WR227-06 Fall 2016

Technical Writing and Technical Communication: How to be a Better Communicator

Instructor: Debbie Killingsworth

CRN#: 20836

Location: Tuesday: IA 233

Thursday: NSH 108

Time: T/R 10-11:20am

Office: SSH 205

Office Hours: T/R 8:30-10am

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WELCOME TO WR227!

Technical communications happen all the time in the workplace and in the world. As writers, we transcribe, produce, translate, and interpret information. This class will give you experience in researching topics and communicating ideas precisely, clearly, and efficiently, an essential skill in technical communication. To view the course objectives for WR227:

<https://www.linnbenton.edu/current-students/student-support/instructional-departments/english/writing/course-outcome-guides/wr227-course-outcome-guide>

The products you will produce for this class will be directly relevant to your career and academic pursuits. The goal of this class is to help you become better communicators.

**As a result of taking WR 227, students will be able to**:

* *Analyze the rhetorical needs* (theneedsoftheiraudienceinrelationshiptotheassignment)forcollege--‐levelevidence--‐basedtechnicalwritingassignments.
* *Apply appropriate levels of critical thinking strategies* (knowledge,comprehension,application,analysis,synthesis,evaluation)intheirwrittenassignments,withanemphasisontechnical,evidence--‐basedanalysis,reporting,application,andevaluation.
* *Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization* (executivesummary,introduction,thesis,developmentandresearch--‐basedsupport,visualevidence,conclusion,etc.)intheirwrittenassignments,withanemphasisontechnicalevidence--‐basedanalysis,reporting,andevaluationassignments.
* *Locate, evaluate, and integrate high--‐quality information and opinion* appropriatefortechnicalevidence--‐basedassignments.
* *Craft sentences and paragraphs* thatcommunicatetheirideasclearlyandeffectivelyusingwords,sentencepatterns,andwritingconventionsatahighcollegeleveltomaketheirwritingclear,credible,andprecise.

**Texts:**

*Technical Communication*: Fourteenth Edition. John M. Lannon and Laura J. Gurak. ISBN 10: 0-13-411849-9.

The textbook is available for purchase (new or used) in the LBCC bookstore at both centers and in Albany. The book is also available for short--‐term loan on reserve at the LBCC library, the main campus Writing Center, and at the Learning Center at the Benton Center. It may also be available for brief use at the other satellite campuses.

NOTE about the text: This REQUIRED textbook is an essential part of our class and you will refer to it frequently as you develop and incorporate the book’s content into your writing projects. However, OWNING THE BOOK IS NOT REQUIRED. You may be able to share a text with a classmate, perhaps even sharing the cost. See me, if you need further assistance. The book discusses writing strategies for technical writing and provides helpful models for all writing assignments. The publisher has developed online resources (including study guides for each chapter which the instructor will share).

**Canvas (LMS):**

In this course, you will need to access the course shell in Canvas. You **MUST** self-enroll in the course once you share with them this URL: [**https://canvas.instructure.com/enroll/3W6AE7**](https://canvas.instructure.com/enroll/3W6AE7)**.** Alternatively, they can sign up at [**https://canvas.instructure.com/register**](https://canvas.instructure.com/register) and use the following join code: **3W6AE7.**

**Grading Categories (400 points total)**

• Technical Writing Projects (5) 300 pts

Employment Packet 20pts

Description 50pts

Proposal 50pts

Outline 30pts

Rough Draft 50pts

Report 100pts

• Forums (5) 50pts

• Quizzes (3)\* 30pts

• Class participation 20pts

An approximate weekly schedule is listed below, and is subject to change.

The grading scale follows the traditional 90% = A, 80% = B, 70% = C, etc. Assignments will earn points based on:

* quality and organization
* clarity and conciseness
* usefulness of design and graphics
* how it incorporates the course material
* timeliness of the assignment (assignments turned in after 24 hours will automatically be marked down one letter grade)

**Student Decorum Statement:** Because college coursework and professional correspondence require focused study and open exchange of ideas, the Department expects the classroom to be a place of courteous interaction, a forum for demonstrating mutual respect between teachers and students. Professional communication requires all of us to listen carefully to each other (whether we agree or not) and to state our positions with clarity and our disagreements with tact.

Standards for academic courtesy apply to group work, on-line interaction, and student-teacher interaction as well.

**Diversity statement**: LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws. Our differences are a source of strength and are an important part of education.

**Skills Needed to Be Successful in this Class**

* Technical skills: Word processing, e-mail, and use of the internet.
* Communicating skills: This class is designed to improve your writing and communication skills.
* Do you like to learn from reading and writing?

**Assignment Submission:** Please see the Weekly Schedule for these instructions.

Please read over the assignments for any given week before the class of that week.

All written submissions (except for any potential in-class writing) will be uploaded to our Canvas class shell. All report drafts must follow work-place conventions and standards of professionalism. Please keep a copy of every paper you submit.

Typically, forums and quizzes will be due before the next week of classes. That means that if a quiz is assigned in week one, that quiz must be completed on the Monday before the next class meeting.

**Emailing the instructor:** In your email, put your name, WR227, and the topic of the message in the subject line of the email (for example, Smith WR227 week 1 assignment). Also include a brief description of the reason you are writing in the message itself. This information will also help me identify the nature of your request and reply more quickly. Please allow 24 hours during business days (Monday through Friday) for a response. Messages sent without a signature and with text such as “wht up in class this wk” most likely won’t receive a response; in addition, e--‐mails without texts in the messages that are sent only with attachments will most likely end up in my spam filter. I usually respond, even with a simple “thanks” just to let you know that I received your message.

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken by a daily sign-in sheet. If you attend regularly, contribute to class discussion, and don’t distract from the learning environment, you will receive full attendance and participation credit. If you are absent due to illness or a verifiable emergency, you must contact me within 24 hours to make further arrangements.

**Late Work:** Our classroom standards reflect workplace standards; a due date is a deadline and you don’t miss deadlines without informing your supervisor of your progress on the report in advance. If you feel circumstances are working against you, you may make arrangements for an extension PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE. Late work will lose 10% automatically and may suffer additional penalties. If any late assignments are turned in after Week Nine, I cannot guarantee that I will be able to read them before the end of the term, and the assignment may result in earning zero credit for those assignments.

**Plagiarism:** Do your own work! Using someone else’s work as your own or using information or ideas without proper citations can lead to your failing the assignment or the class. Bibliographies

(Works Cited or References) and in-text citations are required whenever you use outside sources, including the Internet. Depending on the severity of the plagiarism, the student may be subject to administrative action. Ask if you are uncertain or have any questions.

**Course Activities and Practice:**

I. Participation: You will be asked to participate in in-class activities to practice concepts you will be learning. Your participation in these activities and your record of attendance will raise or lower your participation grade.

II. Assessments: Usability review workshops are a time for you to get helpful feedback from your colleagues, peers, and classmates. To complete this activity, you will bring drafts of assignments to class. These workshops are designed to develop your growing audience awareness, helping you understand not only how your writing sounds to others but also how it affects or fails to affect others.

III. Projects: Assignments are designed to gradually increase in difficulty and assigned length.

**Resources**

The Writing Center: While enrolled in Writing 227, you are encouraged to seek extra help at the

Writing Center located on the second floor of Willamette Hall, in the Learning Resource Center above the Library at the Albany campus, and on the first floor of the Benton Center in Corvallis.

If needed, they will also be able to direct you to the ESOL lab for additional support. Visit their website at https://www.linnbenton.edu/writing-center for hours and information. The Online Writing Lab is also available to submit writing electronically for feedback. Follow the link to the Writing Center homepage. You are encouraged to seek help early in the term. This is a free service to all LB students.

Computer Lab Resources: You may use either LRC 213 or Forum 204 at the Albany campus as a drop-in computer lab whenever classes are not scheduled and space is available.

Library Information: The LBCC library homepage can be found by following the links from:

<http://library.linnbenton.edu/home>. The site provides library hours, an online catalogue, as well as many helpful research databases.

Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab): While not exclusively, I will be using examples from the

Purdue OWL to ameliorate the material we cover in class. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

**LET’S WORK TOGETHER!** Developing technical writing skills for effective individual and teamwork means a great deal of thoughtful effort on your part. Your commitment will enhance your results in class and in your future employment. Email me or visit during office hours to discuss an assignment or your progress at any point in the term. I look forward to working with you this term. Let me know what I can do to make this a successful learning experience for you!

Students who have emergency medical information the instructor should know of, or who might need special arrangements in the event of an evacuation, or students with documented disabilities who have special needs, should make an appointment with the instructor no later than the first week of the term. If additional assistance is required, the student should contact LBCC’s Office of Disability Services at (541) 917-4789.

Students who need to talk to somebody can talk directly with me. If you are struggling with personal issues, please know there are people you can turn to: Contact the LBCC Career and

Counseling Center (541) 917-4780.

**Accessibility**

You should meet with your instructor during the first week of class if:

* you have a documented disability and need accommodations,
* your instructor needs to know medical information about you, or
* you need special arrangements in the event of an emergency.

If you believe you may need accommodation services please contact Center for Accessibility Resources, (541) 917-4789. If you have documented your disability, remember that you must make your request for accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources Online Services web page every term in order to receive accommodations. If you have a documented disability, I will help you in any way I can. Talk to me during the first week of class. If you think you might have a disability, but you are not sure, contact Disability Services, (541) 917-4789.

**Incompletes**

If you have completed approximately 80 percent of the course work by the end of the term but are unable, for reasons that are generally not your fault, to complete the rest, I will grant you an incomplete until you are later able to complete.

**LBCC Non-Discrimination Policy**

Everyone is welcome at LBCC, regardless of whether they are black, white, Latino, native, gay, straight, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, male, female, transgendered, married, single, disabled, a veteran, a non-English speaker, an immigrant, or any number of other categories not listed here. For the official nondiscrimination policy click here. What is more, LBCC sees our differences as a source of strength and an important part of education.

**APPROXIMATE WEEKLY SCHEDULE & THEMES:**

**Week 1 (Sept 27 / 29)**

Welcome to WR 227.   
  
This week you will familiarize yourself with the Canvas, learn about your classmates, and learn a bit about technical writing.

*Weekly To Do List:*

* Please read the syllabus and the following chapter: Introduction to Technical Communication (1), Meeting the Needs of Specific Audiences (2), Persuading Your Audience 3), and Teamwork and Global Considerations (5)
* Take the Week 1 Quiz. (Remember: complete all quizzes before the day of the next class.)
* Review the grading criteria for forum posts.
* Participate in the Career forum. Here you will answer some questions about yourself and how technical writing interfaces with your professional aspirations. (Remember: complete all forums before the day of the next class.)
* Respond to the Tech Report Ideas forum.

Note: Late forum posts and late quizzes will not receive credit.

**Week 2 (Oct 4 / 5)**  
  
Next we are going to study a very important kind of technical writing: resumes and cover letters.   
  
Note: We skip around in the book. This is typical of technical readers. Technical readers use books to get specific information they need.

*Weekly To Do List:*

* Read the following chapters: Email and Text Messages (14), Workplace Memos and Letters (15), and Resumes and Other Job-Search Materials (16), Oral Presentations and Video Conferencing (16).
* Complete the Resume / Job Search quiz.
* Do a google search to find at least 3 different formats for a typical resume in a job field in which you are interested.
* Complete the Resume Writing Forum.
* Find a posting for a job that you are interested in or are qualified for. Complete the Employment Packet Assignment by creating a resume and cover letter tailored to get you an interview for this position. Upload your work.

Note: Late forum posts and late quizzes will not receive credit.

**Week 3** **(Oct 11 / 13)**  
  
This week you will have a couple of tasks relating to employment writing and the final report.  
  
Weekly To Do List

* Read the following chapters: Oral Presentations and Video Conferencing (23), Blogs, Wikis, and Web Pages (24), and Social Media (25).
* Complete the Employment Experts forum. (To get credit for forums, they must be completed by the due date. Late submissions will not get credit.)
* Please complete the Video Forum. This is related to your report not to resume and cover letter writing.

If you would like to do a revision of your resume and cover letter (this is optional) email me at killind@linnbenton.edu by Sunday at midnight. Revisions must follow these rules:

* revisions must be accompanied by the original work
* copy and paste my comments into the file on the revised document
* highlight all changes in bold. (This file should be uploaded to Canvas. Under the original assignment. Canvas will keep multiple copies of the same document.)

Note: Late forums will not receive credit.

**Week 4 (Oct 18 / 20)**

Next you'll practice technical description. Descriptions are important part of scientific reports, instruction sets, and product descriptions.

Weekly To Do List

* Please read the following chapters: Designing Visual Information (12), Designing Pages and Documents (13), Technical Definitions (17), Technical Descriptions, Specifications, and Marketing Material (18), and Instructions and Procedures (19)
* Complete the Instruction/Description assignment and submit it here.

Remember that all visuals (that you did not yourself create) must be cited!

**Week 5 (Oct 25 / 27)**

Weekly To Do List:

* Please read the following chapter: Proposals (22)
* Read the sample proposal.
* Review the Proposal Grading Criteria.
* Decide if you want to work in a group. Use the Team Building Forum to find group members if you want to work in a group.
* Begin researching and writing your [proposal.](http://elearning.linnbenton.edu/mod/assign/view.php?id=152491)

There is no homework due this week. Use the time for research

**Week 6 (Nov 1 / 3)**

Weekly To Do List:

* Review the Proposal Grading Criteria.
* Finish and submit your proposal.
* Complete the Avoiding Plagiarism Test. This test is a learning tool. It does not have to be turned in. However, it is important that you get 100% on this test and understand the answers. A final report that contains plagiarism (even a single sentence borrowed without citation) will receive a score of zero.

Looking Ahead: If you want to revise your final report, you will have to complete it by the end of Week 8. If you submit your final report on the day it is officially due, you will not have time for a revision.

**Week 7 (Nov 8 / 10)**  
  
Now we come to the most important (and challenging) part of this course: the technical report. I like to think of a technical report as a research-paper-plus. You will do all the things you would do for a regular research paper like familiarize yourself with the topic, evaluate sources, and present your findings in clear and correct prose. However, when writing a technical report, you will include some other material such as:  
  
\* visuals (charts, graphs, photos, etc.)  
\* bullets or numbered lists  
\* headings  
\* colored text (to help guide the reader)  
\* a letter of transmittal  
\* table of contents  
\* appendix  
\* glossary  
\* abstract  
  
Weekly To Do List

* Read the following chapters: Organizing for Readers (10), Editing with a Professional Style and Tone (11), Formal Analytical Reports (21). \* Review all relevant readings from the textbook. Everything you have studied so far will be useful when writing your report.
* Complete the Chapter 10, 11, 22 quiz.
* Start writing your report. Continue researching if necessary.
* Complete the Outline assignment.

Note: Details of the report assignment are posted under Week 10.  
  
This is a big project, but it is manageable if you start early and do a little bit of work every day. Do not procrastinate!

**Week 8 (Nov 15 / 17)**

It is time to share your work. Post a complete rough draft in the rough draft forum. Hopefully, your draft is the very best it can be, but even if it's not perfect, post it. It is better to get feedback on imperfect work, than try to make the draft perfect and miss the opportunity to get input.

Weekly To Do List

* Keep working on your Report. I will provide samples on Canvas.
* Post your rough draft to the [rough draft forum](http://elearning.linnbenton.edu/mod/forum/view.php?f=5380) by midnight on Sunday. Please note, I will only comment on drafts if you specifically request my feedback. If you want my feedback, email me at [killind@linnbenton.edu](mailto:killind@linnbenton.edu) to request that I do so.

Note: If you want to revise your final report, you will have to complete it by the end of Week 8. If you submit your final report on the day it is officially due, you will not have time for a revision. 

Note: Late forum posts (including the rough draft) and late quizzes will not receive credit.

**Week 9 (Nov 22 / 24) No class on Nov. 24 – Happy Thanksgiving**

This week you will be helping other people refine their writing. This is an important skill for two reasons. One, many workplace writing projects are collaborative and thus peer review is important to the success of the project. Also, reviewing other people's work will make you a better writer because you will be better prepared to review your own work.

Weekly To Do List

* Keep working on your Report.

Note: Late forum posts and late quizzes will not receive credit.

**Week 10 (Nov 29 / Dec 1)**

You are almost done with your report.

Weekly To Do List:

* Go to last week's rough draft forum. Respond to at least two other posts by reading and thoughtfully commenting on the report. Be sure to mention at least three things the author did well and three things the author could improve upon. Write at least 500 words per response.
* Complete the Citation Quiz.

Note: Late forum posts and late quizzes will not receive credit.

**Finals (Dec 9 8-9:50)**

Weekly To Do List:

* Please post the final draft of your final Report no later than 9:50am.