

ENGL 3405—03W: PROFESSIONAL and TECHNICAL WRITING

T-R 9:30—10:50

TLC 1111

Spring Semester 2012

INSTRUCTOR: JOHN STURGIS
OFFICE (HOURS): PAFFORD 319 (Announced in class; Wednesdays by appointment only)
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LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COURSE GOALS

The following are taken directly from English Department policy documentation and are approved for publication in ENGL 3405 syllabi:

Course description: An intensive, practical examination of ways to write powerful, audience-driven documents in a variety of real-world business, professional, and technical contexts. Students will also learn how to make effective business-related presentations supported with appropriate documentary and visual aids.

- Prerequisites: ENGL 1101 and 1102.
- May be taken for certification in Secondary English Education.

Note: A "W" designation after a section number of a 3000- or 4000- level course signifies that the course is a Writing Across the Curriculum or WAC course. WAC accepts as a guiding principle the idea that writing is a valuable tool for learning and communication. Therefore, the writing components of a course so designated are designed to help you learn the material and communicate what you have learned. Students are required to take two 'W' courses for an undergraduate degree in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Course Goals

- Students will develop the rhetorical acumen and composing skills needed to prepare a variety of documents required in common business and technical writing contexts.
- Students will learn teamwork and collaborative authorship skills.
- Students will develop real-world problem-solving techniques.
- Students will understand and practice the scrupulous attention to detail necessary in a business and technical writing environment.
- Students will become aware of techniques for adapting their writing to the demands of a highly audience-driven, context-sensitive field.
- Students will develop techniques for making effective business presentations to individuals and groups.
- Students will understand and appreciate internationally and culturally diverse styles of business communication.

Program Goals

- This course fulfills one of the departmental requirements for the completion of the English major and the English Major with Secondary Education.
- Students will develop the analytical, oral and written skills to pursue graduate study or careers in teaching, writing, business and a variety of other fields.

REQUIRED TEXT and MATERIALS

Alred, Gerald, Charles T. Brusaw and Walter E. Oliu. *The Technical Writer's Companion*, 3rd edition. ISBN 0-312-25978-6.

Flash Drive or disk (required each day in class).

Pens (black and blue ink), pencils, and paper (required each day in class).

Three *cardboard* three-post binders will be required throughout the semester: One for all writing samples; one for formal submission of the Professional Writing Package at midterm and one for the formal submission of the Formal Report Project at the end.

In order to complete the assignments given in this course, students are required to have appropriate computer equipment outfitted with appropriate software (MS Word, PowerPoint), printers, portable memory devices, a my.westga e-mail account, and internet access. Technologically substandard work will not be accepted.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion, students will be able to edit and compose as demonstrated by the following:

Without reference texts, students will edit, recognize and correct diagnostic test items on technical usage and grammar.

Students will organize and draft instructions, processes, descriptions, proposals, terms and conditions, specifications, syllabi, operations and maintenance instructions, executive summaries, formal reports, business letters and memoranda in clear syntax and unambiguous semantic selection, and will develop in readily available applications graphs and tables that communicate numerical data in a clear visual format with unambiguous titles and labeling.

Students will write resumes, letters of application and other job-search correspondence including *curriculum vitae*, interview evaluations, and personnel reports.

Students will, individually and collaboratively, develop and present a researched presentation complete with an original PowerPoint package or other visual aid.

Students will research, develop and present a 6-8 page Research Paper covering a pre-approved topic of their choice, complete with proposal, executive summary, and references.

Students will execute in-class assignments—some announced, some impromptu—in order to demonstrate writing ability and understanding of the rhetorical context of their work. Papers submitted for this course will adhere to current MLA style and possess the following features:

1. Unless otherwise instructed, all written work will be the product of a word processor (MS Word) and printed in black ink on white paper with double-spacing throughout. A one-inch margin will be provided. Improper formatting will result in loss of points.
2. Your name, class and section, date of submission, and assignment description will be located in the upper left-hand corner of the first page (only) of the text.
3. Each submission will be provided with an appropriate label in answer to the assignment from which it is developed.
4. Proofreading and editing are considered very high order concerns in these submissions. The learning process that is facilitated by these writing exercises should not be mitigated by a distracting assortment of grammatical and mechanical writing errors. Shoddy work and poor writing habits will not be tolerated, and grades will reflect the gravity of this requirement, especially at this level (3000)
5. All written work, excepting that developed in class, will be in accordance with current MLA style. Students are referred to Maimon's *Writer's Resource*, TAB 6 for further information.

GRADING AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

You are responsible for your own education. You are expected to take this course and your performance in it very seriously. Your ability to think critically and respond to the material will be under close scrutiny at all times. Your attendance and participation in the classroom work of this course are an absolute necessity and will be observed closely and evaluated daily. You are expected to arrive on time and remain in class for its duration. You are further expected to appear in class with appropriate materials, work in progress and the required text. You are here forewarned that reading is at the crux of this course. Those who do not read the assigned material will be exposed quickly; reading assignments include chapter outlines and are to be completed on the date indicated on the calendar below. Reading quizzes may be liberally applied, and your final grade will become the grade that you earn in terms of your ability to read and write in a professional context. Your personal conduct while in this classroom is expected to be professional and adult. Unauthorized use of the technology during the class period constitutes a breach of this requirement.

Professional Presentation	35%
Presentation	10%
Report Proposal	10%
Formal Report	35%
Attendance and daily participation, Outlines, Miscellaneous documents (minutes, e-mails)	10%

PLAGIARISM POLICY

(Required on all English Department Syllabi)

“The Department of English defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. An equally dishonest practice is that of fabricating sources or facts; it is another form of misrepresenting the truth. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. Consistent with the last caveat, any instance of plagiarism or academic dishonesty in ENGL 3405-03W will result in an automatic course grade of F.”

COURSE POLICIES: ATTENDANCE, LATENESS, CLASS PARTICIPATION, AND CELL PHONES
and OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Attendance Requirement Policy: Strictly Enforced

Students will be administratively withdrawn from class based on the following attendance policy. For classes that meet three times a week, a student is allowed four absences. Upon the fifth absence, the student will be withdrawn. *For classes that meet twice a week, a student is allowed three absences. Upon the fourth absence, the student will be withdrawn. Be aware that no distinction exists between excused and unexcused absences.* Students withdrawn according to this policy on or before Wednesday, March 2, 2011, will receive a grade of *W*. Those withdrawn under this policy after that date will receive a grade of *WF*.

Disruptive Behavior Policy: Strictly Enforced

Students will be asked to leave any class meeting in which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, checking email or surfing the web, and using personal audio or video devices. Every class period that a student misses by being asked to leave for these reasons will count as an absence and be applied to the attendance policy stated above.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONFERENCES

For the purposes of this course, my office hours are before and after class on Tuesdays and Thursdays *by appointment*, and on Wednesdays from 10:30 until 4:30, all by appointment only. My office is in Pafford Hall, Number 319. Phone is 678-839-4899. E-mail is jsturgis@westga.edu, and my website is located at www.westga.edu/~jsturgis. I am always available to all of my students to discuss course-related concerns and material and will do as best I can to work with each of you individually as need be. I will expect reciprocity from you.

The syllabus below presented has been prepared well in advance of its presentation and is a fairly reliable calendar of proposed activities and course functions. I must reserve the right, however, to modify the calendar as necessary to accommodate the apparent but unexpected needs of the course and its participants. You will of course be advised of any such changes as they proceed out of necessities as they may arise.

SYLLABUS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Though not specifically stated below, the basic assumption prefacing this schedule is that students will have read the assigned material and be prepared to discuss it on the date indicated below:

Week One Introduction and Initiation

T, 1-10 Introduction to the course. Review of the Syllabus. Groundrules and housekeeping. Tips on Reading in College—The *Trivium / Quadrivium* and the Art of Learning. Assignment: Read All Prefatory Material in your text (inside front cover-xiii); Chapter 1 “The Writing Process” and Chapter 2 “Workplace Technology”.

R, 1-12 What is a Technical Writer? Detailed syllabus review. Discuss our major assignments and collaborative work. Assignment: Read Chapter 9 “Style and Clarity”

Note: Saturday, 1-14 is the last day of Drop-Add

Week Two Professional vs. Technical Writing

T 1-17 In-class readings quiz. (Prefatory Material , Chapters 1 and 2), and an exercise in detailed description writing. Assignment: Write a set of instructions using telegraphic style on the procedure you used to register for your classes this semester.

R 1-19 Editing and editorial marks. Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric (*The Trivium*). “The Writing Process”. Assignment: Write descriptions of five egregious grammar errors and instructions on how to detect them and the different ways to correct them. Read Chapter 10 “Usage”

Week Three Instruction Sets and Procedural Writing

T 1-24 In-class: Watch an Alton Brown video. Assignment: Polish your instructions for submission when you get to class on Thursday.

R 1-26 Review video sample and grade a classmate’s instructions. Assignment: Read Chapter 11 “Grammar”

Week Four Professional Writing Indeed

T 1=31 Discussion of prior Readings and an *in-class Reading and Outlining of Chapter 12 “Grammar”*. Assignment: Read Chapter 8 “Job Applications” and prepare a personal academic resume and an employment resume for review and discussion in class on Thursday. Find *two different jobs* you would like to apply for on the internet, download the information and bring it to class with you on Thursday.

R 2-2 In-class: Planning and writing **resumes** and **cover letters**. Assignment: Read Chapter 7 “Correspondence” for submission on Tuesday, beginning of class.

Week Five Resumes, CVs, Covers, etc.

T 2-7 Peer review and editing of resumes and cover letters. In-class collaboration and revision, proofreading and editing skills. Assignment: In-class writing of business correspondence to be followed up with completing what you have written in class and turning it in for grading on Thursday.

R 2-9 Final Drafts of Resumes, CVs and Cover Letters due. Assignment: Prepare a letter addressed to me that identifies the possibilities you have developed for your Formal report. This is *not* your formal Proposal, but it is important correspondence and it will be graded. An appropriate e-mail with your letter attached as a Word document will be the means of submission.

Week Six Revision and Final Preparation

- T 2-14 Preparation for midterm and submission of Presentation Package. In-class writing: memos, e-mails, meeting minutes, trouble reports. Edit and revise at home for inclusion in the PP. Technical Writing Samples.
- R 2-16 In-class work on Presentation Package. Revise your resume and be sure you bring it to class on Tuesday. Assignment: Prepare a completed Rough Draft of Your Presentation Package for final peer review and editing on Tuesday in Class. **Do Not Miss this Class!**

Week Seven Writing is *never* finished

- T 2-21 In-class work polishing your Presentation Package.
- R 2-23 Presentation Package due, beginning of Class. Writing Proposals, Press Releases, and other technical documents.

Week Eight Technically speaking

- T 2-28 Discussion of the real time scope of Technical Writing. Assignments: Read Chapter 5 "Technical Writing Documents and Presentations". Assignment: Prepare formal Internal Proposal for Formal Report.

Note: Last day to withdraw with a grade of W: Friday 3-2

- R 3-1 Midterm Exam I

Week Nine

- T 3-6 Proposal types and the Preparation thereof. Report assignments and Verification of Sources
- R 3-8 Review of preliminary Proposals and other Technical Documents. Brochures and Press Releases relative to your project. Assignment: Read Chapter 3 Research and Documentation.

Week Ten

- T, 3-13 Research types and methodologies
- R, 3-15 Formal Proposal for Formal Report due. Midterm Exam II . **Do Not Miss This Class!**

Week Eleven No Class: Spring Break

- T 3-20
- R 3-22

Week Twelve

- T 3-27 Specifications and Scopes of Supply. Research and Development Documentation. Engineering System. MilSpec. System. Using the Internet for research. Manufacturer's Directories and Advertising.
- R 3-29 Writing Newsletters and Presentations. In-class drafting and collaboration. Planning and Writing Technical manuals. Brochures. Assignment: Read Chapter 6 "Formal Reports".

Week Thirteen Real World Research and Writing: Feasibility Reports and Projection Reports

- T 4-3 Identifying and Verifying Sources for your research. Qualitative vs. Quantitative projects. Interviewing. Assignment: Design five interview questions for use with your research.
- R 4-5 Researching sources and Writing Reports. Assignment: Designate and Qualify a minimum of five different sources for your research project. Write them up and submit them for approval on Tuesday. Assignment: Read Chapter 4 "Design and Graphics" due for submission on Tuesday.

Week Fourteen Jazzing it up and The Abstract

- T 4-10 Defense of Sources Presentations conclude. Using Graphs and Tables, other illustrative components in formal documents and manuals. Assignment: Create a pie chart that envisions the contributions of each of your Formal Report Sources. Be prepared to share it with the class on Thursday.
- R 4-12 Writing recommendations and references, Technical Qualifications documents. **Do not miss this class.**

Week Fifteen Presentation Guidelines

- T 4-17 Technical Writing Holistics. Assignment: Prepare Rough Draft of your Formal Report for submission and remarks during your conference. The document should be fully realized and lacking only final proofing, editing and polish.
- R 4-19 Last Day of Class. Final Exam Assignment and instructions.

Week Sixteen The End is Near

- Exam Week Section 03W Exam Schedule: Thursday, April 26, 8:00 AM
