

[English 410 :: Technical Writing]
[Section 011 – M/W/F 1:15 - 2:25 pm]
[Section 012 – M/W/F 12:20 – 1:10 pm]

Meeting Location: 123 Sharp Lab

Instructor: Dr. Meg McGuire

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Office Hours: Mondays 2:30 to 4:00 pm, Tuesdays 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, or by appointment

[Required Texts]

- *The Technical Communication Handbook*, Laura J. Gurak and Mary E. Hocks
- Additional readings provided on Sakai

[Description]

This course is designed to help you examine and gain experience with a variety of professional communication genres. You will focus on understanding and negotiating the rhetorical situation, which will help you develop practical approaches for developing content for multiple audiences. By analyzing the purpose, audience, and context of various communicative situations, you will be able to create documents that successfully achieve their intended goals. Importantly, this course will also focus on the design and arrangement of documents, as well as on the development of their textual content.

[Course Objectives]

- To write well in various technical and scientific situations
- To develop a strong, careful, correct professional style
- To communicate effectively in various media (written and oral, visual and verbal, paper and electronic, face-to-face and mediated)
- To demonstrate team collaboration, communication, presentation, and discussion skills
- To develop skills with information technologies for creating, revising, and responding to texts and data

[Course Policies]

Attendance:

A great deal of what we do in this course will build upon discussion and work done during class meetings. Therefore, **daily attendance is required for this class**. Please remember

that it is your responsibility to find out from your peers what you missed in class. Contact me as soon as possible via email if you know you must absent. We will do many graded in-class assignments and these cannot be made up. **Excessive absences (six or more) will result in failure of the course.**

Extenuating Circumstances

If you become seriously ill, have a family emergency, or otherwise experience other extenuating circumstances during the semester **that constitute a legitimate reason for missing classes** or falling behind in the course, **let me know as soon as possible so we can try to resolve the issue.** You should also contact the Dean of your College. This office can assist you in notifying faculty and in validating your situation. You will need this validation to make up missed class work and assignments.

Tardiness:

At the beginning of each class I will call roll. If you come into class late and miss your name being called, you must come up to me at the end of class and let me know you were in class. **Otherwise you will be marked absent.**

Professionalism and Courtesy

All students are expected to conduct themselves professionally in the class and to treat the professor and other students with respect at all times. I expect you to be physically and mentally 'present'—listen, contribute, and otherwise engage. Texting or carrying on a side conversation, surfing the net or checking FB instead of working is not acceptable in this class.

Late Work:

I do not accept late work. Assignments should be turned in on the date they are due. However, I do realize that life happens and that sometimes gets in the way of assignments. If this does happen, please let me know **BEFORE** the due date and we can work something out.

Technology:

If you own a laptop, I encourage you to bring it to class as I will often allocate class time for working on assignments. However, I will expect you to use your laptop like a professional who understands how to appropriately multi-task.

I ask that all your assignments be submitted through Sakai, unless otherwise specified. You will have until the end of class time of the due date to submit these assignments. Assignments must be turned in as attached .doc or PDF file. You will also need to include your last name and assignment name in the file name. For example, if I were turn in a research analysis, my assignment file name would look like this:

mcguire_rhetoricaanalysis.doc

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

[Course Projects and Assignments]

Major assignments will include instructions and explanations of grading expectations for each project.

In and Out of-Class Assignments (10%):

Classroom discussions and activities are important in achieving the overall objectives of the course. Homework and in-class work will be included in the final course grade and will often build towards your final projects. Many of these assignments are graded and some are not, but all are mandatory and necessary to contribute to your success in this course. I also expect that you will meaningfully contribute to in-class discussion, whether it is large group discussions or small group work.

Rhetorical Analysis (15%)

This assignment asks you to analyze a piece of technical communication (user manual, instructions, fact sheet, application, guide) using the key concepts we discuss in class.

Redesign Project (15%)

You will take the piece of technical communication you chose for your rhetorical analysis and redesign it so that it is more usable for the intended audience. You can take some creative liberties and create something outside its original genre, such as a brochure, a website, an infographic, etc.

Group Project (60%)

This project asks you to provide documentation for a new collaboration tool the University of Delaware Department of English will use. You will work through various steps including:

- Needs Assessment/Audience Analysis
- Project Planning
- Creating a User Manual
- Researching Usability
- Giving Presentations
- Attention to Document Design

[University Writing Center]

The Writing Center in 016 Memorial provides free one-on-one instruction to students who have writing assignments in this or any course. You may make an appointment by visiting the Center's Web Site: www.cas.udel.edu/writing-center. (The telephone number is 831-1168.)

[Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)]

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me in the first or second week of the semester. Any student who may require an accommodation should contact me as soon as you become aware of your circumstances.

[Academic Misconduct/ Plagiarism]

The University of Delaware protects the rights of all students by insisting that individual students act with integrity. Accordingly, the University severely penalizes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Unethical or plagiarized work will receive a zero and may result in failure of the course. I will also report any serious breach of ethics to the Dean of your College.

[Course Evaluation]

A final expectation of the course is for you to complete the on-line student evaluation. This survey will be available for you to complete during the last two weeks of the semester. Apart from being an expectation of the course, your evaluation provides valuable information to me and to the Department.

[Class Schedule]

[*The Technical Communication Handbook - TCH*]

[Dates and activities may change]

Week One (August 27-29)

Introduction to class. Rhetorical situation.

Week Two (September 2-6 – No class Monday, 9/2 for Labor Day)

Read pages 3-16 and 33 through top of 44, *TCH*. Introduction of Rhetorical Analysis Assignment.

Week Three (September 9-13)

Read pages 63-68, “Email and Attachments” and 76-78, “Instructions *TCH*. Genres of technical communication

Week Four (September 16-20)

Read pages 120-124, “Memos,” 142-156, “Proposals” *TCH*. Genres of technical communication. **Rhetorical Analysis is due, Friday, 9/20**

Week Five (September 23-27)

Read *CRAP*. Document Design. Introduction of Redesign Assignment.

Week Six (September 30 – October 4)

Read pages 156-216, “Reports”, *TCH*. Genres of technical communication. **Redesign peer review, Friday, October 4.**

Week Seven (October 7-11)

223-251, “User Manuals.” *TCH* Presentations of Redesign Assignment. **Meet in MEM 028 Wednesday, October 9 :: Redesign Assignment due Friday, 10/11.**

Week Eight (October 14-18)

Read pages 136-140, *TCH*. Introduction of Final Group project.

Week Nine (October 21-25)

Needs Assessment/Audience Analysis due Friday, 10/25

Week Ten (October 28-November 1)

Conferences about project plans. (**Project Plans due day of conference**)

Week Eleven (November 4-8)

User Manual

Week Twelve (November 11-15)

Usability. Usability Methods Report

Week Thirteen (November 18-22)

Continue working on final project

Week Fourteen (November 25-29 – No class November 27 & 29)

TBA

Week Fifteen (December 2-6)

Presentations **User Manuals/Usability Report due.**