

Professor: Dr. Doug Phillips
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Office hours: Fridays, 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm (in person), 339 Colson Hall
Tuesdays, 9:00 am to 10:00 am (virtual)
Thursdays, by appointment only (virtual)

/ 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.

In this course, you will explore the forms of technical writing that are common in the professions, including memos, instructions, and descriptions. Drawing on the expertise you 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.

/ Course Goals

Students who have completed Writing Studies 305 should be able to:

1. Specify and adapt to the constraints of the rhetorical situation, especially an audience's knowledge of a topic and its desired uses for a document.
2. Conduct research to gain command of a technical subject and to invent the contents of communication.
3. Convey clearly and precisely the technical aspects of a topic to a non-specialist audience.
4. Develop a functional vocabulary for discussing, analyzing, and planning professional, technical documents.
5. Apply technology to organize and design documents that support reader comprehension.

6. Evaluate and modify a document to ensure its usability and accessibility for an audience by emphasizing planning, audience analysis, persuasion, clear and effective writing style, organization, graphics, and information design.
7. Demonstrate the ability to speak persuasively in a professional setting, including the ability to select and design effective presentation graphics.

/ Academic Integrity

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course.

For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Standards Policy (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification>).

Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

/ Participation & Attendance

Regular participation and engagement are vital to your success in this course. Engagement will be measured by your timely completion of course work, asking and answering questions, and working with your peers.

Absences. You are allowed **six (6)** absences. Your seventh absence will result in a zero (0) for participation. Each additional unexcused absence will lower your final course grade by one full letter grade, and ten (10) or more absences will result in failing the course.

Falling more than two weeks behind the posted schedule of work without a documented special arrangement may result in failing the course. Special arrangements require a formal, written request (prior to an assignment deadline when applicable) that includes an explanation of the circumstances, documentation (if relevant), and a detailed plan for

completing any late or missed work. Submitting a formal request for a special arrangement does not automatically guarantee that I will be able to grant your request.

University sanctioned absences are absences in which the instructor agrees to provide an opportunity to make up missed class work or activities (e.g., assignments, exams) and will not penalize students for those absences. These include religious observances, mandatory military obligation, mandatory court appearances, and participation in university activities at the request of university authorities. Other events may justify an excused absence at the discretion of the instructor or program.

COVID related absences fall under the University attendance policy found here: [attendance](#). As detailed in the policy, a student who becomes sick or is required to quarantine during the semester should notify the instructor. The student should then work with the instructor to develop a plan to complete the course learning outcomes while he or she is absent.

For university sanctioned absences totaling more than three weeks of course work resulting from military obligation, see WVU's [Military Leave section of the undergraduate catalog](#). Students who will miss more than a week of course work due to health condition or personal trauma should refer to WVU's [Emergency Leave Policy](#).

For the full statement, see the Undergraduate Catalog:

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#enrollmenttext>

/ Submitting Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the Course Calendar.

Major Assignments. Major assignments will lose 10% from the final assignment grade for each calendar day that a rough or final draft is late. If you don't submit a rough draft *on time*, you will not be able to participate in the peer review. If you don't submit a rough draft, I won't grade a final draft.

Homework. You will complete many short homework assignments, discussion posts, or other writing to prepare you for the major assignments. Some I may collect for a homework grade, others I may count as a quiz or toward your participation grade. **I do not accept late homework.**

Professional Standards. You're expected to follow professional standards in your work such as promptness, neatness, and correct mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation). Toward that end, please spell check your work and plan ahead when switching between computer programs—documents created in Google Docs or MS Word might look different when saved as a PDF—and don't expect spell check to catch all errors.

Unless otherwise noted, all submissions should adhere to the following guidelines:

- One-inch margins, single spaced, 11- or 12-point legible typeface (e.g., Times-New Roman, Garamond, Arial, or Calibri)
- Written documents should be submitted as .docx or .pdf.
- Presentation assignments should be submitted as .ppt or .pptx.
- No emailed homework or Google Docs (unless requested); assignments created in Google Docs should be exported as a Word doc or PDF prior to submission.

/ Overview of Assignments & Grade Weights

Assignments are graded on content, technique, and style. Before you submit a final draft, you will receive a detailed assignment sheet and grading rubric, as well as extensive comments (from me and your peers, written or oral) that will help you in the revision process. For additional comments, please visit my office hours.

Major assignments	Grade weight
Job Application package	20%
Technical Description	20%
Presentation	20%
User Guide	20%
Other work	
HW, Quizzes & Participation	10%
Midterm Reflection Memo	5%
Final Reflection Memo	5%
Total	20%

Weighted Grades

Grades for this course are *weighted*, which means that the point values don't correspond exactly to your overall course grade. In other words, Assignment A and Assignment B might count equally toward your final course grade (20% each), even though the possible points for each assignment may differ (e.g., 50 points vs. 75 points). eCampus will display both your point total and weighted grades.

/ Grade Descriptions

The major assignments for this course will be graded according to the following criteria:

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. A company or organization could use these documents without further revisions and might even use them 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 or organization 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 or organization 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. A company or organization would most probably dismiss the writer from current projects.

Grading Scale

A+: 97 or above

A: 93-96

A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89

B: 83-86

B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79

C: 73-76

C-: 70-72

D+: 67-69

D: 63-66

D-: 60-62

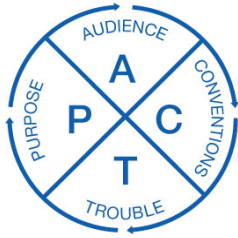
F: 59 and below

/ Inclusion Statement

WVU is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this course, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700 or <https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>). For more information on WVU's Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, please visit <https://diversity.wvu.edu/> as well.

/ SpeakWrite Certification

This course will emphasize effective communication, provide opportunities for feedback and revision, and base a significant portion of the final grade on written and spoken communication. The Eberly Writing Studio will work one-on-one with students on everything from note-taking and pre-writing to revision strategies, editing, and effective presentation techniques.



Purpose: What exactly do I want to happen?

Audience: Who is reading, listening, or viewing?

Conventions: What is expected in this context?

Trouble Spots: What could get in the way of my goals?

/ Department of English Affirmation of Values

We, the members of WVU's Department of English, believe that critical and creative reading and writing constitute acts of radical love. We ally ourselves with a multitude of departments, student bodies, and dedicated individuals across the country and the world who refuse to remain silent within a climate of hatred and violence: be it from sexism, racism, classism, ableism, nativism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, or Islamophobia. We are committed to building communities, not dividing them.

Colson Hall and our classrooms campus-wide are spaces where students, faculty, and staff may safely voice their concerns and where we may, together, foster futures more just. We aim to raise the status of those suppressed by the status quo; in assembly with human and nonhuman beings, we protest all types of environmental degradation, especially those prescribed at the expense of inhabitants' health.

Our research and syllabi affirm the core values of compassion, inclusivity, and care that a diverse humanities program holds for everyone. By telling stories of those who suffer under oppression in any form, past and present, we honor the ability of language and other means of communication—in each area of study we offer—to redress these wrongs, urge unity, and pursue peace. To those who seek shelter or wish to expand its scope, we welcome you; we thank you; we are with you.

WRIT 305 Technical Writing
Course Calendar
Spring 2024

Week 1

M Jan 08	In class:	Technical writing and the rhetorical situation
	HW:	1) Wedberg, "What is technical writing and how does it relate to UX writing?" 2) Graves & Graves, "Thinking about audience, purpose, and genre," pp. 29, 32-36, and 40-45
W Jan 10	In class:	Email communication, concision, precision
	HW:	1) Email assignment (eCampus) 2) Wardle, "You Can Learn to Write in General," pp. 30-33
F Jan 12	In class:	Last day to add/drop without a W Job Package Assignment: genre sets Interpreting job ads
	HW:	1) Audience analysis for job ad 2) Markel, "Writing job application materials," pp. 386-405

Week 2

M Jan 15	Univ. closed	MLK Day
W Jan 17	In class:	Rhetorical elements of the resume: categories/organization (logos) Bullet point formula, action verbs, and memorable details (ethos and pathos)
	HW:	1) Gillenwater, "Visual Communication," pp. 15-17 2) Review sample resumes 3) Begin drafting your resume
F Jan 19	No class	Snow Day
	HW:	1) Markel, "Writing Job Application Materials," pp. 411-415 2) Review sample cover letters

Week 3

M Jan 22	In class:	Resume workshop: visual design, detailed descriptions
	HW:	1) Begin drafting your cover letter
W Jan 24	In class:	Rhetorical elements of the cover letter: claim to candidacy, select & develop (logos, ethos, and pathos) Cover letter for a job vs. an internship Write an effective introduction
	HW:	1) Complete resume and cover letter draft 2) Doyle, "Best thank-you emails for after an interview examples"
F Jan 26	In class:	Due: Job Application Package rough draft Discuss PACT memo and thank-you email Begin peer review
	HW:	1) <i>By Monday</i> : Complete peer reviews

Week 4

M Jan 29	No class	Dr. Phillips available to meet after 1:00pm (102 Colson) Review peer review comments
	HW:	1) Work on job application revisions
W Jan 31	In class:	Meet w/ peer review partners Work on revisions
	HW:	1) Work on job application revisions
F Feb 02	In class:	Due: Job Application Package final draft Introduce Technical Description assignment
	HW:	1) Complete: Technical Description proposal - please print your answers for next class and upload to eCampus 2) Review sample technical descriptions: curling and riparian forest buffers 3) Markel, "Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions," pp. 534-551

Week 5

M Feb 05	In class:	Workshop proposals Writing sentence definitions (eCampus)
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	HW:	1) Graves & Graves, "Researching technical subjects," p. 73 and pp. 88-94
W Feb 07	In class:	Conducting research/locating useful sources
	HW:	1) Henze, "Adaptation strategies and rhetorical appeals" 2) <i>Due Monday</i> : Technical description source summary
F Feb 09	In class:	Introductions: appeals to wonder or application, problem/solution Organizational principles; strategies for providing enough detail
	HW:	1) Begin drafting your document
Week 6		
M Feb 12	In class:	Image search: Google Images, Creative Commons, picture attribution Page layout considerations: balance, white space, justification
	HW:	1) Keep drafting your document
W Feb 14	In class:	In-class workday
	HW:	1) Complete your Technical Description rough draft
F Feb 16	In class:	Due: Technical Description rough draft Discuss PACT memo and grade rubric Begin peer reviews
	HW:	1) Complete peer reviews
Week 7		
M Feb 19	In class:	Consult with peer review group
	HW:	1) Work on revisions
W Feb 21	In class:	In-class workday
	HW:	1) Work on revisions
F Feb 23	In class:	Review Technical Description PACT memo and grade rubric Discuss Midterm Reflection Memo
	HW:	1) Complete Technical Description final drafts

Week 8

M Feb 26	In class:	Due: Technical Description final draft Introduce Presentation assignment
	HW:	1) Presentation proposal 2) Reynolds, "Planning in Analog," pp. 61-74, and "Crafting the story," pp 77-87
W Feb 28	In class:	Narrative: What's your point? Why does it matter? Sticky ideas/SUCCESS: Why our screens make us less happy
	HW:	1) Reynolds, "Presentation design: principles and techniques," pp. 131-185 2) Nathans-Kelly & Nicomento, "Clarify topics with full-sentence headers," pp. 65-91
F Mar 1	In class:	Midterm grades due Due: Midterm Reflection Memo Slide design workshop: full-sentence headers and images as background (eCampus)
	HW:	1) Nathans-Kelly & Nicomento, "Build information incrementally," pp. 95-107 2) Work on your slide decks and narrative

Week 9

M Mar 4	In class:	Building information incrementally and using animations
	HW:	1) Nathans-Kelly & Nicomento, "Make slide decks with archival and legacy value," pp. 175-188
W Mar 6	In class:	Archival notes and audience handout
	HW:	1) Work on your slide decks and narrative
F Mar 8	In class:	How to begin and end a presentation; avoiding bad habits Assign presentation dates
	HW:	1) Complete your presentation: slides and handout due Mon., Mar. 18 for everyone, regardless of presentation date

Week 10

Mar 11-15 **No class** **Spring Break**

Week 11

M Mar 18 In class: **Due: Presentation (slides & notes) and Handout**
Presentations 1-5

W Mar 20 **No class** **Dr. Phillips at conference**

F Mar 22 In class: Presentations 6-10

Week 12

M Mar 25 In class: Presentations 11-15

W Mar 27 In class: Presentations 16-20

F Mar 29 **Univ. closed** **Spring holiday**

Week 13

M Apr 1 In class: Introduce User Guide assignment

HW: 1) Bit.ai blog, "Technical manual: What, types, & how to create one?"
2) Markel, "Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions," pp. 551-571

W Apr 3 In class: Analyzing audience and purpose
Gathering requirements

HW: 1) Decide which option you will use for the assignment and work with the system. Click all links, tabs, etc., and make a list of questions regarding meaning or functionality
2) Lemke, "The Different Types of Manuals in Technical Writing"

F Apr 5 In class: Expert review: Work with the systems and familiarize yourself with all functionality

HW: 1) Begin drafting your document

Week 14

M Apr 8	In class:	Rhetorical elements of user guides: Explanations, workflows, references; non-procedural information
	HW:	1) Review sample user guides
W Apr 10	In class:	Rhetorical elements of instructions: overview/introduction, materials, imperative voice/numbered steps Differences between online and offline (print) instructions Targeting users with different levels of expertise (fried chicken)
	HW:	1) Work on your documents
F Apr 12	In class:	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the univ. Taking and editing screenshots How to arrange text and images Review WVU brand and style guide: color, type, logo
	HW:	1) Work on your documents

Week 15

M Apr 15	In class:	In-class workday
	HW:	1) Finish your rough drafts (upload to Google Drive folder)
W Apr 17	In class:	Due: User Guide rough draft In-class peer review
	HW:	1) Complete peer reviews
F Apr 19	In class:	Introduce Reflection Memo
	HW:	1) Work on User Guide revisions 2) Begin drafting Reflection Memo

Week 16

M Apr 22	In class:	In-class workday
	HW:	1) Keep working on revisions
W Apr 24	In class:	In-class workday
	HW:	1) Complete User Guide 2) Complete Reflection Memo
F Apr 26	In class:	Due: User Guide Due: Reflection Memo

Course wrap-up and SEIs