



# ENGL 3203: Technical Writing

2025 Fall Online Asynchronous | X10

This course introduces students the purposes and practice of expository writing in the professions, with particular emphasis on writing related to each student's major. Topics include audience analysis, communication ethics, collaboration, information design, technical editing, and professional writing genres (letters, e-mails, memos, procedures, proposals, reports, and presentations).

## Course Objectives

- Analyze communication contexts rhetorically by understanding subject, readers (audiences), and purpose.
- Create technical documents that solve problems and improve situations through communication.
- Analyze and apply the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication.
- Use conventions of various workplace genres, such as proposals, instructions, correspondence, reports, and slide decks, with understanding of how the genre conventions can be used as heuristics and as principles of arrangement.
- Apply concepts of information design to create convincing, usable, and informative documents.
- Collaborate with classmates in planning, researching, writing, revising, and presenting information.
- Identify and apply the principles of effective style in the composing of usable, reader-centered written communications.

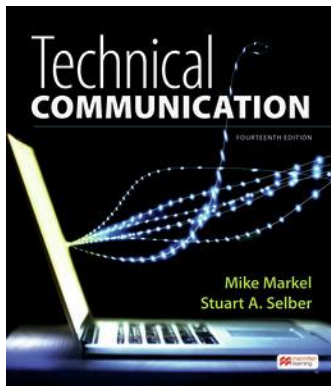
# Contact Information

Instructor: Meng Yu, PhD.  
Email: [meng.yu@msutexas.edu](mailto:meng.yu@msutexas.edu)

I will check the email from Monday to Friday 8 am to 5 pm. Messages sent outside this time span will not be check until the next business day. Students are also welcomed to visit the instructor during the office hours or request an appointment at a mutually convenient time. Students are strongly encouraged to “cc” themselves on all email correspondence to ensure delivery. Please note: There is a chance that I will not see the email on the same day that you send it. Therefore, please anticipate waiting at least 24 hours for a response to emails.

Office Hours:  
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11:00 am to noon (in person)  
Wednesdays: 11:00 am to 2 pm (in person)  
Zoom by appointment

## Texts



Markel, Mike, and Stuart Selber. *Technical Communication*. 14th edition. Bedford/St. Martins, 2025.

## Assessment

All assignments receive a numeric grade based on the 100-point scale. Assignments are weighted. You will complete three major projects that make up 80% of your grade for this course. Each project will consist of planning, design and production, and reflections. Here is the rough weight of each major assignment, and I might adjust weights of assignments as the semester progresses.

- Major Assignments
  - Correspondence (10%)

- Job Search Packet (15%)
- User Manual (20%)
- Technical Report (25%)
- Participations: Weekly Discussions, Homework, or Peer Reviews (30%)

Your final grade will be converted to a letter grade as follows:

A 88.5-100	B 79.5-89.4	C 69.5-79.4	D 59.5-69.4	F<59.5
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## Course Structure

This course will be taught online in D2L.

This course will be structured in weekly lessons or modules beginning on Mondays. The length of time spent on each module will vary depending upon the complexity of the assignment. All work within the lesson must be completed by the close of each lesson and prior to the start of the next lesson.

## Participation

Participants in this course should expect to spend about **3.5-4.5 hours** per week involved in the activities and completion of assignments over the semester. This is similar to the time one would invest in a course in a traditional classroom setting.

This time invested is an average, with some weeks requiring more and some less time to complete all assignments and activities. Participation will be evaluated as the completion of all activities within the unit or module period.

## Absences

Granted, it is difficult to take roll in an online course that has no set meeting times. However, it is somewhat common to get overwhelmed, particularly if you are taking more than one online course. Sometimes, students even disappear (so to speak) from online classes. And that's truly what being absent means in a class that meets virtually: to go missing.

Don't disappear and expect to make up missed work (daily work or major assignments). If you do disappear, expect that you will have to go to your dean (in person or via email) to provide me with an excuse before I will accept any missed work. If you cannot provide me with a legit excuse via your dean, the missed work will be entered as a zero (or zeroes).

In the end, you will get the grade you get. If you decide to skip three major assignments and all homework, that's okay with me, as long as you realize you will not be permitted to make it up without documentation.

If circumstances prevent participation or timely completion of assignments, you must contact me in advance of due dates.

## Technology

Students in this course will need a working and reliable computer and internet access that will allow the use of D2L course site tools, Google Drive, and any online resources provided. No special software is required but students will need access to MS Office products.

## Professionalism

Members of this class are expected to treat one another with courtesy, professionalism, and respect. Repeated unprofessional, rude, or inappropriate behavior can result in points being deducted from a student's final grade for the course per instance of such behavior.

## Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 940-397-4140.

## Writing Center & Tutoring

[Tutoring and Academic Support Programs](#) (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, writing tutors are available Monday through Thursday from 11:00am to 6:00pm and Sunday 2:00pm to 9:00pm. You don't need an appointment to use these services. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they provide support and feedback at all stages of writing, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

## Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to adhere to the Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed when completing any work for this course. When using the content or ideas of others, both published and unpublished sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (e.g., APA or MLA). See the MSU Student Handbook (attached to course website) to read the Student Honor Creed and the university's policy on academic dishonesty.

- All work submitted to D2L will be scanned by the Turnitin® program, which flags text that has been quoted from other sources and/or generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT.
- AI/ChatGPT: In this course, you are welcome and encouraged to use artificial intelligence platforms such as ChatGPT **ONLY** for **pre-writing tasks and brainstorming**. That said, you should not be using AI to produce your assignments or otherwise perform the “brain-work” that you are expected to be able to do (or learn to do) on your own. Doing so will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. If this happens twice, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course.
- When using the ideas of other published and unpublished sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (i.e., MLA or APA). If you submit an assignment in which quoted content is not placed in “quotation marks” and/or you have not cited the correct source, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. If this occurs twice in the course, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course. There are no exceptions to this policy.

## Campus Carry Statement

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked in accordance with state law. For more information please refer to the MSU Texas website.

## Technical Writing Online 2025 Fall Schedule

This schedule reflects a plan for the course, but deviations from this plan **will** become necessary as the semester progresses. Students are responsible for taking note of changes announced during class time **when** they occur.

### Module 1: 8/25 to 8/31

#### **\*Readings**

Course Syllabus

Course Expectations

Grading Policies & Standards

Avoid These Technical Mistakes

Textbook Ch1

#### **\*Weekly Discussions and Homework**

Introduce yourself discussion

"Avoid These Technical Writing Mistakes" Discussion

**\*Major Assignments**

N/A

**Module 2: 9/1 to 9/7**

**\*Readings**

Textbook Ch2 &Ch5

**\*Weekly Discussions and Homework**

Ethical Scenarios Discussion

“the Champlain Towers South Engineering Report” Discussion

**\*Major Assignments**

N/A

**Module 3: 9/8 to 9/21**

**\*Readings**

Textbook Ch14 & Appendix Part C

Tips for Successful Correspondence.pptx

Sample Complaint Letter

Plain Language

Memo Format and Study Notes

**\*Weekly Discussions and Homework**

“Memo: Good or Bad?” Discussion

Correspondence Peer Review

**\*Major Assignments**

Correspondence Due by 9/21

**Module 4: 9/22 to 10/12**

**\*Readings**

Textbook Ch11 &Ch15

Document Design: An Introduction Document Design: CRAP Strategies Document

Design: More Design Strategies

Using Storytelling as a Job Search Strategy

Resume & Cover Letter Checklist

Resume & Cover Letter Sample

**\*Weekly Discussions and Homework**

“Using Storytelling as a Job Search Strategy” Discussion

Resume Peer Review

Cover Letter Peer Review

**\*Major Assignments**

Job Search Packet:

Job Description Due by 10/5

Resume Due by 10/5

Cover Letter Due by 10/12

**Module 5: 10/13 to 11/2**

**\*Readings**

Textbook Ch20 & Ch9

User Manual Tips for Success

Text Wrapping Good and Bad Examples

User Manual Checklist

User Manual Sample

**\*Weekly Discussions and Homework**

“How to Create Vanilla Cupcakes” Discussion

User Manual Subject Discussion

User Manual Image Discussion

User Manual Half Draft Homework

User Manual Peer Review

**\*Major Assignments**

User Manual Due by 11/2

**Module 6: 11/3 to 12/5**

**\*Readings**

Textbook Ch17 & Ch18

Textbook Ch 6 & Ch7

Technical Report Headings

Recommendation Report Samples

Informational Report Samples

Technical Report Checklist

Using Sources in the Report

**\*Weekly Discussions and Homework**

Technical Report Discussion:

- Researching Your Subject

- Using Sources

- Sources Exhibition

Technical Report Rough Draft Homework

Technical Report Peer Review  
Course Reflection Memo Homework

**\*Major Assignments**

Technical Report Due by 12/3