ENGL 305: Tech Writing
10:30-11:20AM
Instructor: Eric Wardell   **Office:** G25 Colson

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(and by appointment)

Required Text

Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*. 7th Ed.
    Boston: Cengage, 2010.

Description

Welcome to English 305. This course introduces you to strategies for translating between discipline-specific knowledge and interested outsiders in a professional setting. 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, including memos, reports, and technical descriptions. 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.

Also, since this is a professional writing course, what you learn here is aimed at helping you in a professional workplace and you will be held to professional standards in the course. Just think, if you didn't show up to work several times, should you expect to keep your job? Since the answer here is now, you can assume the same for your grade.

Primary Course Objectives

- That you master the practices and principles of technical communication with particular emphasis on planning, audience analysis, persuasion, clear and effective writing style, organization, graphics and information design.

- That you refine a writing process that will enable you to communicate well, meet deadlines, and work as part of a team.

- That you attend and participate in classroom discussions and peer-review sessions. Class participation will be a significant portion of your grade.

- That you design and execute several forms of technical communication including a memo, résumé, literature review technical description, and feasibility report.

- That you produce a significant (20+ pages), professional portfolio related to your field of

study based on the career path you choose to follow. By the end of the semester, this portfolio will have been revised and refined for clarity and effectiveness.

- That you demonstrate the ability to speak persuasively in a professional setting, including the ability to select and design effective presentation graphics.

Course Requirements

You will be evaluated on written documents, oral presentations, class participation, several unannounced quizzes and your final writing project. 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.

Assignments and Grading

Final Grade Breakdown: The final grade in English 305 evaluates formal writing, informal writing, several short quizzes and participation. The following will show the way that I will break down your grade.

Final Portfolio	50%
Informal Writing	25%
Participation	15%
Quizzes	10%

Submitting to eCampus: You will submit assignments primarily through eCampus and you will find the descriptions for your assignments there as well. I will get feedback to you usually within a week after you have submitted your work and you will need to constantly be writing and revising to stay on top of your course work.

All of your course work must be submitted as Word documents. Submitting your work as a Pages document will result in a reduction to your overall participation points. Remember, even in Pages there is a "Save As" option that allows you to save your work as a Word document.

There will be a great deal of writing and reading for this course so it is important that you not get behind since late assignments will not be accepted unless negotiations have been made with the instructor prior to the due date, but even then exceptions are rare.

Grade Descriptors: Students often ask why they receive one grade or the other, particularly on their portfolio so I'm including grade descriptors to help clarify what earns certain grades on different kinds of writing. The following descriptors relate specifically to the portfolio, but you'll find similar ideas linked to both participation and informal writing assignments and will often receive language from me similar to what you see below in the feedback for your work. If you have questions, please ask.

A—Exemplary work that demonstrates originality and initiative. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and formatted so that it is accessible and attractive; genre conventions are effectively used; mechanics and grammar are correct. The portfolio demonstrates a range of well-edited, well-written, well-argued, and well-documented texts that a company could use without further revisions, and might even use as examples when training new

employees.

B—Good work. The documents generally succeed in meeting their goals in terms of audience, purpose, and genre without the need for further major revisions. They may need some *minor* improvements in content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics. In the workplace, a company would be able to use the documents without major revisions of any sort**.**

C—Satisfactory work. Documents are adequate in all respects, but require some substantial revisions of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics; they may require further work in more than one area.   For instance, central ideas may generally be apparent, but may often lack adequate explanations or documentation necessary for different audiences and purposes. In the workplace, the documents would be functional for an immediate deadline, but would require further revisions before being distributed or made part of a permanent record.

D—Documents are unprofessional. They generally require extensive revisions of content, presentation, writing style, and/or mechanics before the documents could be used by a company. The writer has encountered significant problems meeting goals of audience, purpose, and genre. In the workplace, a company would most probably have to reassign the project to another writer for successful completion.

F—Documents do not have enough information, do something other than is appropriate for a given situation, or contain major and pervasive problems in terms of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning. The portfolio may be incomplete, or plagiarism may compromises the portfolio on ethical grounds. A company would most probably dismiss the writer from current projects.

- The more writers write, reflect and revise, the better their writing becomes. For this reason, you will receive full credit, partial credit or no credit for all draft and "minor" writing assignments, depending on how well the work you turn in meets the criteria set forth for that assignment. More important, you will also receive extensive comments (from me and your peers) that will help you in the revision process.

As you turn in your assignments, I will hold you to professional standards. For example, your employer will take for granted qualities such as promptness, neat appearance, and correct mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation). You must also bring your documents in the assigned format (digitally, in print, or otherwise)**.**

USB Drive, Gmail, & Drafts

Almost all of the work you do for this class will be either online or on the computer so it's important that you have a consistent way to save and share your work. One simple way to do this is by obtaining a USB drive that you will dedicate to collecting the writing, designing, editing and revising done in this course. If you choose to use a USB drive, please bring this drive to each class. Otherwise it would be acceptable to save your documents on Google Drive or another cloud server you could access through class. Part of the moral of the story here is that failure to provide the correct documents for days like peer review days will result in a reduction of your participation grade. As you work on your assignments both in and out of class, keep (within reason) progressive versions of all your notes, drafts, outlines, peer reviews, and research materials (both hard copy and electronic). Organize and label the documents as you go because you will regularly review these materials in order to learn how your discovery, drafting, and research processes evolve throughout the course.

Tip for naming digital documents: It's useful to use a consistent naming format for your documents since you will be writing multiple drafts and will want to see your progress (as well as not lose original work that you may need to come back to later). For instance, I might name my drafts like so (note my initials):

> ***First draft –*** BadNewsLetterJH1.doc.
> ***Second draft –*** BadNewsLetterJH2.doc
> ***Peer-reviewed draft –*** BadNewsLetterJH2edits.doc
> ***Final draft –*** BadNewsLetterJH.doc

Also, back up your files in a second location (another USB drive, a CD, your home computer, an external hard drive, etc.) regularly. USB drives have been known to get lost or corrupted!

***Gmail*:** You will need a gmail account for this class in order to accomplish several collaborative activities, so if you don't currently have account, make sure to create one (it's free).

Attendance

You are expected to attend class every day and bring your USB drive and reading materials. If you amass more than **three** unexcused absences, your grade for the course will be lowered **one** full letter grade. For each unexcused absence after three, I will lower your final grade by an additional letter grade. Six absences results in an automatic failure for the course. Put simply, you are all adults and I expect you to be in class; if you are not in class (for any reason), your grade will suffer.

It's particularly important for you to attend—and be prepared for—in-class peer reviews on drafts of your documents. The more you have written before peer-review sessions, the more you will benefit from them. Although your drafts need not be "polished," they should be complete enough for you to receive substantial help from your peers.

Professional Expectations & Conduct

In addition to the requirements in this syllabus, you are expected to work until the class period has ended, to complete all reading assignments on time, to help your classmates learn by your responses to their writing, to choose projects that require significant research and analysis, to spend at least six hours per week out of class for writing and class preparation, and to be courteous and considerate. Please turn all cell phones and pagers off (no ringing, vibrating or text messaging) during class unless instructed otherwise. Our classroom computers are for class use only – no Facebook, MySpace, etc, please. All distractions are very detrimental to your class participation grade. Finally, please respect the request for no food or drink in the lab.

Plagiarism Policy

West Virginia University defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students *are* expected to be familiar with the sections on Academic Honesty in the University Student Conduct Code, Policy Bulletin 31, which is online at http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsa.html.

Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your writing from friends are NOT acts of plagiarism. Taking someone else's published or unpublished words and calling them your own IS plagiarism: a synonym is academic dishonesty. When plagiarism amounts to an attempt to deceive, it has dire consequences, which can include failure of an assignment, failure of the course and a permanent blemish on your University transcript.

Non-Discrimination & Disability Policies

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700).

Undergraduate Writing Center

Please consider taking your ideas and your written work to the WVU Writing Center, where trained peer tutors will consult with writers about any piece of writing at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in G02 Colson Hall. To schedule appointments or to ask questions, call 293-5788. For more information about Writing Center programs as well as for materials to help you negotiate various stages of the writing process, visit <http://english.wvu.edu/centers_and_projects/wcenter>.

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Course Schedule
(Like all writing…this schedule is open to significant revision and you'll need to be in class to make sure you're up to date on any changes)

Week 1	Introduction & Memo on Defining Your Field
M 8/20	Discussion: Intro to course and technical writing Reading: Anderson Ch. 1
W 8/22	Assigned: Introduction Memo Discussion: Intro to the Rhetorical Situation Reading: Introduction to the Rhetorical Situation (both Bitzer and Vatz,) (online pdf)

F 8/24	Reading: Anderson Ch. 2 Discussion: Résumé, Cover Letter & Career Fact Sheet Assigned: Résumé & Career Fact Sheet + locate 3 job prospects you will be interested pursuing. **Due:** Introduction Memo
Week 2	**Resume, Cover Letters and Career Fact Sheet**
M 8/27	Reading: Anderson Ch. 3 & 4 and Clinton R. Lanier: "Technical Communication Employers in Recruitment Postings." Discussion: Anderson "Defining Objectives" sheet (pp. 91-93) **Due:** 3 job prospects
W 8/29	Reading: Leah Ceccarelli: "A Hard look at ourselves" (online) In-class writing: Audience analysis w/ Anderson
F 8/31	Resume Analysis
Week 3	**Resume, Cover Letters, and Career Fact Sheet**
M 9/3	*No Class. Labor Day*
W 9/5	**Due:** Draft of Résumé, Cover Letter & Career Fact Sheet In-class peer review of Résumé, Cover Letter & Career Fact Sheet
F 9/7	Assigned: Contrasting Technical Descriptions Reading: Anderson Ch. 8 plus "Using Seven Reader-Centered Organizational Patterns" (pp. 235-261) In-class writing: Brain-storm & outline description topics
Week 4	**Finding a Place for Rhetoric and Technical Writing**
M 9/10	**Due:** Résumé, Cover Letter & Career Fact Sheet (**online by midnight**) Reading: Anderson Ch 5 & 7 Discussion: Research Methods & intro to Ethics
W 9/12	Reading: Harlow: "Province of Sophists: and Argument for Academic Homelessness" and "Why we chose Rhetoric"(online) Discussion: IP and Writing
F 9/14	Assigned: Technical Description and Ethics activity Reading: Anderson Ch. 6 & Codes of Ethics reading (online) Miller, Carolyn. (1979). "A humanistic rationale for technical writing." and "The Ethic of Expediency" Online
Week 5	**Instructions /Technical Descriptions/Ethics**
M 9/17	Reading: Baker and Barfield: "Keeping Users at the Center: Developing a Multimedia interface for informed Consent." (online) Documentation/Instructions assignments. Beginning of technical descriptions with examples In Class: Tech Description Class Activity
W 9/19	Finish Tech Description Class Activity
F 9/21	**Reading:** Lawrence Lessig "End the War on Sharing" and "Exclusive Rights to Stagnate" **Due:** Draft of Technical Description Assignment In-class peer review of Technical Descriptions
Week 6	**Literature Review**
M 9/24	Assigned: Short Topic Form & Literature Review (both tied to Proposal)

	Reading: Ch. 9 and sample instructions (online) Creating annotated bibliographies **Due:** Technical Description (online by midnight)
W 9/26	Reading: Anderson Ch. 12 In-class writing: Anderson, "Collaboration" (p. 309-310)
F 9/28	Reading: Anderson Ch. 10 & 11 "Ideology and the Map" by Barton and Barton In-class writing: Anderson, "Collaboration" (p. 302)
Week 7	**Page Layouts & Using Research for Projects**
M 10/1	Reading: Anderson Ch. 13 & 14 Discussion: Strategies for Page Layouts **Due:** Instructions Assignment Peer Review (quiz)
W 10/3	**In-class: Discuss Annotated bib and Literature Review**
F 10/5	More on Design and Midterm Assessment
Week 8	**Feasibility Reports**
M 10/8	*Conferences—Overlaps Class time*
W 10/10	Introduction to Feasibility reports Read Chapter 24-27 and sample feasibility reports online **Due:** Instructions Set (Online by Midnight)
F 10/12	Assigned: Design Proposal Reading: Sample Reports Homework: begin design of proposal for Feasibility Report
Week 9	**Research Guide and Feasibility reports**
M 10/15	Design Sample Feasibility Report Reading: Anderson Ch. 25
W 10/17	Design Sample Feasibility Report Reading: Sample Feasibility Reports Online
F 10/19	Reading: Sample Feasibility Reports Online.
Week 10	
M 10/22	Reading Anderson Ch. 22 Finalize Truck Feasibility and prepare for 10 min group presentation **Due:** Feasibility Presentations
W 10/24	Reading: Anderson Ch. 23
F 10/26	Reading: Anderson Ch. 6,7,12
Week 11	
M 10/29	Introduction to academic and technical research and discussion of library sources/ annotated bibliographies **Due:** Design Proposal
W 10/31	Read How to Lit Review (online) and work on citation
F 11/2	Peer Review Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography
Week 12	
M 11/5	*Individual conferences—overlaps class time* Reading: Ch. 15 & 16
W 11/7	A brief introduction to GIMP and Kompozer
F 11/9	**Due:** Annotated Bib and Literature Review Due Saturday 11/10 by

	Midnight
Week 13	
M 11/12	Portfolio Reflection Papers / Work on Project
W 11/14	In-class work day on Proposals / Revision and more Peer Review Reading: Anderson Ch. 17 & 18
F 11/16	Reading: Anderson Ch. 19 on Presentation Skills Discussion: Preparing for Presentations and Revision Strategies
Week 14	
M 11/18	*Thanksgiving Break; No Class*
W 11/20	*Thanksgiving Break; No Class*
F 11/22	*Thanksgiving Break; No Class*
Week 15	**Feasibility Reports & Preparing Presentations**
M 11/25	Discussion of Reports and Report Prep
W 11/27	Final Feasibility Report Presentations
F 11/29	Final Feasibility Report Presentations
Week 16	
M 12/3	Final Feasibility Report Presentations
W 12/5	Final Feasibility Report Presentations
F 12/7	Final Feasibility Report Presentations / Course Evaluations & Closing **Full Portfolio Due Today.**