com by 11:59pm on Sunday; hardcopy due in class on Monday)**
- Project planning: Analytical Report

WEEK 11: Posters & Graphics

Monday, November 3

- Activity Report due
- Designing and presenting effective research posters

Homework

- Read Chapter 19, "Creating and Using Graphics" (pp. 532-547)
- Complete Reading Response 11
- Start working on Analytical Report

Wednesday, November 5

- **Reading Response 11 due**
- Graphics discussion

Homework

- Read Chapter 4, "Ethics in the Technical Workplace" (pp. 68-90)
- Read Chapter 20, "Revising and Editing for Usability" (pp. 551-561)
- Research for your analytical report should be completed by now

WEEK 12: Ethics & Revising

Monday, November 10

- Discussion: Ethics
- Ethics group activity

Homework

- Read Chapter 20, "Revising and Editing for Usability" (pp. 562-570)
- Complete Reading Response 12

Wednesday, November 12

- **Reading Response 12 due**
- Revising and Editing for Usability
- Revising activity

Homework

- Read Chapter 22, "Designing Websites" (pp. 611-625)
- Continue working on Analytical Report

WEEK 13: Website Design

Monday, November 17

- **Analytical Report & Poster due**
- Introduction to Website project
- Poster Gallery

Homework

- Read Chapter 22, "Designing Websites" (pp. 626-632)
- Complete Reading Response 13
- Finalize and polish Analytical Report & poster

Wednesday, November 19

- **Reading Response 13 due**
- Discussion: Website design principles

Homework
- Read Chapter 23, "Using Social Networking Tools" (pp. 635-644)
- Complete Reading Response 13
- Project planning: website
- **Finalize Analytical Report & poster (e-version due to TurnItIn.com by 11:59pm Sunday; in-class final due Monday) ****Poster presentation on Friday, November 21st at the Interdisciplinary Student Poster Session is REQUIRED**

WEEK 14: Website Construction

Monday, November 24
- **Analytical Report & Poster due**
- **Reading Response 13 due**
- In-class work day: website construction (meet in designated computer lab TBD)

Homework
- Continue working on website
- Read Chapter 11, "Starting Your Career" (pp. 314-330)
- Complete Reading Response 14

Wednesday, November 26
- **Reading Response 14 due**
- In-class work day: website construction (meet in computer lab)

Homework
- Finalize website (due Monday); be prepared to show class

WEEK 15: Finishing Up

Monday, December 1
- **Website due**
- Website presentations
- Portfolio expectations & rubric

Homework
- Read Chapter 11, "Starting Your Career" (pp. 331-348)
- Complete Reading Response 15

Wednesday, December 3
- **Reading Response 15 due**
- Introduction to In-class Final Essay exam

Homework

- Prepare portfolio (write progress statement)
- Prepare for in-class final exam (locate and bring 3 secondary sources to use as support)

FINALS WEEK (Dec. 8-10)

Scheduled finals block: Wednesday, December 10: 10:30am-12:30pm

- **Portfolio due**
- In-class final essay exam