

TECHNICAL WRITING: WRITING A RESOURCE

WR 227 | Sept 23 - Dec 9, 2018 | Forrest Johnson

COURSE INFO

T/R: 11:30-12:50

Benton Center 225

INSTRUCTOR INFO

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Office Hours: **Tue- 9:30-11:20 am**

Or by appt.

What will I learn?

WR 227 introduces students to the types of writing they will encounter in business, industry, the academic world, and government. It examines the rhetorical nature of writing and asks students to think critically about content, audience, argument, and structure. Students will learn how to effectively design documents, present instructions, create proposals, and produce technical reports.

Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the rhetorical needs (the needs of their audience in relationship to the assignment) for college-level evidence-based technical writing assignments.
- Apply appropriate levels of critical thinking strategies (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) in their written assignments, with an emphasis on technical, evidence-based analysis, reporting, application, and evaluation.
- Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization (executive summary, introduction, thesis, development and research-based support, visual evidence, conclusion, etc.) in their written assignments, with an emphasis on technical evidence-based analysis, reporting, and evaluation assignments.
- Locate, evaluate, and integrate high-quality information and opinion appropriate for technical evidence-based assignments.
- Craft sentences and paragraphs that communicate their ideas clearly and effectively using words, sentence patterns, and writing conventions at a high college level to make their writing clear, credible, and precise.

What is iFixit?

Though this class, you have the exciting opportunity to author peer-reviewed and published work for iFixit. In order to pass this class, you must be willing to do the following:

- 1. create content for iFixit (published under CC 4 license with your by-line)**
- 2. work with a group for a large portion of the semester**
- 3. turn in your portion of the assignments by the exact due date or receive a failing grade.**

If this seems too demanding, you might consider taking a different section of 227.

Is attendance required?

Your team is counting on your attendance and participation. You are allowed to be absent for 10% of the number of classes remaining on the day you join the class (2 classes if you start on the first day of class), and you will lose 5 points from your final grade for each additional absence. After a total of 7 absences you will fail the class.

Each class will begin promptly with 5-10 minutes of silent, prompted writing. If you arrive after the journal period has begun you will be counted tardy, and 2 tardies will count as an absence.

What are the classroom expectations?

Be kind and respectful toward everyone in the class (even if you don't like them). Be courteous to the instructor when communicating in class. If you must answer a phone call please do so out in the hall. Repeated or prolonged use of technology for extraneous tasks will result in being counted tardy or absent for the day.

How do I turn in assignments?

We will be using Canvas as our course LMS (Learning Management System) and you will submit all of your assignments there. You will also be submitting work to iFixit through your LBCC email address. The most up-to-date information regarding due dates and assignment expectations will be on Canvas.

How do you grade?

Earning A's and B's at the university level requires strong, consistent effort. **Keep in mind that while I don't administer exams, I use criteria based from the assigned readings to grade your assignments (we may or may not discuss it in class).** Be sure to make an appointment with me if you do not understand an assignment's grade. Here's a general idea of what makes up letter grades:

A (95%) = Writing is excellent: all the qualities of a B, plus the work demonstrates particularly thoughtful engagement.

B (85%) = Writing is good: clear, concise, and accurate; follows all of the individual requirements of the assignment well; demonstrates thoughtfulness and engagement.

C (75%) = Writing is satisfactory: mostly clear, concise; and accurate; follows the individual requirements of the assignment; not particularly thoughtful or engaged

D (65%) = Writing is deficient: is not clear, concise; and accurate; does not follow the individual requirements of the assignment; is disengaged and thoughtless.

What are the assignments?

iFixit (group)		Individual		
Charter & assessment form	20 pts	Journal	30 pts	
Proposal	20 pts	Proposal Assessment	20 pts	
Troubleshooting page	20 pts	Troubleshooting assessment	20 pts	
Device page	20 pts	Device page Assessment	20 pts	
Guides (5)	60 pts	Guides Assessment	30 pts	
Peer reviews	20 pts	Final	40 pts	
Total	160		160 pts	

Do I have to work in a group?

Yes. Technical writing is primarily collaborative in the workplace, so this class requires you to work as a part of a group. Your group will craft a charter stating what is expected of the members of the group, including a firing clause. If you get fired from a group, you will have to convince another group to hire you. If you are fired twice over the course of the term you will fail the course. You may also write a quitting clause into your charter, but you must be part of a group to receive credit for any assignment. Groups may not exceed 5 members. Directions for creating firing and quitting clauses will be provided as a part of the group charter assignment.

What are the assessments?

Your group will design an assessment form that each member of the group will fill out individually after the group completes each milestone. Directions for what information needs to be included in the assessment will be provided as a part of the group charter assignment.

Is there any extra credit?

I will add 5% to an assignment grade for visiting the writing zone.

Do you take late work?

No late assignments will be accepted—unless you have prior approval from me. You must notify me about time constraints and deadlines you might have a conflict with. Notification does not mean telling me in the hall before class starts; notification means an email or memo previous to the day the assignment is due stating the specific reasons why an extension is needed.

What is Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism?

Do your own work! Using someone else's work as your own or using information or ideas without proper citations (plagiarism) can lead to your failing the assignment or the class. Plagiarism is subject to disciplinary action as described in Student Rights and Responsibilities.

NOTE: Bibliographies (called "Works Cited" in MLA or References in APA) and in-text citations are required whenever you use outside sources, including the internet.

Penalties for plagiarism include failing the assignment, and in some cases failing the course.

What will we do for the iFixit Standard Project?

Students work in teams of 3-5 to write a complete, web-based service manual for a real device—either one provided by iFixit, or a device of their own choosing. The major project milestones are:

- **Proposal (Getting Started):** After creating an account, joining a team, and choosing a device, students write a project proposal that describes the scope of their project and provides specific details about the deliverables they will create in each subsequent milestone. **(20 pts)**
- **Troubleshooting Page (Milestone 1):** Students research the most common hardware failures that users experience with their device, and they use this research to write a troubleshooting wiki that helps users identify the underlying cause and then fix the problem. **(20 pts)**
- **Device Page (Milestone 2):** Students create a special wiki page that includes background and identification information as well as links to repair guides and the troubleshooting page. The device page is the central hub for all the repair resources for the device. **(20 pts)**
- **Guides (Milestone 3):** Students write a series of 5-8 guides, each showing how to replace one component of the device. Along the way, students work together to capture high-quality photos of each procedure, write detailed instructions, and format their guides for publication. **(60 pts)**
- **Peer Review/Usability Testing (Milestone 4):** Students hand off their reassembled device and completed manuals to another team for usability testing and feedback. **(20 pts)**

If students follow the instructions, they can expect to complete the Standard Project in roughly 25-30 hours of hands-on working time. Once published on iFixit, a student project gets an average of 3,000 public views within 6 months.

Tentative Schedule

Week	Milestone	Concepts	Readings	Deliverables
1	Getting Started	Joining a team Planning for group work Interpersonal communication Reading Initiative	Getting Started (iFixit) Team charter reading (TBD)	Device sign-out Team Charter & Assessment
2	Getting Started	Basic research Email Communication Incorporating feedback	Getting started (iFixit) Emailing collaborators (TBD)	Scavenger Hunt Proposal GS checklist
3	Milestone 1	Wiki Licensing Research	Milestone 1 Licensing articles (TBD) Look Before you Write (DTW)	License wksheet Library source list
4	Milestone 1	Accessibility Phrasing Grammar	Milestone 1 Accessibility coding (TBD) Grammar	Troubleshooting page Proposal assessment
5	Milestone 2	Visual Communication Technical mastery Peer Review	Milestone 2 Photograph the Process (DTW) How to take awesome photos Individual camera white balance instructions Peer Review reading (TBD)	photography plan Device photo Troubleshooting Peer Review Troubleshooting Assessment
6	Milestone 2	Clarity Conciseness Research and source lists	Milestone 2 Be Concise (DTW) Crystal Clarity (DTW) Research pt. 2 (TBD)	Device Page Concise and Clarity Forum
7	Milestone 3	Outlines Prerequisites	Milestone 3 Organize the content (DTW) Know your audience (DTW)	Prerequisite guide Device page Assessment
8	Milestone 3	Voice	Milestone 3 Communicate With Style (DTW)	Guides 2 and 3
9	Milestone 3	Communicating Important details markup	Milestone 3 Use Visuals (DTW) Legal Requirements (DTW)	Guides 4 and 5
10	Milestone 4	Peer Review Group evaluation	After you write (DTW) How to Publish (DTW)	All pages and guides finalized Guides Assessment
11				Final reflection Group evaluations Device Sign-in