University of Washington
Department of English
ENGL 388: Professional and Technical Writing | Autumn 21

Course Information

ENGL 388 Prepares students to become conscious and conscientious communicators in various modes, platforms, and professions. Recommended: ENGL 288. Offered: AWSp.
GE Requirements: English Composition (C) Writing (W)| Course Canvas site: Section A | Section B

Instructor Information

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Course Description & Goals:

In the 21st century, the ability to write and communicate effectively is no longer restricted to a subset of workers like technical writers or public relations specialists-- it is a near universal requirement of all professionals that has a direct bearing on hiring, promotion, and sustained professional success. ENGL 388, Professional & Technical Writing, aims to do just that.

In this course you will apply core concepts of technical and professional writing in real-world contexts. These concepts include genre knowledge, content strategy usability, rhetoric (exigence, purpose, audience), visual and information design, ethics, cross-cultural communication, and plain language. Course projects will include several cases in which students, individually and collaboratively, need to select and use technical writing genres to communicate information or solve communication problems. As you carry out these projects, you will be working toward the following learning goals:

Effective Communication:

- Read closely and critically to analyze the purpose, audience, format, and conventions in varied types of professional and technical writing genres and across various media.
- produce rhetorically effective texts across a range of digital, print, and multimedia formats.
- Use multiple revision strategies for improving professional writing.
- Design, adapt and revise writing for different contexts, media, and audiences.
- Collaborate with others

Application & Engagement
- Engage in audience analysis to understand who you're writing for and how best to meet their needs.
- Apply critical thinking, close reading, and rhetorical persuasion to engage productively and ethically in scholarly, civic, and professional communities.
- Analyze how genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary; compose using common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts.

Research & Project Management:
- Develop strategies for gathering information systematically.
- Integrate the ideas and language of various sources.
- Document sources and research according to accepted convention and practice.
- Design and manage complex, multi-stage projects.

Professional Identity:
- Understand your role as a communicator within your professional field.
- See writing and communication as an essential component of ongoing professional practice.

Course Texts:

- [Open Technical Communication](#) OER Book
- The New York Times; [Wirecutter](#)
- HowtoGuides
- Pdf Readings uploaded in Canvas

Course Policies

Classroom Community: This course will take on challenging questions about technology and society. We will endeavor to discuss both the course materials and our responses to them in a respectful manner. In this community of thinkers demonstrating your maturity will be paramount, as will an agreement to consider our classroom as a productive space for expression and critique. When engaging in discussions, think not only about your own contributions, but also about the overall classroom dynamic: who is speaking more, who

less? How might you contribute to an atmosphere that enables everyone to participate meaningfully? Demonstrate respect by not sleeping in class, whispering to or chatting with classmates, or yawning loudly while your peers and I are talking. All electronic devices are allowed for course-related work and are acceptable uses of technology in our classroom.

Work Ethic: Your work in this class should mirror the work you do in a professional environment. Every document you produce must exhibit *conscientiousness.* This is a key word for success in this class and in the professional world this class is preparing you for. A *conscientious* person carefully reads and responds to directions, invests time and effort in the project at hand, and prudently edits all documents for correctness and rhetorical appeal. Not meeting deadlines, a careless attitude, and shoddy work is not a reflection of conscientiousness.

Canvas: Course schedule, assignments and additional readings (PDF) will be posted on Canvas. I will also periodically send out announcements and reminders using the Announcement Forum.

Deadlines and Submission Standards: I take deadlines very seriously as a mark of professionalism. Please aim to meet all deadlines and submit your assignments as specified. All assignments will be submitted electronically through Canvas (not ever via-email). I will not accept any emailed assignments be they by attachment or otherwise.

If you anticipate a late assignment, do email me ahead of time.
I will use the Comment tool in Canvas to review and annotate your work.

Professionalism: In the professional work environment, employees are expected to carry themselves professionally. Here is a basic professionalism explanation that I use. Professionalism is usually worth 10% of the grade.

Expectation	Problem
Complete all ungraded homework assignments in a timely manner	Missing or late homework assignment
Make a good-faith effort on all ungraded homework assignments	Lack of effort on homework assignment
Make a good-faith effort on all classroom work (individual or team-based)	Lack of effort in classroom work (individual or team-based)
Follow basic directions on every homework and classroom assignment	Failure to follow basic directions on homework or classroom assignment
Schedule and attend required conferences / peer review	Fail to schedule a conference or miss a scheduled conference / peer review
Actively participate in scheduled conferences / peer review	Not actively participate in a scheduled conference / peer review

Although I give explicit instructions for all assignment. Do make sure that your assignments include your name, page numbers, and correct formatting.

> When you email me, do: ask yourself:
> - o   Have I read the course syllabus/schedule?
> - o   Have I read the assignment prompt?
> - o   Have I read the instructions or checked the deadlines on Canvas?
> - Begin your message with an appropriate salutation such as "Dear/Hello/Hi/Professor."
> - Keep your question or request concise and concrete, and specific
> - End politely: include terms like "please" and "thank you."
> - Allow at least 48 hours for a response.

Assignments and Grades:

We will use a contract grading system, **which includes revision as part of the writing process.** You'll revise your drafts in response to peer review and instructor's comments before you turn in the final draft of major projects. Locate the revision process here. You will earn grades as follows: Exemplary, accomplished, developing, Under developed, No Submission as outlined in the grading contract. You will have opportunity to revise if you wish to change your grade. If you do not revise, your grade stands. The course assignments will be weighted as follows:

Assignments: There are three major assignments:

1. Jobs Skills and Technical Documents (15%)
2. Content Strategy and Analysis (35%)
3. Research Skills and Plain Language (25%)

  Other assignments include ethics and associated discussions (25%)

Grading Scale: As explained in the Academic Policies section of the catalog, UW's grading system uses a numerical 0.0 to 4.0 scale:

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Number	4.0-3.9	3.8-3.5	3.4-3.2	3.1-2.9	2.8-2.5	2.4-2.2	2.1-1.9	1.8-1.5	1.4-1.2	1.1-0.9	0.8-0.7	0.0
Note											Lowest passing grade.	Academic failure. No credit earned.

Writing Technical Documents: Your workwill entail reporting data and information in an organized and efficient manner; reflect workplace settings; and help people in both professional and personal contexts accomplish tasks. While each assignment will have specific criteria, those criteria are ultimately derived from the general characteristics of technical communication, which according to Markel and Selber (2015) are:

Addresses particular readers	Knowing who the readers are, what they understand about the subject, how well they speak English, and how they will use the document will help you decide what kind of document to write, how to structure it, how much detail to include, and what sentence style and
Helps readers solve problems	For instance, you might produce a video that explains to your company's employees how to select their employee benefits, or you might write a document spelling out the company's policy on using social media in the workplace. shows awareness of the document's purpose; of audience's needs; is attached to a problem-solving point of view
Reflects organizational goals	For example, a state government department that oversees vocational-education programs submits an annual report to the state legislature in an effort to secure continued funding, as well as a lot of technical information to the public in an effort to educate its audience. Although the connection may not be obvious, technical documents also reflect the organization's culture. For example, many organizations encourage their employees to blog about their areas of expertise to create a positive image of the organization.
Uses design to increase readability	Technical communicators use design features — such as typography, spacing, and color — to make a document not only more attractive but also more usable, so that is easy to navigate and understand. Document design, adherence to HATS*, professional pages, accurate visuals.
Consists of words or images or both	Images — both static and moving — can make a document more interesting and appealing to readers and can help the writer communicate and reinforce difficult concepts, communicate instructions and descriptions of objects and processes, communicate large amounts of quantifiable data, and communicate with nonnative speakers.
Collaboratively produced	No one person has all the information, skills, or time needed to create a large document. You will work with subject-matter experts — the various technical professionals — to create a better document than you could have made working alone. You will routinely post questions to networks of friends and associates — both inside and outside your own organization — to get answers to technical questions.

Revision & Late Work:

This course emphasizes continual revision. Thus, there are built into the course many opportunities to start your assignments early and revise them. Take advantage of these opportunities, and of the feedback you will

receive from your peers and instructor along the way! Because it is disruptive to my own work flow, I may not be able to provide feedback on late assignments. If you are not able to turn in an assignment, please make every effort to get in touch with me in advance of its due date so we can discuss a contingency plan. If your circumstances cause you to become chronically late with assignments such a way that interferes with your chances of receiving the course grade you would like, please contact me sooner rather than later (see section below on our course grading system).

Data Management: You are responsible for managing the data of all of your work. Since deadlines are stated in the course schedule and on the assignment sheets, technological problems (e.g., missing or corrupted files, internet failures/power outages, printing problems) should not be excusable reasons for late work.

Peer Review: The grades you earn in this class are confidential. However, the texts you produce in this class may be shared with your classmates as a part of our regular peer review process. In order to prepare you to meet the needs of a variety of readers in college and beyond, there will be opportunities during the semester for your work to be read and responded to by classmates. You should, therefore, always assume that the work you compose in this class is public, not private.

Collaboration: At least on one project this semester you will be working in teams of two to three. Your team will be assigned a task and you will divide up the work so that each individual contributes responsibly to the project's outcome. The grade the project receives will be determined in two ways: (1) the extent to which it satisfies the criteria of the task, as determined by me using assessment rubrics; and (2) each individual's anonymous evaluation of him/herself and of the other members of his/her team. The grade for the project will be lowered for those who do not contribute meaningfully to the project at hand.

Academic Conduct Policy: Cheating on examinations; plagiarism; falsifying reports/records; and unauthorized collaboration, access, or modifying of computer programs are considered serious breaches of academic conduct. Plagiarism includes copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written by other students. In this class you are to avoid plagiarism at all costs. The University of Washington policy on academic conduct will be strictly followed with no exceptions.

Accommodations: It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with DRS, please communicate your approved accommodations to your instructor at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary or permanent disability that requires accommodations (this can include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu

Academic Support:
The Student Technology Loan Program (STLP). offers laptops and other devices for students to borrow for an entire quarter: https://stlp.uw.edu/overviewLinks to an external site.

UW Libraries can offer research support, especially through the use of Subject Area Librarians in your course.

The Student Code of Conduct describes student rights and responsibilities on campus, including information about academic integrity and misconduct.

Disability Resources for Students. supports students with documented disabilities, and

helps provide accommodations, including accessible course materials.

Wellbeing and Community Resources:
[UW SafeCampus](#)
[Husky Health & Well-Being](#)

Covid-19 Protocols

All UW students are expected to complete their [vaccine attestation)](#) before arriving on campus and to follow the [campus-wide face-covering policy](#) at all times at all times when on-site at the University, including any posted requirements in specific buildings or spaces. You are expected to follow [state](#), [local](#), and [UW COVID-19 policies and recommendations](#).

If a student refuses to comply with the policy, the student can be sent home (to an on or off-campus residence). Student Conduct offices are available for consultations on potential violations of student conduct if needed.

To protect fellow students, faculty, and staff, if you feel ill, have been exposed to COVID-19, or exhibit possible COVID symptoms, or receive a positive COVID-19 test result, you must report to campus [Environmental Health & Safety](#) (EH&S).

All UW community members are required to notify EH&S immediately after:
- Receiving a positive test for COVID-19
- Being told by your doctor that they suspect you have COVID-19
- Learning that you have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19

You can notify the COVID-19 Response and Prevention Team by emailing covidehc@uw.edu or calling 206-616-3344.

If you need to temporarily quarantine or isolate per CDC guidance and/or campus policy, please notify your instructors as soon as possible. Together, we can arrange make-up work, or how assignments and course grading might be modified to accommodate missed work. For chronic absences, the instructor may negotiate an incomplete grade after the 8th week, or recommend the student contact their academic adviser to consider a hardship withdrawal (known as a Registrar Drop).

NOTE: In the event a student in this class tests positive for Covid, the class will move to remote format for two weeks and will reconvene for in-person learning after that.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus when necessary