

Technical and Professional Writing

Instructor

Ryan House

Email

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Office Location

Avery 483

Class Room:

Avery Hall 104

Office Hours

Tuesdays/Thursdays -
1:30-2:30

Catalogue Description:

402 [W, M] Technical and Professional Writing

Prereqs:

- English 101
- Junior standing.
- Research writing: defining, proposing, reporting progress, and presenting a final product; other professional writing needs.

Credit not granted for both English 402 and 403.

Required Text:

Technical Communication, 11th Ed. -- Markel, Mike

Additional materials as posted on Blackboard.

Course Overview

The course prepares students for producing texts outside the university. Approaching textual design from rhetorical principles, we will work to understand how thinking and writing function in various communities and in a variety of professional discourse situations—how writing is rhetorical. As such, the focus of this course is to study and practice the design and content choices that lead to effective communication in professional writing settings to multiple audiences.

Course Objectives

As part of the general education curriculum, English 402 engages writing as both a means of communicating and a way of making meaning in technical and professional texts. In doing so, the course focuses on the following objectives:

- Develop strategies for planning, drafting, and revising professional and technical documents.
- Engage with the role that visual communication plays in the reception of texts.
- Learn to define the rhetorical situation, and to identify and apply rhetorical strategies to texts.
- Engage ethically the obligations of writing in a diverse world.
- Respond to and evaluate the writing of others in a constructive manner.
- Learn to present ideas and information in a proficient and persuasive manner.



	At the end of this course, students should be able to perform the following:	Course topics that address this learning outcome:	Primary evaluation of this outcome:
Critical and Creative Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess, identify, and prioritize the needs of a particular writing situation and audience. Apply various organizational methods to information and determine which method of presentation communicates to the user most effectively. Analyze documentation needs and develop new methods of organization to match those needs. Assess their own work as well as the work of others, identify strategies for making a document more effective, and provide feedback constructively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining communications objectives Planning persuasive strategies Planning for usability Conducting Reader-Centered Research 	Informal writings, workshops, formal writing assignments
Information Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand professional writing as an intermixing of industry, government, and public discourses that socially constructs the ideological assumptions that lead to changes in perception and value judgments. Combine elements of visual rhetoric with verbal content in order to address a rhetorical situation effectively. Analyze various professional writing genres (both print and multimedia) and consider how their stylistic constraints (and potentials) affect what can and cannot be represented in those documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using seven reader-centered organizational patterns Creating eleven types of graphics Drafting paragraphs, sections, and chapters Beginning a communication Ending a communication 	Informal writings, workshops, formal writing assignments
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine how purposes, audiences, contexts, and forms affect the writer's and reader's stances toward the content of a document and are able to consider how these elements interact in order to communicate effectively. Understand how readers use a document and are able to make a document's content accessible by leading a reader's eye with various formatting techniques. Use the conventions of Standard Written English effectively and translate among organizational and intercultural variations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing reader-centered pages and documents Creating reader-centered graphics Principles of graphic design Writing reader-centered letters and memos 	Informal writings, workshops, formal writing assignments
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how rhetorical effects, which are culturally active, extend beyond the individual and the workplace. Understand how professional communication literacies instantiate and maintain dominant ideologies and knowledge systems. Identify cultural differences, understand their effects on communication practices, and adapt content and form to address the globalization and localization of documents effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe reader's cultural characteristics Identify communication's stakeholders Determine readers' cultural expectations about what makes a communication usable 	Informal writings, workshops, formal writing assignments

Formal Writing Projects:

All of the writing activities and discussions we generate are designed to help you complete four formal assignments:

- A rhetorical analysis memo (15%),
- A job application packet (30%),
- A researched recommendation memo (30%)
- A project proposal and collaborative repurposing project (15%)

Plus:

- Professionalism and participation (10%)

For each major assignment, you will submit a draft for peer review and then revise for final submission. You will need to have completed all first drafts on time in order to submit final drafts for evaluation.

The assignment sequence was designed so that students would:

- *first*, recognize and analyze rhetorical choices in other's professional writing;
- *second*, construct a version of themselves through choices of rhetoric and design to effectively meet the needs of the purpose/audience,
- *thirdly*, conduct research in order to recommend suitable solutions to a defined problem,
- and *finally*, plan and coordinate a redesign of a research project with a group.

Workshops / Peer Review:

This class is built upon the idea that providing and receiving peer feedback are essential elements of writing and revision. All writing is done within or across communities and requires a back and forth exchange. For each workshop/peer activity, you must come to class with a draft for peer review and be prepared to participate in peer response.

In-Class Activities:

In response to readings and/or class discussion, I will ask you to complete a combination of writing activities: quizzes, group work, analyses of case studies, rhetorical exercises, etc. In each case, I will provide you with a specific question or prompt to get you started. These writing activities will allow you to try out and reflect on course content and rhetorical strategies and are imperative to meeting the course goals.

Group Meetings:

Because schedules rarely align in the outside world, some class days are designated as group meetings for the final project. It is vitally important to be present on those days, as your group is dependent on you to help produce the final product. Unfortunately, some absences are unavoidable. In instances such as these, you should take the initiative to contact your group as early as possible to make arrangements. Remember that your team members will evaluate your participation at the end of the project.

Evaluation:

Your final grade will be calculated according to the following percentages (and adjusted for absences and/or late and missing work):

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| • Formal Writing Assignments | 80% |
| • Writing Activities / In-class Assignments | 20% |

Attendance:

Due to the collaborative nature of this class, regular attendance is required. Students are afforded two (2) absences. Absences beyond the second will negatively impact the student's final grade for the course. Absences exceeding four (4) will result in a failing grade for the class. Keep this in mind: there are no "excused" absences (with the exception of school sponsored activities). If you miss, you miss.

Communications:

Students should maintain professionalism in any and all communications made to the instructor and/or fellow students. I reserve the right to request revision of any email that lacks a proper salutation, correct grammar and punctuation, professional tone, or proper signature before addressing any questions or concerns it may have posed.

IMPORTANT:

Per new WSU policy effective August 24, I will ONLY be able to respond to emails sent from your WSU email address. I will NOT be able to respond to emails sent from your personal email address as of the first day of fall semester. Effective the 24th, the IT Department will switch the “preferred” email address in your myWSU to your WSU email address.

Additional Information

Classroom and Campus Safety:

Classroom and campus safety are of paramount importance at Washington State University, and are the shared responsibility of the entire campus population. WSU urges students to follow the “Alert, Assess, Act” protocol for all types of emergencies and the “Run, Hide, Fight” response for an active shooter incident. Remain ALERT (through direct observation or emergency notification), ASSESS your specific situation, and ACT in the most appropriate way to assure your own safety (and the safety of others if you are able).

Please sign up for emergency alerts on your account at MyWSU. For more information on this subject, campus safety, and related topics, please view the FBI’s Run, Hide, Fight video and visit the WSU safety portal.

Plagiarism:

Academic Honesty is a serious issue at this University and in this course. While this is the correct place for you to experiment with conventions and citation, this is not the place for you to submit others’ work without attribution. Intentionally plagiarizing damages the trust upon which our classroom community is founded. Any student found in violation of the academic integrity policy may be given an “F” for the course and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. For additional information about WSU’s Academic Integrity policy/procedures please contact (360) 546-9573. <http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/plagiarism/main.html>

Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for this course. Late notification may mean that requested accommodations might not be available. Accommodations may take some time to implement so it is critical that you also contact Disability Services as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Services, located in the Student Resource Center on the Lower Level of Student Services Center (360) 546-9138. <http://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/student-resource-center/disability-services>

The Writing Center:

You are encouraged to visit the university Writing Center as you write your assignments for English 402. The Writing Center, located in VLIB 203, has open tutoring hours throughout the week.

Emergency Notification System

WSU has made an emergency notification system available for faculty, students and staff. Please register at myWSU with emergency contact information (cell, email, text, etc.). You may have been prompted to complete emergency contact information when registering for classes on RONet. In the event of a Building Evacuation, a map at each classroom entrance shows the evacuation point for each building. Please refer to it. Finally, in case of class cancellation campus-wide, please check local media, the WSU Vancouver web page and/or <http://www.flashalert.net/>. Individual class cancellations may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Each individual is expected to make the best decision for their personal circumstances, taking safety into account. The safety plan website is located here: <http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/safety-plan>.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Students are encouraged to refer to the academic calendar often to be aware of critical deadlines. <http://www.registrar.wsu.edu/Registrar/Apps/AcadCal.ASPX>.

Questions regarding the academic calendar can be directed to the Office of Student Affairs in VSSC 100 or call 360-546-9559.