

English 318 – Advanced Technical and Professional Communication

Contact Information

Instructor: Meg McGuire Office: F3 Milton Hall (Graduate Teaching Complex)

Phone: (575) 646-3931 (this is the English Department phone number)

Email: mmcguire@nmsu.edu (but please try to do all email through Blackboard)

Office Hours: I am available by appointment - through Blackboard chat or face-to-face

Required Texts

Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach, 6th edition by Paul V. Anderson

Non Designer's Design Book, 3rd edition by Robin Williams

Additional readings provided on Blackboard

Course Description

This class will help you gain experience and a greater understanding of the genres of writing that are performed in the workplace. In order to achieve this, we will spend a significant amount of time discussing and analyzing the rhetorical situation of the composition process, both with text and document design. By exploring the rhetorical situation, you will not only develop strategies for persuasiveness and effectiveness in communication, but you will be able to better assess the process and approaches that will work for various projects and various audiences.

Furthermore, you will also have an opportunity to investigate the type of writing and organizational context that occurs specifically in your field. Doing so will help you to view a "real-world" rhetorical situation and writing process that you may be faced with in your future. This should give you a greater understanding of how the writing process fits into your profession.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Understand and address the rhetorical situation that various workplace writing and communication requires
- Develop writing, planning, and research strategies that will aid you in your workplace writing
- Engage in effective collaboration with colleagues to manage projects
- Gain experience managing short and long term projects
- Incorporate design principles, images, graphics and charts into documents to aid in the usability of the document
- Understand the rhetorical choice in using various technologies to convey meaning

About the Instructor

Since we won't get to know each other face-to-face, I thought I would take the time here to introduce myself. My name is Meg McGuire and I am currently working on my PhD in Rhetoric and Professional Communication. I also have a Master's degree in Scientific and Technical Communication. Before I came back to school for my PhD, I worked as a technical writer, so many of the issues and projects we will discuss and do in this class, I have had to deal with.

I am originally from Michigan and hope to never live in a place as cold as there ever again. I've lived in Las Cruces, NM for the past three years and lived here before while I was getting my Bachelor's degree. I love this part of the country, for it's warmth - not just in temperature, but in the people and culture as well.

I am really looking forward to this semester and getting to know you all (virtually).

Online Course Policies

Technology

Because this class is online, it is important to have easy and consistent internet access. If this is a problem, you should reconsider taking an online version of this class.

That being said, we all know technology can fail us when we least expect it, so you should have a backup plan in case of computer problems. That means going to a computer lab or the library to get your work done. Also, do not wait until two minutes before the due date to start uploading assignments. Using computer problems as an excuse for a late assignment is **unacceptable**.

In a face-to-face class, we would have three hours of in-class time as well as the six to nine hours you might spend weekly reading and doing homework for the class. For this online class, you should expect to do roughly 10-12 hours of work a week.

Assignments must be turned in as a .doc file. These files are 1997-2004 Word documents, which is a common file format that everyone can open. I will NOT accept files as.docx (if you are unsure how to save your files this way, Google it!). You will also need to include your last name and assignment name in the file name. For example, if I were to turn in a visual analysis assignment, my assignment file title would look like this,
mmcguire_visualanalysis.doc

Any other file name will not be accepted and you may be marked down for turning in late work.

Missed Deadlines/Participation/Late Work

Turning in work and participating in discussions is VERY important. The pace of this class is very quick, so checking in every Monday and Thursday and getting your work

turned in by midnight is important. In fact, checking in daily is the best way to approach this class. I may add notes or addendums to the class that would be important information. If you anticipate there will be a day that you cannot get onto Blackboard to get your work uploaded by the deadline, notify me as soon as possible and we can discuss it. If/when you miss a deadline, it is your responsibility to turn in your work before you miss the deadline.

However, I do know that missing deadlines is sometimes unavoidable. Therefore, the following is a guideline as to how many deadlines you can miss and how many points you can still earn.

2 or fewer missed deadlines = 10/10 points

3 missed deadlines = 8/10 points

4 missed deadlines = 7/10 points

5 missed deadlines = 6/10 points

6 missed deadlines = 5/10 points

7 or more missed deadlines = you will fail the class.

I do not accept late work. Turning your work in at 12:01 am is a missed deadline - unless you contact me PRIOR to the deadline.

Participating in meaningful ways is also an important component of the class. For each reading and/or activity, I will post several discussion questions. It is important to not only give thoughtful answers to the questions, but to respond and discuss the issues with each other. Therefore, I will assign you to discussion groups and you will be responding only to those people in your group. Further details are in the Discussion Board Assignment Sheet under Assignments.

Contacting Me

The best time to send me an email and get a really prompt response is Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. That does not mean I won't respond to an email sent before or after those times or on the weekend, I just might not get back to you as quickly.

Also keep in mind that if you see that I am online during the times listed above, you can start a chat with me.

I am also available for one-on-one meetings, either online or face-to-face. Just email me about what times would work best.

Revision

You have the option to revise the Web 2.0 analysis or the Visual Analysis assignments. You have one week from the time I return it to you to turn in the revision. You can revise for one grade higher and keep in mind you are not guaranteed a higher grade.

Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities are to be provided with reasonable accommodations in accessing buildings, programs and services. Students are encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities for academic-related services, and may refer to the Campus Directory for resource information, telephone numbers and Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDD) locations. Disability-based discrimination grievances may be filed according to the procedures set forth in section 4.05.10 of the New Mexico State University Policy Manual (dated March 22, 2002).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism can be defined as using another person's work without acknowledgement; making it appear to be one's own work. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is making it appear to be one's own work. Plagiarizing in this class will result in failing the class immediately. Consult the NMSU [Code of Conduct](#) regarding your responsibilities and rights concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty.