

WR227, Technical Writing

("Clear and Effective Writing")
Winter 2019

About the Class:

This class teaches you to communicate in ways that will get you a job, earn good grades on four-year college papers, gain you admission to an important program, win approval of a project you conceived, or land other real-world rewards. This class also will make you feel overworked, frustrated, and possibly angry, because it will turn your long-held beliefs about writing upside down. Fortunately, despite the discomfort, I suspect you'll enjoy yourselves.

Instructor:

Brian B. Egan, WR227@ClarityCorvallis.com (or EganB@LinnBenton.edu), cell phone (541) 740-0540

Office hours: Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. in the Commons Cafeteria (NE corner)
Other days, times, and locations by arrangement – email, text, or call me!

Class Hours and Locations:

CRN 31469 Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 9:50 a.m. IA-219

Textbook:

I will loan you printed materials at no charge, and will direct you to web pages to read.

Requirements and Recommendations:

1. You must create formatted documents in Microsoft Word (free to LBCC students), LibreOffice Writer (also free from LibreOffice.org), Google Docs, or another full-featured word processor that can save/download to .doc/.docx/.odt file formats. If you don't know how to use such an application, you will need to learn quickly.
2. You must have a reliable email account, and must know how (or learn how) to attach files to an email message.
3. It is essential that you visit my Instructor Web Page at least every other day. You will find updates, new resources, corrections, etc. This is my only way to reach you outside of class! To view it, either: a.) browse directly at <http://tinyurl.com/wr227>, or b.) browse via the Instructor Websites link on the Faculty & Staff home page.
4. I very strongly suggest you exchange contact information with at least two classmates. Do this safely: exchange only LBCC emails, *not personal emails, addresses, or phone numbers*.
5. I strongly recommend that you also buy or borrow a book on grammar or find a good website that covers the basics (Google "basic English grammar").
6. To get full credit for the class, you are required to make a 3-5 minute presentation during Week 10. If this is a problem, talk to me during Week 1; chickening out at the last minute will cost serious points.

7. Attendance is essential for an effective learning experience (and a good grade).
8. Back up your WR227 work!

Approximate Course Schedule (undoubtedly will change slightly):

Week 1	Introduction, logistics, concepts; The Audience
Week 2	The Audience (cont.); email/memos, persuasion
Week 3	Persuasion (cont.); cover letters and business letters
Week 4	Cover letters (cont.); résumés
Week 5	Résumés (cont.); research tools, citation, avoiding plagiarism
Week 6	Organizing material, descriptions, reports
Week 7	Reports (cont.)
Week 8	Reports (cont.), proofreading, typography, illustrations, citations
Week 9	Presentation techniques, review
Week 10	Student presentations
Week 11	Final exam: Tuesday, March 19: 7:30 a.m. - 9:20 a.m. in IA-219.

Attendance, Reading Assignments, and Quizzes:

The majority of the material taught in this class is conveyed during the “lectures,” in-class discussions, and in-class consultation with your classmates. Your success in this class will depend on your regular attendance.

Points are awarded for attendance; they are not awarded for unexcused absences.

If you cannot get to a class or will be late, please let me know by email or text (just as you would notify your employer); make arrangements to get notes from a classmate (swap contact information with several classmates before you need it).

The reading assignments provide essential supplementary information. They are not optional. Three no-notice closed-book, closed-notes quizzes will be given during the term to ensure you keep up with your reading!

Writing Assignments:

Instruction sheets will be passed out in class and posted on the web as each assignment is made. (Sample assignments from the previous term are posted on the web site as a preview.) Due dates will be indicated on the instruction sheets.

There are a lot of tasks, and often several run concurrently. You are responsible for managing your time and deadlines! (Welcome to “real life”!)

Late Work:

Tardy assignments will be penalized 1/3 letter grade (e.g., B to B-, A- to B+) per day or part of a day that they are late. Assignments will not be accepted if one week or more late. Do not fall behind – you will not be able to catch up!

Assignment Weighting:

Task	Max. Pts.	~ Pct.
Demographic survey completion	5	1%
“Toast” (full credit if turned in, zero credit if missing)	10	2%
“My Position...” (final only, no draft)	10	2%
Persuasive Email draft and final	30	5%
Cover Letter worksheet (final only, no draft)	25	4%
Cover Letter draft and final	60	10%
Résumé draft and final	75	13%
Job Application Package Email (final only, no draft)	25	4%
Research Technical Report Topic Email (final only, no draft)	15	3%
Research Technical Report Outline (final only, no draft)	30	5%
Research Technical Report Introduction/Summary draft	20	3%
Research Technical Report Body draft	40	7%
Research Technical Report Front/Back Matter draft	10	2%
Research Technical Report final version	90	15%
Oral Presentation delivery	30	5%
Oral Presentation visuals	10	2%
Attendance at student presentations (5 pts each day)	10	2%
Three quizzes on reading and concepts (5 pts each)	15	3%
Attendance (2 points per class day)	40	7%
Final Exam	50	8%
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Total possible points	600	~100%

Most assignments require both a rough draft and a final version. The rough draft is usually worth one third of the assignment’s point value, and the final version is worth the remainder. This provides you a “safety net” as you create your first version. (Hint: Testing and revision are keys to good technical communication.)

Assignment Grading:

The emphasis of this course is to prepare you for the writing tasks that you will encounter in the workplace and/or a four-year college. Each assignment will be given a letter grade that reflects how I [subjectively and objectively] would react to the work if given to me by an employee or job applicant:

- A** Can be used for its intended purpose with very little or no further work. Well planned and thought out, well structured, no or very few grammatical or spelling errors, written for appropriate audience, clear, correct, and usable. Gives a very positive impression of the author. (It may not be perfect, but it’s very close.)
Bottom line: If this were your job application, I would immediately bring you in

for an interview. If it were your Technical Research Report, I would ask you if I could use it as an example for future classes.

- B** Suitable for internal workplace use, but would need some editing of structure, wording, grammar/spelling, and/or presentation to meet corporate or university standards. No errors in technical content. Bottom line: You are in the running for the job, but I'll wait a bit to see if someone better comes along.
- C** Adequate, but could not be used without significant editing. May have minor technical inconsistencies, clarity problems, and/or spelling or grammatical errors. Gives a questionable impression of the author. Bottom line: You are just another person in line; I'll get back to you if nobody else applies.
- D** Could not be used without major editing. Has structural problems, serious audience mismatch, and/or frequent spelling or grammatical errors; and/or does not meet one critical specification. Gives a distinctly negative impression of the author. Bottom line: I will not hire you, because it's clear you don't care enough even to do a good job for yourself, much less to work hard for me.
- F** Too many problems to be worth repairing in a professional environment. Does not meet two or more critical specifications, and/or writing is insufficient for instructor to understand intent, purpose, or content. Would be rejected out of hand by an employer or university. Bottom line: I will mutter under my breath for the rest of the day.
- X** No credit, because assignment was plagiarized (see below), was not turned in at all, or was more than one week late.

I may specify + or – on a grade, which will affect its point value.

Final Course Grade Scale:

≥90%	540 - 600 points	=	A
≥80%	480 - 539 points	=	B
≥70%	420 - 479 points	=	C
≥60%	360 - 419 points	=	D
Below 360 points		=	F

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is using someone else's words, pictures, ideas, concepts, etc. and representing them as your own work. It's illegal and unethical; it can get you fired, sued, thrown out of school, and/or discredited professionally. In this class, it will earn your assignment an instant "no credit" and I must report you to the school.

The most obvious example is when you copy material directly out of a book or a web site and paste it into your own document, and then fail to *cite* your source (i.e., mention that you did this and where you got the material from). If you copy material, you must enclose it in quotation marks and cite the source. A related example is using too much non-original material, even if it is properly attributed (like Pinterest).

Strangely, in this class, you may not re-use work you have written previously. This is an LBCC academic policy on "self-plagiarism". (And in the outside world, if you use material

you have written previously as a reference or source, you must cite it like any other referenced work.)

You must cite every use of outside material even if you reword it substantially (*paraphrase* it), because you are taking the knowledge as well as the words themselves.

But simply citing a source does not get you off the hook. In this class, I expect you to write original material, based on thorough research from reputable, cited sources. If more than 5% of any assignment comes directly from outside sources – quoted and cited, paraphrased and cited, rearranged or disguised even if cited, or just plain stolen – you will receive zero credit for that assignment. **The school requires me to report all plagiarism! You have been warned!**

For more information on plagiarism and fair use, visit the Using Research section of this excellent resource: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>.

Keys to Surviving any Technical Communication Project

- Read and understand the instructions completely and follow them explicitly.
- Know the purpose and intended use of what you are creating.
- Know your audience and write to their needs (and wants).
- Know your topic thoroughly, but research extensively anyway.
- Proofread and test your product mercilessly.

Keys to Surviving this WR227 Class

- Do everything in “Keys to Surviving any Technical Communication Project”.
- Come to every class.
- Pay attention to detail, and strive for perfection.
- Complete all the reading assignments in the textbook and elsewhere.
- Do not get behind in your assignments; it is impossible to catch up.
- Find a study partner; read and proofread each other’s work.
- Turn in all assignments even if incomplete; an F grade is better than an X grade.
- Do the best possible job on your first draft; you’ll get a good grade on it and the final draft will be close to a “free ride”.
- If you have questions, try to find the answers yourself, then ask a classmate or the Library or Writing Center, then ask me. Do not let questions go unanswered!

Request for Special Needs or Accommodations

LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in the class, please talk to your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you believe you may need accommodations but are not yet registered with CFAR, please [visit the CFAR Website \(https://www.linnbenton.edu/current-students/student-support/center-for-accessibility-resources/\)](https://www.linnbenton.edu/current-students/student-support/center-for-accessibility-resources/) for steps on how to apply for services, or call 541-917-4789.

LBCC Comprehensive Statement of Nondiscrimination

“LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws. For further information see Board Policy P1015 in our Board Policies and Administrative Rules. Title II, IX, & Section 504: Scott Rolen, CC-108, 541-917-4425; Lynne Cox, T-107B, 541-917-4806, LBCC, Albany, Oregon. To report: [linnbenton-advocate.symplicity.com/public report](http://linnbenton-advocate.symplicity.com/public-report).”

LBCC-wide WR 227 Technical Writing Course 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.