

## **Technical Writing: Explaining Things in a Simpler Fashion**

WR 227 CRN# 47244  
Times: 1430-1550, TR  
Location: TR – IA 224  
Office: SSH 212  
Office Hours: 1200-1250, TR

Spring 2015  
Instructor: Steven A Thornberry  
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Phone: (541) 917-4564

### **Course Description**

This course is designed to help you in your future careers. We will be working on cover letters, résumé writing, and technical reports. By the end of our course you guys should be able to: understand the differences between Technical and Academic writing, yield a large amount high-level research, and use the principals of good document design to produce a document that is easily navigated.

### **Required Texts**

Technical Communication: Thirteenth Edition. *John M. Lannon and Laura J. Gurak*. ISBN 13: 987-0-321-89997-2 or ISBN 10: 0-321-89997-0.

### **Course Requirements**

Weekly Reading Responses

Cover Letter & Résumé

Technical Report:

- Research Proposal
- Final Report

Reflective Letter

### **Course Policies**

#### **Formatting Assignments**

All essays are to be:

- In proper MLA, APA, Chicago, or CSE format
- Typed using Times New Roman 12 point font
- Double Spaced
- Have one inch margins

All the above is to be done before your piece is turned in for workshopping. Do not fret, all this will be covered in class. A helpful source you may want to refer to when formatting your paper is the Purdue Owl, which you can find at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.

### **Participation**

Unlike some classes you may encounter, our class is not a one man show. So I expect everyone to contribute to what is going on in class. This will consist of being here, in mind as well as body, and being part of the conversations that go on in class. Your presence in class is as important as mine. A large portion of class time is dedicated to workshopping the assignments you will be eventually turning in to me. Oh, and a percent of your grade is also connected to your ability to participate in class.

## **Attendance**

As you may have gathered from the portion on participation immediately preceding this one, I do expect to see you in class. I am not a complete sadist so I will allow two absences before I crack open the book of pain and start docking your grade. So as the saying goes, “help me, help you.” As long as you make an attempt to be in class on a regular basis I will try and make our time together as pleasurable as possible. Now before anyone freaks out, I do understand that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances that may force you to miss more days than I have allotted. I will deal with such cases when and if they arise.

## **Weekly Reading Responses**

You guys will be writing up quick responses to readings, that we have done for the week, at the beginning of class. The reading responses are meant to engage the readings and give us, as a class, a starting point for conversations that will be taking place in class.

## **Late Work**

It is at this juncture that I will have to borrow a line/attitude from one of my favorite movies. When it comes to late work “I am stern, but I am fair,” I expect work to be completed and turned in by its respected due date. I am holding you up to a standard that I hold myself to. I will be reading and returning your assignments by the time I specify to you, so I expect you to give me and your fellow classmates the same respect. Work shopping your papers is a large part of the group dynamics of this course so it is important to have materials ready. I am not completely rigid with late work and can be flexible, if I feel the situation calls for it. With that being said, I will not accept any late work past seven days of its due date.

## **Final Grade**

Your grade will be weighed by:  
Participation: 5%  
Weekly Reading Response: 10%  
Cover Letter & Resume: 25%  
Technical Report: 50%  
Reflective Letter: 10%

## **Grade Range**

100 – 88% = A  
87 – 78% = B  
77 – 68% = C  
67 – 58% = D  
57 – 0% = F

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, that nasty gut wrenching term that is the boogeyman of college writing, will not be tolerated in its blatant form. By “blatant” I mean the purposely misappropriated use of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas. In short give credit where credit is due. Do not fear, we will be going over the “dos” and “don’ts” of referring to, or using, another’s thoughts, words, or text. As part of the academic discussion you are expected to interact with and use terms and ideas that come up in the conversation of academia, but you are also expected to inform others involved in the conversation where you have gotten your information. With that said, it is understandable that mishaps will occur in which case we will work together to rectify the situation. For a full rendering of this college’s plagiarism policy you can refer to the course catalogue.

## **Cell Phones**

Though we all have them, we can all agree that they can be highly disturbing. I will ask you guys to keep your phones on quiet and put away at all times. It is not only disrespectful to

me, but also to your classmates. If I do find you with your phones out I will ask you to leave our class for the day.

### **Student Resources**

Students who may need accommodations due to documented disabilities, or who have medical information which the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak with the instructor during the first week of class. If you think you may need accommodation services, please contact ODS, (541) 917-4789.

### **Readings/Assignment Schedule**

#### **Week One**

T 03/31 – Introduction to course

R 04/02 – **Chapters 1:** Introduction to Technical Communication and **2:** Meeting the Needs of a Specific Audience

#### **Week Two**

T 04/07 – **Chapters 3:** Persuading Your Audience and **4:** Weighing the ethical Issues

R 04/08 – **Chapter 16:** Workplace Letters and **Chapter 17:** Resumes and Other Job-Search Materials  
– (Cover letter and Resume)

#### **Week Three**

T 04/14 – Workshop Cover letter  
– Workshop Resume

R 04/16 – **No School**

#### **Week Four**

T 04/21 – **Chapters 12:** Designing Visual Information and **13:** Designing Pages and Documents  
– (Cover Letter and Resume) **DUE**

R 04/23 – **Chapters 19:** Technical Descriptions, Specifications, and Marketing Materials and **20:** Instructions and Procedures  
– (Research proposal)

#### **Week Five**

T 04/28 – **Chapter 23:** Proposals

– Deciding if it will be “All for one,” or “One for all.” (Group or individual projects)

R 04/30 – A jaunt to the library

#### **Week Six**

T 05/05 – Proposal work

R 05/07 – Proposal work

**Week Seven**

T 05/12 – **Chapter 10**: Organizing for Readers and **Chapter 11**: Editing for a Professional Style and Tone  
– (Research proposal) **DUE**

R 05/14 – **Chapter 22**: Formal Analytical Reports  
– (Technical Report)

**Week Eight**

T 05/19 – Technical Report work

R 05/21 – Technical Report work

**Week Nine**

T 05/26 – **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**

R 05/28 – Workshop A (In class office hours)

**Week Ten**

T 06/02 – Workshop B (In class office hours)

R 06/04 – (Technical Report) **DUE**

– Reflective Letter

**Week Eleven**

T 06/09 – Reflective Letter **DUE**