



ENGL 3203: Technical Writing

2026 Spring Online Asynchronous | X21

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, technical editing, and elements of various types of technical reports. Each student will complete one major report as well as numerous shorter letters and reports.

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

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:

Monday to Wednesdays: 10:00 am to noon (in person)

Zoom by appointment

Textbook

[Open Technical Communication](#): This is a free, open-access textbook. Open the link and click “Read Open TC 1e,” or click the title of each chapter at the bottom of the webpage.

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. This course doesn’t have any mid-term or final exams. Your grade is evaluated through the following writing projects.

- 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

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding

assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Online Computer Requirements

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 or Office 365.

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. *Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. *Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline. There are many places to access your class. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however, they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into D2L.

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 the Student Wellness 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.
- ***Important!** I will use Turnitin to check the AI score on all major homework and assignments, including group assignments. If your AI score is over 30%, I will ask you to explain your AI use, such as sharing a full transcript of your chats with AI and your draft version history. You also need to submit a statement describing how you used AI in your assignment(s). Failing to provide such evidence may result in a grade of zero for your assignment. Ethical AI use will be evaluated by the instructor on a case-by-case basis. Please act responsibly when working with your classmates and disclose how you used AI in your group work to your group members before submitting any group assignments to me.
- 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.

University Closure Practices

In the event of university closure because of inclement weather conditions or emergency situations, students will be notified through official campus channels (MSU Alert, MSU Safety app, Postmaster emails, and website headers) and through communication with the local news networks. Students should refer to their course syllabi, course D2L News announcements, and/or their university email for expectations related to assignments due during the closure. For this course, unless a change is posted to the course D2L News, assignments due to be uploaded or posted to D2L during the closure will remain due as scheduled. Students who are unable to complete assignments due during a closure (for example, due to a power outage) will not be penalized but will be expected to notify the professor of their situation.

Technical Writing Online 2026 Spring 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: 1/20 to 1/25

***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: 1/26 to 2/1

***Readings**

Textbook Ch3 & Ch5

***Weekly Discussions and Homework**

Ethical Scenarios Discussion

***Major Assignments**

N/A

Module 3: 2/2 to 2/15

***Readings**

Textbook, Ch 2.1: Business Correspondence and Resumes
Textbook, Ch 2.13: 2.13: Memos and Emails
Plain Language Introduction and Techniques
Memo Format and Study Notes
Tips for Successful Correspondence.pptx
Correspondence Major Assignment Description
Sample Complaint Letter
Letter Format Study Note I & II

***Weekly Discussions and Homework**

“Memo: Good or Bad?” Discussion
Correspondence Peer Review

***Major Assignments**

Correspondence Due by 2/15

Module 4: 2/16 to 3/8

***Readings**

Textbook Ch4 Document Design
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 2/22
Resume Due by 3/1
Cover Letter Due by 3/8

Module 5: 3/16 to 4/12 (April 2 to 5 Holiday Break)

***Readings**

Textbook Ch 2.6: Instructions
Textbook Ch 2.7: User Guides
Textbook Ch 2.14: Technical Definitions and Descriptions
User Manual Tips for Success
Text Wrapping Good and Bad Examples
User Manual Checklist
User Manual Sample

***Weekly Discussions and Homework**

User Manual Subject Discussion
User Manual Image Discussion
User Manual Half Draft Homework
User Manual Peer Review

***Major Assignment**

User Manual Due by 4/12

Module 6: 4/13 to 5/8

Last day of “W” 4/29 at 4 p.m.

This module’s major assignment is a group-based submission.

***Readings**

Textbook Ch 2.9: Recommendation and Feasibility Reports
Textbook Ch 2.11 Titles, Abstracts, Introductions, and Conclusions
Textbook Ch 7: Collaborative Writing
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
- Looking for your group members
- Using Sources
- Sources Exhibition

Technical Report Rough Draft Homework
Technical Report Peer Review

***Major Assignment**

Technical Report due by 5/6
Group reflection memo homework due by 5/6

Course Reflection Memo Homework due by 5/8