Course Syllabus: Technical Writing 227

Linn Benton Community College	Term: Spring 2023
CRN / Section	40789 / B01
Scheduled time/days: Wed. 12:30–2:20	Number of credits: 4
Classroom(s): Chinook Hall, 202	Modality: Hybrid
Instructor	Joshua Daniels
Email	danielj@linnbenton.edu
Phone / text	541-687-5969
Consultation	Friday, 12:30–2, and by appointment.
Hours	Consultation hours held over Zoom or phone.

Writing 227 Course prerequisites

WR 121 or equivalent with a grade of C or better

Required Texts

I will provide *all* of the readings for this course. You do **not** need to purchase any textbooks.

We will use PDF excerpts from several textbooks as well as material on the 'net. I will assign these as the term progresses.

Reference style guide: Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual* (2016 MLA Update, 7th edition. MacMillan Publishing, 2016. This text allows me to reference common issues in college writing so that you may learn about them and make corrections, as needed. Here's a link to a copy. We will use less than 10% of this text over the term.

Course Description for Writing 227

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

About this Writing 227

Writing 227 is taught by a variety of instructors at LBCC. While all sections share course outcomes, individual instructors may vary the type of assignments, class activities, readings, and other course elements in efforts to achieve the outcomes, though by different pathways.

This course takes a **"workplace simulation" approach** and immerses you in activities, materials, and reflective writing to help you meet the communications challenges of the professional workplace.

The emphasis on simulating the workplace, to the extent we can, means paying attention to "holistic performance," behavior, attitudes, and "meta-" skills, such as communications and cognition. In this course you will find us talking about how we communicate and thinking about how we think.

I strongly encourage you to orient yourself towards this class as you would towards employment in your chosen career. Thinking of yourself as "being at your job" will help you develop an appropriate mindset for this course, and help you transition from a "school orientation," which for many of us is passive, to an active and engaged professional and career mindset. This is a key mindset shift for success in the course (and your career).

Thinking as a person at work also means shifting from "doing what the teacher says," "good enough" standards, or "doing the minimum," to taking on the ownership, accountability, proactivity, and internal motivation required for career success.

Assignment & Grade Breakdown

Please see [Assignments Points & Grade Breakdown](#) for details and a course grade scale.

Required Apps and File Format

I create and share a Google folder with you at the start of the term. I refer to this as your "Portfolio." It contains several subfolders for your coursework. All work, except Discussion Board posts, go in the Portfolio.

This course relies heavily on Google Drive and Google Docs for capturing assigned work and peer collaboration. All final assignments, apart from Discussion Boards, must be turned in using Google Doc or MS Word format only.

To avoid losing work in Moodle, don't compose Discussion Board posts there; instead, write them in Google Doc or MS Word, then copy and paste them into Moodle.

I provide tutorial videos and other instructions to help you use the technology in this course, such as Google Drive and Google Docs. Not finding the tutorials?—just ask.

Please don't submit Portfolio work in formats other than Google docs or MS Word, unless the assignment specified, as this creates difficulty for me as your reader/grader. Also: Please do not submit your writing in PDF format (even though I use that handout for learning materials) as I'm unable to comment directly into the text of this format. Google Docs or MS Word only, please.

Course Policies

Communication & contacting me

I value communication with students. Please do not be shy or feel uneasy about contacting me. This includes, for instance, information about assignments or clarifying any of the details that make up this course. Know that I am always happy to dialog with you and welcome your communications.

- You may phone or text me for urgent matters only, but please **email first**. Identify yourself and the course when you communicate so I know whom I'm talking with.
- If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, send me a **nudge** (write "nudge" in the subject line). I don't mind at all; I aspire to be timely with my responses, though I occasionally cannot be.
- Please **avoid sending me Google invitations**. I will have access to your work after you've shared your Personal Folder. There is never any reason to "share." Email me whenever you have issues with Google so we can troubleshoot and solve the problem together.
- Access problems to Google Drive: log out and then back in, and the problem should resolve.

Visit me at office hours. But please **inform me ahead of time** so that I can put you on my calendar and give you the full time and attention you deserve.

For those interested in understanding some of the social and linguistic conventions at play when communicating by writing with a professor, [this video](#) may be (extremely) relevant for you in this or other course/life situations.

The 'Fifteen Minute Rule'

Try to solve your own problems, of course. Be resourceful and use resources I've provided you.. Read instructions carefully, more than once, download and annotate them so you're reading in detail, and watch tutorials.

But: if after 15 minutes you are spinning your wheels, unable to resolve an issue, understand an assignment or anything related to this course, then **stop trying to solve the problem on your own**.

At this point, **get in touch with me** and I will help.

There is no shame involved and, in fact, learning to ask questions in order to solve problems is a student "best practice"

Now that you know about the Fifteen Minute Rule I will not expect to receive emails along the lines of… "I spent hours looking for the assignment" or "I didn't turn in the assignment because I didn't understand it.

Late Work & Deadlines

Understand that my workload, like yours, can get overwhelming at times. Therefore, it is crucial that I be efficient and deal with student work on a strict schedule. Part of what drives the due dates for this course is my schedule for reading and grading your work, and work submitted late impacts my process.

Work is due by the assigned due date and time; when you submit work in your Google Portfolio or on Moodle it is automatically time and date stamped.

This course has **peer review work** that relies on "good citizenship," which means turning your work in on time and adhering to deadlines for completing peer reviews. It may go without saying, but I'll say it anyway: late work that is peer reviewed (or doing peer reviews late) affects more than you.

But…If you fall behind….

If you approach this course as you would any serious commitment, such as **a job in your chosen profession**, then you are in the right frame of mind for success!

"Commitment" **means you will not willingly accept failure**; it means you're willing to give it your all; it means you're resourceful, flexible, and ready to ask for help when you need it, before it's too late. It means you're willing to keep learning…

It also means you pay attention to time management and distractions in your life that pull your attention away from school.

If you don't yet have these attitudes and skills, or have not yet developed them, then think about how things might go at a job at which you don't show up or get work completed on time, expect others to flex rather than you, or are sloppy or lackadaisical. It's not a pretty picture...for you.

Think about your commitment to school—and to yourself.

I care about your success in this course. A lot, actually. They say that "the teacher succeeds or fails with the student." So, on my end, I try to be professional in my attitude, work ethic, and behavior; I also try to be flexible and understanding (see below). I know these ways of being impact everyone's success.

Shouldn't I expect the same way of being from you?

So...We're talking about being professional...and we know that failing to turn in an assignment, or turning it in late, is unprofessional.

And yet, we know that sometimes "life happens," even to highly committed and responsible people.

So...what to do?

- Be sincere and honest.
- **Communicate** before you're in trouble or have allowed time to pass. This means: **before** your work is late!
- Here's are steps to follow when cannot possibly meet an assignment deadline:
  - Fill out an [Assignment Completion Form]. This form provides information from you along with proposed alternative due dates that I must review and approve. **This process holds you accountable**.

Without your first completing this form, I will be unable to figure out how to help you complete your late work.

- ○ Start by making a copy of the form to your Google Portfolio's main folder. Without copying it, you will be unable to write in it. Please don't convert the form to a different format; use it exactly as is. Complete all of the information the form asks for.
- ○ Be sure to **review the assignment schedule,** so you're not over-committing yourself, in light of forthcoming assignments you will also need to complete. Make sure your alternate deadline is realistic.
- ○ **Inform me by email** once you have completed the form. Without an email from you, I will *not* know why your work is missing. Include a brief, but honest reason for the missing work—I don't need a lengthy email—keep it brief (Note: "Reasons" ≠ excuses, and professors have a lot of experience with both. Not all reasons are equal or valid. :)

- You are responsible for **communicating completion status**. I will not check for your missing work until I hear from you. You will *not* get credit for late work *unless* you inform me it has been completed. Please email me *only* when all late work is completed; I do not need a progress report or update; however. I am happy to dialog with you as you complete the assignment, so reach out if you have any difficulties.
- **I will determine how much credit your late work will receive**. Depending on the situation, you may receive up to 100%, but typically less. I handle this issue on a **case by case** basis.
- Summary: this process requires **at least two communications** from you: 1) an initial request email with a completed form, with proposed alt due date and 2) a notification your work is completed.

Incompletes

I do not generally offer an Incomplete (I) grade option as a way for a student to avoid an F grade. To be eligible for an incomplete in this class you must be passing the class but lack one essential requirement, such as missing one exam or one project. In addition, I must find your reason for requesting an incomplete acceptable (e.g., an illness or death in the family would probably be acceptable, whereas a vacation trip to Hawaii would probably not be acceptable). See me for more details regarding incompletes.

Teaching & Learning philosophy

The Student-Teacher "Learning Contract"

It is assumed that you will work towards the goals of this course and uphold your end of the "learning contract" by working diligently, attending class regularly, and turning in your work on time. I, in turn, will give you 100% of the 50% effort on my part that it takes for you to have a successful experience in this class; I only ask that you give 100% of your 50%). And, 95% will do. ☺

"Constructivist" vs. "knowledge transfer" learning

Most teachers have a "philosophy" of education. Mine may differ in important ways from some of your prior experience. These differences may confuse you, initially, and also require you to "think outside of the box," sometimes. While I do not intend for you to feel confused or expect you to guess or improvise in this course, you may initially react in these ways.

My educational philosophy is what's called "constructivism." For students this means that—rather than learning, memorizing, and "regurgitating" information, as knowledge transfer courses do—in this course you will be expected to engage in a process of learning and then to apply your knowledge in progressively complex assignments and projects.

I keep testing to a minimum, and instead "test" you by looking at evidence of learning through a) application of learning, b) revision and improvements, and c) reflective writing.

Professional behavior ≠ "school behavior"

As your instructor, I look to my students for engagement and professional behavior. I look for a "workplace" orientation from you. I assume your intention is serious: to learn and to prepare yourself for a meaningful career in which character, attitude, ethics, and behavior all matter.

As you enter this course, think of it as a temporary, but career-related job of eleven weeks. "The position" requires curiosity, attention to detail, strong work ethic, self-awareness (or metacognition), flexibility (esp. with mindset), and proactivity on your part.

In shifting your thinking from school to career, you may need to evaluate some of your mental habits and motivations.

Schooling can make us passive and reliant on external rewards for motivation. From years "doing what the teacher wants or says" for a "good grade. In this course practicing internal motivation is important: you are investing in yourself and your career as much as in a course grade.

This shift in thinking is also about taking ownership and accountability for your work, being proactive, especially with asking questions, and doing the job well regardless of the rewards.

Learning = error correction & improving ≠ perfection

Learning is about "correcting errors," and this means allowing yourself to make mistakes and even fail. The saving factor is persistence: a willingness to continue trying, learning, and improving. This is a key factor that separates learning in college from learning in the workplace (though I would argue that the best places to work will recognize the value of learning through error).

If you find yourself struggling in the course, doing poorly on assignments, or failing to understand what is expected, then let's talk. I believe in second chances and do-overs :)

Self-presentation & "reputation" awareness

Being in an "at work" course means cultivating both self-awareness and awareness of "self-presentation." It also means monitoring your behavior and being consistently engaged and communicative towards your "colleagues" (fellow students) and your "supervisor" (me).

So, while "school behavior" may be the norm for some kinds of courses, in this course professional behavior is expected norm (and if you are unfamiliar with the standards and practices of professionalism—you will learn these!).

Being "at work" also implies that your behavior and self-presentation will impact your reputation—impressions and beliefs that others form about you.

So, while "school behavior" may be acceptable, even expected, in some educational contexts, courses that prepare you for your profession require "the whole you" to be engaged.

Reading load and reading style

It is easy to bog down and fall behind if you ignore or postpone readings for this course. You will sometimes be expected to read closely and carefully, and not simply "skim for information." This may be a style of reading you are unaccustomed to and may, therefore, find challenging if not difficult to do. Nevertheless, learning to draw appropriately from course materials and to participate effectively in our Moodle Discussion Boards is critical to having a successful experience.

Reading the assignment carefully

This won't surprise you: most vital information in college courses is communicated in writing. Often, assignments have **multiple layers** of complexity and cover span of weeks, sometimes even the entire term.

Learning to break down and tackle complex assignments so that they are doable and not overwhelming is a learned—and indispensable—college skill, just as is managing your time.

Many college assignments contain numerous, what I call, "moving parts." The parts often interrelate, but sometimes not in obvious ways—at first. The assignments in this course may seem at first complex, confusing, or even overwhelming. Have trust: they are all doable and you'll learn a ton, looking back.

Handling complex assignments

An important aim of this course is to help you build skills comprehending and managing complex college assignments presented to you in written form. These skills, as with many you'll learn in this class, transfer to professional and career life if you practice them.

All assignment rubrics in this course have accuracy and completeness as baseline criteria. This means that I'm checking to see that you've read the assignment carefully and checked your work against it for accuracy.

When you first read course assignments for this course, you may sometimes feel confused or a bit overwhelmed. There are reasons these emotions arise, including a lack of familiarity with a new kind of assignment or the style in which it is written; prior beliefs or assumptions about "how assignments should look" or how to complete them; your inexperience breaking down complex assignment into manageable chunks and pacing yourself through them over time; or failing to notice design features of the assignment, such as sequencing, layering, learning and applying concepts, and spirals of practice and improvement (such as drafting and revising).

But once you've understood your reaction to an assignment, you're in a better position to strategize about how to tackle it. Bear in mind that this course involves skills building on the "how to" and cognition levels; this means that you'll be learning to do things that are useful and learning to notice your own thinking about the work you do (this is called "metacognition").

Apply "best practices"

The assignments and workload are manageable when you apply what are called "best practices." These are attitudes, behaviors, and strategies that experienced, highly skilled, and successful people have learned and followed as they approach new tasks.

Writing load & revision

I have set up the writing assignments so that a number of them require drafting, reevaluation and / or peer review, and revision. I allow and expect students to learn from the draft process, and so I recognize and award your "attempts" to complete the assignment. I call attempts "labor," but also expect that you'll push yourself towards excellence. This means revising and not simply "fixing" your work. Revising means rethinking and usually revisiting the assignment instructions to deepen your understanding.

Grades & Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes

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

- Create documents designed to help readers make decisions and solve practical, real-world written communication problems.
- Evaluate and adapt to different technical and workplace writing situations by analyzing audience, purpose, context, stakes, and the writer.
- Demonstrate mastery of technical and workplace writing conventions including clean and clear design, style, and layout of print and web communications.

- Find, evaluate, and integrate credible research in written documents clearly, concisely, and logically, credit sources as appropriate.

Each assignment in this course has a rubric that I provide with the assignment. I will usually also provide examples of student work from prior classes, but I typically will not include a grade on these.

Labor & quality points

Most of the assignments require at least one, substantive revision. I recognize that student work varies in the degree of initial effort and "off stage" revision, so not all work will require extensive revision; however, be prepared for it.

I will provide feedback on work prior to revision (and without feedback, please do not revise). Some work will receive feedback from peers only.

I apply labor points only to first drafts and quality points to revised work (with a few exceptions).

College Policies

LBCC Email and Course Communications

You are responsible for all communications sent via Moodle and to your LBCC email account. You are required to use your LBCC provided email account for all email communications at the College. You may access your LBCC student email account through Student Email and your Moodle account through Moodle.

Disability and Access Statement

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 at www.linnbenton.edu/cfar for steps on how to apply for services or call (541) 917-4789.

Statement of Inclusion

To promote academic excellence and learning environments that encourage multiple perspectives and the free exchange of ideas, all courses at LBCC will provide students the opportunity to interact with values, opinions, and/or beliefs different from their own in safe, positive, and nurturing learning environments. LBCC is committed to producing culturally literate individuals capable of interacting, collaborating and problem-solving in an ever-changing community and diverse workforce.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy

Basic Needs Statement

Any student who has difficulty affording food or finding a safe and stable place to live, or who needs assistance with resources for transportation, childcare, etc., is urged to contact the Roadrunner Resource Center for support and referral to community resources. Also, please talk with your instructor if you are comfortable doing so. This can help them direct you to the appropriate office and resource.

Title IX Reporting Policy

If you or another student are the victim of any form of sexual misconduct (including dating/domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment), or any form of gender discrimination, LBCC can assist you. You can report a violation of our sexual misconduct policy directly to our Title IX Coordinator. You may also report the issue to a faculty member, who is required to notify the Coordinator, or you may make an appointment to speak confidentially to our Advising and Career Center by calling 541-917-4780.

Public Safety

In an emergency, call 911. Also, call LBCC Public Safety and Loss Prevention Office at 541-926-6855 and 541-917-4440. This link will take you to the LBCC's Safety & Well-being page.

From any LBCC phone, you may alternatively dial extension 411 or 4440. Public Safety also is the home for LBCC's Lost & Found. They provide escorts for safety when needed. Visit them to learn more.