

Course Title: TECHNICAL WRITING

Course Prefix: ENGL

Course No.: 1143

Section No.: P01

Department of | Languages & Communication |

College of | Arts & Sciences

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Office Hours: | MW 12-2pm, TR 1-3pm

Virtual Office Hours: | in eCourses and on Twitter most evenings (SR\_Wakefield)

Course Location: | Hilliard 123  
 Class Meeting Days & Times: | TR 11-12:20pm

Catalog Description: | Application of principles of composition and rhetoric to genres of scientific and technical writing including proposals, formal reports, presentations, business and scientific correspondence, manuals, technical articles and reports. Students will undertake a full scale project through proposal and research with formal oral and written presentations of a documented technical project from the student's major field of study.

Prerequisites: | "C" or better in ENGL1123

Co-requisites: | none

Required Text: | Markel, Mike. *Technical Communication*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010. ISBN-13-978-0-312-55532-0; 10-0-312-55532-6

Recommended Text/Readings: | none

Access to Learning Resources: | PVAMU Library:  
 phone: (936) 261-1500;  
 web: <http://www.pvamu.edu/pages/3585.asp>  
 University Bookstore:  
 phone: (936) 261-1990;  
 web: <https://www.bkstr.com/Home/10001-10734-1?demoKey=d>

**Course Goals or Overview:**

This course will develop student efficiency in designing and creating technical documents in acceptable professional formats; engage students in conducting necessary research; develop skills in interpreting and organizing data for formal reports; provide training for formal class presentations; and facilitate practical applications of technical writing in science and industry, including cross-cultural awareness.

**Course Outcomes/Objectives**

At the end of this course, the student will...

		Core Curriculum Objective
1	Work effectively, both individually and collaboratively.	Teamwork
2	Create a variety of documents including memos, resumes, cover & transmittal letters, original graphics, lab reports, and project reports.	Communication, Critical Thinking
3	Produce collaborative, multimedia, oral presentations.	Communication, Teamwork
4	Use Standard English necessary for reaching professional readers.	Communication
5	Define basic ethical and legal obligations for technical writers.	Personal Resp.
6	Use correct APA citation and format.	Personal Resp.

## Course Requirements & Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

**Resume and Memo** – In each of two professional documents, students will demonstrate **critical thinking** by analyzing the audience and purpose of the document and making appropriate choices about content and structure. They will demonstrate **communication skills** by composing clear and direct prose geared toward achieving the document’s purpose. On the memo document, students will demonstrate **personal responsibility** by implementing good communication ethics while responding to a particular scenario.

**Graphic Design Project** – In developing a professional graphic design product, students will demonstrate **critical thinking** by analyzing closely a particular set of data and an audience and making appropriate choices for effectively communicating the data in a visual format. They will demonstrate **personal responsibility** by using APA citation guidelines to document their data properly.

**APA Practice Exercises** – In a series of online exercises, students will demonstrate **personal responsibility** by properly citing source references of various types using APA guidelines.

**Exams** – On the midterm and final exams, students will complete written tasks that will require them to 1) demonstrate **critical thinking** by analyzing audience and purpose and making appropriate choices about content and structure, 2) demonstrate **communication skills** by composing clear and direct prose, and 3) demonstrate **personal responsibility** by implementing good communication ethics.

**Group Presentation** – In a group oral presentation accompanied by multimedia slides, students will demonstrate **critical thinking** by analyzing their audience and purpose and making appropriate choices about content and structure. They will demonstrate **communication skills** by clearly delivering concepts, data, and arguments in oral and visual formats. They will demonstrate **teamwork skills** by working with group members to develop their content and presentation materials.

**Group Research Project** – In an extensive group research project, students will demonstrate **teamwork skills** by working together to produce a detailed, research-based proposal or report. They will demonstrate **critical thinking** by analyzing audience and purpose and making appropriate choices regarding the content and structure of their proposal or report. They will demonstrate **communication skills** by composing clear and direct prose to achieve their purpose, and they will demonstrate **personal responsibility** by implementing good communication ethics and by citing their source material properly according to APA guidelines.

## Grading Matrix

Instrument	Value	Total
Resume (1 page, following specific format)	100 points	100
Memo (1 page, following specific format)	100 points	100
Graphic design (converting raw data to graph or chart)	100 points	100
APA practice exercises (convert information into correct in-text citations and Reference entries)	4 at 25 points each	100
Group presentation (oral presentation of research using principles of good slide design)	100 points	100
Group project report (researched proposal or recommendation report)	300 points	300
Midterm exam	100 points	100
Final exam	100 points	100
<b>Total:</b>		<b>1000</b>

### Grade Determination:

A = 896 – 1000 points

B = 796 – 895 points

C = 696 – 795 points

D = 596 – 695 points

F = 0 – 595 points

## Course Procedures

### Submission of Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted through eCourses. Due dates are included clearly on the syllabus so you can plan ahead. The work environment does not tolerate missed deadlines, so expect penalties for any late work just as you would experience on the job. Absence is NOT an excuse for missing an assignment due date. Athletes and those involved in ROTC, band, or other extracurricular activities will not be excused from this policy because of out-of-town events. Work may be handed in early, but not late.

### Formatting Documents:

Microsoft Word is the standard word processing tool used at PVAMU. If you're using other word processors, be sure to use the "save as" tool and save the document in either the Microsoft Word, Rich-Text, or plain text format. **Specific formats are crucial in technical writing;** be sure to follow guidelines for every assignment.

### Exam Policy

The midterm exam will be given on Thursday, October 18, in keeping with the official University schedule. The final exam may well be administered on Tuesday, December 11, also according to the new, official University schedule. No early or make-up examinations will be allowed except under documented emergencies, like a major surgery scheduled months in advance. **Making travel plans before the last day of final exams is not an emergency.**

## References

Student Center for Markel's *Technical Communication* <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm9e/>

## Semester Calendar

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 1, Intro to Technical Communication, focus on the 6 characteristics of technical documents & 8 measures of excellence
Assignment (s):	Read the syllabus carefully Apply the 6 characteristics / 8 measures to one of the samples in eCourses
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Ethics &amp; Audience</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 2, Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations / WWYD? discussion Chapter 5, Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose
Assignment (s):	Do a web search for the Code of Ethics for your future career field and read it carefully; take notes and bring them to class on Thurs.
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Organization &amp; Grammar</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 9, Writing Coherent Documents Chapter 10, Writing Effective Sentences
Assignment (s):	Complete practice revision activities
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Resumes</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 15, Writing Job-Application Materials
Assignment (s):	Bring a rough draft of your 1-page resume to class on Thursday for workshopping Final resume due Thursday of Week 5
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Memos</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 3, Writing Technical Documents Chapter 14, Writing Correspondence
Assignment (s):	Bring a rough draft of your 1-page resume to class on Thursday for workshopping Final resume due Thursday of Week 6
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Design of Original Graphics</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 8, Communicating Persuasively Chapter 12, Creating Graphics
Assignment (s):	Discussion and analysis of sample graphics: clarity and design Watch the eCourses videos on transforming Excel data into graphics Final graphic & brief analysis due Thursday of Week
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Effective Collaboration</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 4, Writing Collaboratively
Assignment (s):	Determine your best-fit Belbin team role
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Midterms</b>
Assignment (s):	Review notes from the first seven weeks—midterm exam on Thursday
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Research &amp; APA Citation</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 6, Researching Your Subject Appendix, APA Style / citation workshop
Assignment (s):	Read the group presentation and project assignments in eCourses Bring first page of a scholarly source to class on Thurs. for research workshop

**Week 10**

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

**Proposals**

Chapter 16, Writing Proposals

Formation of project groups

Create and sign a group contract based on the provided template

Set up your initial project timeline (engineering majors, create a Gantt chart)

Complete APA practice exercise #1 in eCourses by Friday

**Week 11**

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

**Recommendation Reports**

Chapter 19, Writing Recommendation Reports

Time in class for team meetings

Complete APA practice exercise #2 in eCourses by Friday

Complete self- and peer evaluations

**Week 12**

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

**Lab Reports**

Chapter 18, Writing Lab Reports

Lab report format in the College of Engineering

Time in class for team meetings

Complete APA practice exercise #3 in eCourses by Friday

**Week 13**

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

**Oral Presentations**

Chapter 21, Making Oral Presentations

Lecture on good slide design / using PowerPoint

Complete APA practice exercise #4 in eCourses by Friday

Work on project presentation

**Week 14**

Assignment (s):

**Group Presentations**

Come prepared for your team's presentation.

Ask questions of classmates.

Conduct reviews of other teams' communication skills and slide design.

**Week 15**

Assignment (s):

**Finals**

Review for final exam: multiple choice on citation + four essay questions

Complete final self- and peer evaluations

Group report due the last day of classes

**Final exams will follow the official University schedule.**

# University Rules and Procedures

## **Disability statement (See Student Handbook):**

Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in class should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal laws, a student requesting special accommodations must provide documentation of their disability to the SSD coordinator. Accommodations are NOT retroactive! They start when you provide your official letter of adjustment to the instructor.

## **Academic misconduct (See Student Handbook):**

You are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course and all other courses. Make sure you are familiar with your Student Handbook, especially the section on academic misconduct. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to university disciplinary procedures.

## **Forms of academic dishonesty:**

1. Cheating: deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he/she has not mastered; giving or receiving aid unauthorized by the instructor on assignments or examinations.
2. Academic misconduct: tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a scheduled test.
3. Fabrication: use of invented information or falsified research.
4. Plagiarism: unacknowledged quotation and/or paraphrase of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own in work submitted for credit. Failure to identify information, graphics, or essays from the Internet and submitting them as one's own work also constitutes plagiarism.

## **Nonacademic misconduct (See Student Handbook)**

The university respects the rights of instructors to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires campus conditions that do not impede their exercise. Campus behavior that interferes with either (1) the instructor's ability to conduct the class, (2) the inability of other students to profit from the instructional program, or (3) campus behavior that interferes with the rights of others will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such disruptive behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Such incidents will be adjudicated by the Dean of Students under nonacademic procedures.

## **Sexual misconduct (See Student Handbook):**

Sexual harassment of students and employers at Prairie View A&M University is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the university community violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Attendance Policy:**

Prairie View A&M University requires regular class attendance. Excessive absences will result in lowered grades. Excessive absenteeism, whether excused or unexcused, may result in a student's course grade being reduced or in assignment of a grade of "F". Absences are accumulated beginning with the first day of class.

Especially during the group project, missing class can negatively affect your grade!

## **Student Academic Appeals Process**

Authority and responsibility for assigning grades to students rests with the faculty. However, in those instances where students believe that miscommunication, errors, or unfairness of any kind may have adversely affected the instructor's assessment of their academic performance, the student has a right to appeal by the procedure listed in the Undergraduate Catalog and by doing so **within thirty days** of receiving the grade or experiencing any other problematic academic event that prompted the complaint.