ENGL 305: Technical Writing
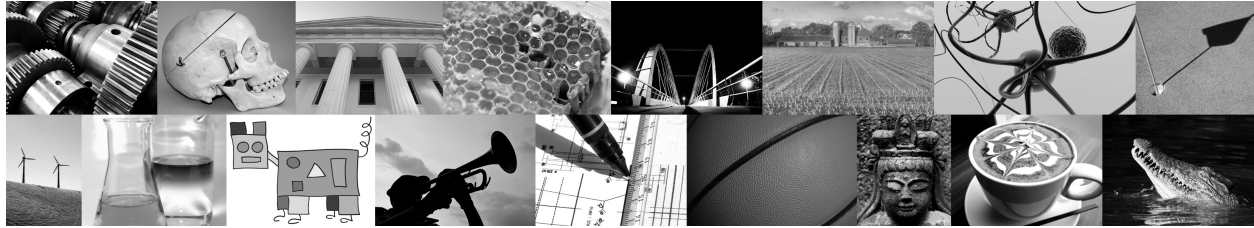
Instructor: Dr. Jill Woods   *Email:* Jill.Woods@mail.wvu.edu   *Phone:* 304-293-9727
Office: 209 Colson Hall   *Office Hours:* (T/R) 1–2pm (in person); 2–2:30pm (online)
Or by appointment

Emailing Your Instructor:
  (1) Begin the subject line with "ENGL 305-003"; and
  (2) Continue the subject line with a descriptive yet concise phrase clarifying your question or concern (e.g., ENGL 305-003: Question about WE deadlines).

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS

- Paul V. Anderson's *Technical Communication: A reader-centered approach*, 9th edition. ISBN-13: 9781305667884
- A MIX email address and regular access to our WVU eCampus course site

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces you to strategies for translating between discipline-specific knowledge and interested outsiders. While this may include topics traditionally understood as "technical," such as those in engineering, architecture and computer science, technical writing encompasses any topic that must be explained to an involved, but not expert, audience.

You will explore the forms of technical writing that are common in the professions. Drawing on the expertise developed in your major, you will explore technical writing through topics and issues important to the work you plan to do. Because a primary assumption of this course is that all writing emerges from and responds to a particular problem, audience, and purpose, the course focuses on helping you develop multiple strategies for accomplishing your communication goals.

Purpose: What exactly do I want to happen?
Audience: Who is reading, listening, or viewing?
Conventions: What is expected in this context?
Trouble: What could get in the way of my goals?

PRIMARY COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Master the practices and principles of technical communication with emphasis on planning, audience analysis, clear and effective writing style, organization, graphics and information design.
- Refine a writing process to communicate well, meet deadlines, and work as part of a team.
- Design and execute several forms of technical communication including correspondence, a technical/process description, instructions, reports, and presentations.
- Develop a polished portfolio of documents that have been revised and refined for clarity and effectiveness.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

You will be evaluated on written and oral communication, class participation, and your final writing portfolio. You will receive a detailed assignment sheet for each task. Assignments that will be graded on content, technique and style will pass through a drafting stage before you turn in your "final" version.

Assignment	%	Points
Quizzes	10%	50 (variable)
Writing Exercises (WEs)	20%	100 (5 or 10 each x 12)
Writing Portfolio *(including drafts)*	60%	300 (drafts = 70, finals = 230)
Employment Documents		d = 20 f = 40
Unsolicited Correspondence		d = 10 f = 20
Tech. Description/Process Analysis		d = 20 f = 40
Instructions		d = 20 f = 40
Report/Presentation		60, WP CR = 30
Class Participation	10%	50
	100%	500

Quizzes

These unannounced quizzes ensure that you are reading the required material, help you remember what you read, and help you prepare for class activities and writing assignments. Read carefully – take notes and ask questions in class. There will be **between 5-8 quizzes** in all.

Writing Exercises

These 12 writing exercises (WEs) include assignments that help you prepare for (or even begin drafting) your major writing portfolio documents. You will submit all of these assignments to our eCampus course site unless otherwise directed by me. **All writing exercises are due by the start of class on the due date specified in the course schedule. Upload them BEFORE coming to class.** Many of these writing assignments will be used as the base for in-class discussions and activities. While some of these are less formal assignments, note that they ARE graded on quality – not on polish but on content and timeliness.

Writing Portfolio

Over the course of the term, you will draft 5 "major" writing assignments, 4 of which you will revise for a final writing portfolio. First drafts of these documents will NOT be assessed on quality. Rather, you will receive full, partial, or no credit, based on how well your draft meets the minimum assignment requirements. I will provide you with substantive feedback on each draft, and only after you have had the opportunity to revise those drafts and submit "final" versions in your writing portfolio will they be assessed on how professional and successful they are. (See the grades section below for general criteria.)

Since you know now that you will have multiple versions of your documents, start practicing consistent naming conventions. For instance, I might name my drafts like so (note my initials):

> **First draft** – WP1_jw1.docx
> **Second draft** – WP1_jw2.docx
> **Peer-reviewed draft** – WP1_jw2_mlreview.docx
> **Final draft** – WP1_jw.docx

Also, back up your files in at least two locations (a USB drive, Google Drive, Dropbox, your home computer, an external hard drive, etc.) regularly. USB drives have been known to get lost or corrupted and cloud files have been known to be temporarily inaccessible!

Participation & Attendance

Your participation will be determined by your attendance, preparedness for class, and contributions to course activities. Participation is worth 10% of your final grade. Everyone is permitted up to three absences without penalty, but each absence after three will reduce your participation grade by one grade level.

GRADES

When grading your "final" draft assignments (i.e., WP#5 group work and individual portfolio drafts), I will ask one overriding question: "Does this document do its job successfully?" The "job," or purpose, of each document will be partially explained in assignment instructions and in class and partially determined by your own rhetorical analysis. Your "final" work will be assessed on this scale:

A – Superior: The work is of near professional quality. The document meets or exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The content is mature, thorough, and well suited for the audience; the style is clear and accurate ; the information is well-organized and designed so that it is accessible and attractive; the mechanics and grammar are correct. It is assured of success and of winning praise.

B – Good: The document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in style, or it contains easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content, or its content is superficial. It is likely to succeed.

C – Competent: The document needs significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. It may be formally correct but superficial in content. It stands a chance of succeeding.

D – Marginally Acceptable: The document meets some of the objectives but ignores others; the content is inadequately developed; or it contains numerous or major errors. It is not likely to succeed without major revision.

F – Unacceptable: The document does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or it contains major errors or excessive errors. It fails to do its "job."

COURSE GRADE
Course grades will be calculated by points earned through completed work: A-/A/A+ = 90–100% (450-500 points) B-/B/B+ = 80–89% (400-449 points) C-/C/C+ = 70–79% (350-399 points) D-/D/D+ = 60–69% (300-349 points) F = 0-59.4% (0–299 points) (Percentages rounded up at 0.5; -/+ added for bottom/top ranges [e.g., 89.5 –90.4% = A-; 99.5–100% = A+])

COURSE POLICIES

You can access and read institution-level policies here: https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements. These include policies on academic integrity, inclusivity, and COVID-19 procedures. No incompletes will be provided for this course. Here are additional details for policies particularly relevant to this course:

Professionalism: I will hold you to the professional standards that prevail both throughout the university and within the field of professional writing and editing. You are expected to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading and writing assignments on time; to help your classmates learn by your participation in class discussions and group activities; to spend at least six hours per week out of class for research, writing, and class preparation; and to be courteous and considerate.

Promptness. As in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All assignments listed on the course schedule must be uploaded to eCampus by the beginning of class on their respective due dates (unless I've noted otherwise in written or in-class instructions. Late assignments will not be accepted unless you have made arrangements with me in advance, and even then, grades for those assignments will be lowered by one full letter grade (e.g., A becomes a B, B becomes a C, and so on) for each day the assignment is late.

Email and eCampus Submission: In most cases, assignments require eCampus submission posted to the Discussion Board or as attached document (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) files through the eCampus "Assignments" tool. If I cannot open the document, it will be considered late. Assignments are not accepted via WVU or MIX email unless the assignment calls for it, eCampus is down, or if you make *prior arrangements with me.*

Writing Studio: If you'd like additional writing help, contact the **WVU Writing Studio** (https://speakwrite.wvu.edu/students) to schedule an appointment with a writing consultant.

Mental Health Services: Finally, mental health concerns or stressful events can adversely affect your academic performance and social relationships. WVU offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns that you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at the Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) website: https://carruth.wvu.edu/

If you are in need of crisis services, call the CCPPS main number 24/7: (304) 293-4431.

Course Schedule

This course schedule – like all writing – is open to revision. You will be notified of any changes in class and/or via our WVU eCampus course site. Otherwise, note that reading and writing assignments are DUE BEFORE CLASS the day they are listed on the schedule.

Noted abbreviations:
- TC: *Technical Communication: A reader-centered approach*
- WE: Writing Exercises
- WP: Writing Portfolio documents

	Classes	Reading	Writing
Employment Documents	Week 1	Course/Colleague Introductions	
	R–8/18	Syllabus	
	Week 2	Employment Documents [Purpose [P], Audience [A]]	
	T–8/23	Read TC Ch. 1, 2, 3	WE#1
	R–8/25		WE#2
	Week 3	Employment Documents (Conventions [C])	
	T–8/30	Read TC Ch. 14, 21	WE#3
	R–9/1		
	Week 4	Employment Documents (PAC + Trouble[T])	
	T–9/6	Read TC Ch. 15	WE#4
	R–9/8		WP#1 [Employment Documents]
Correspondence	Week 5	Persuasive Correspondence	
	T–9/13	Read TC Ch. 9, 10	
	R–9/15 No class	Career Fair Swap Day (WE#XC) 9/14: Ag & Nat Sci 9/27: B&S Sci. Other_____ 9/15: STEM 9/28: Bus Comm	
	Week 6	Persuasive Correspondence	
	T–9/20	Read TC Ch. 6, 7	WE#5
	R–9/22	Read TC Ch. 8	WP#2: (Unsolicited Recommendation)

TD/PA	Week 7	Technical Description/Process Analysis	
	T–9/27	Read TC Ch. 12, 13, 14	WE#6
	R–9/29		WE#7 (peer review draft)
	Week 8	Technical Description/Process Analysis & Instructions	
	T–10/4		WP#3: Technical Description/Process Analysis & PACT Presentations
	R–10/6		WP#3 PACT Presentations
Instructions	Week 9	Instructions	
	T–10/11	Read TC. Ch. 16, 27	
	R–10/13		WE#8 (in class)
	Week 10	Instructions	
	T–10/18		WE#9
	R–10/20		
	Week 11	Instructions	
	T–10/25		WE#10
	R–10/27		WP#4: Instructions
Reports, Research, Presentations, & Collaboration	Week 12	Reports, Research, Presentations, & Collaboration	
	T–11/1	Read TC Ch. 17, 22	
	R–11/3	Read/Skim TC Ch. 23, 25, 26	WE#11 (in class)
	Week 13	Reports, Research, Presentations, & Collaboration	
	T–11/8 No class	Election Day (Go vote!)	
	R–11/10	Read TC Ch. 4, 5, 11	
	Week 14	Reports, Research, Presentations, & Collaboration	
	T–11/15	Read TC Ch. 18	
	R–11/17		WE#12 (peer review)
	Week 15	Fall Recess	
	T–11/22	Rest up and rejuvenate for presentations next week!	
	R–11/24		
	Week 16	Presentations	
	T–11/29		WP#5: Report & Presentation
	R–12/1		WP#5: Report & Presentation
Final WP	Week 17	Revision & Writing Portfolio	
	T–12/6	Review TC Ch. 1, 11, 15	
	R–12/8		eSEIs Writing ePortfolio