



ENGL 3203-X20: Technical Writing

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Spring 2026 (Jan. 20, 2026 to May 14, 2026)

Online course

Syllabus & Schedule

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sally Henschel

sally.henschel@msutexas.edu

Office: **BW 214**

Office hours: We can visit in person, by phone, or in Zoom (Central Time)

Mon. noon – 1:00 p.m.

Tues. 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Fri. 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Other times available by appointment

Important Dates

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- For long semester courses, last day to drop with a grade of "W": **Wed. April 29, 2026**, before 4:00 p.m. An F will result if a student ceases to attend class without completely processing a course drop or withdrawal from the University. Withdrawals after this date will receive grades of "F." Note: You can receive an Instructor drop with a grade of "F" or "WF" prior to that date: See course policies for Late Assignments, Academic Dishonesty, and the University policies on [Withdrawals](#).

Course Description

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. **Prerequisite:** Communication core completed.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze communication contexts rhetorically by understanding subject, readers (audiences), and purpose. **Measurement:** Completion of course reading assignments, and successful completion of individual assignments and collaborative projects.
- Create technical documents that solve problems and improve situations through communication. **Measurement:** Successful completion of individual assignments and collaborative projects.
- Analyze and apply the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication. **Measurement:** Completion of course reading assignments, observation and evaluation of face-to-face and online discussions, and successful completion of individual assignments and collaborative projects.
- Write effective, meaningful technical prose. **Measurement:** Successful completion of individual assignments and collaborative projects.

- Apply concepts of information design to create convincing, usable, and informative documents. Measurement: Successful completion of individual assignments and collaborative projects.
- Communicate effectively with a diverse audience. Measurement: Observation and evaluation of face-to-face and online asynchronous discussions, completion of proposal presentation, and successful completion of individual and collaborative projects.

Textbooks and Technology

Textbooks and Resources

- [Technical Writing \(free, online\)](#)
- [Open-Technical Communication \(free, online\)](#)
- [MLA Handbook](#), ninth edition: free access MSU library, in the A-Z database
- [MSU Student Handbook](#)
- [MSU Mustangs Survival Guide](#)
- Other readings and resources will be made available in D2L.

Required Technology

- A computer or laptop with access to both the internet and a webcam (for team and instructor Zoom meetings).
- Extensive use of the MSU Desire-to-Learn (D2L) course management system 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. D2L resources:
 - Login to D2L from the [MSU homepage](#): On the homepage menu, click **Login**, and choose either **myMSUTexas** or **D2L**.
 - [D2L Login Instructions](#) (See bottom of the page for steps to follow if you have trouble logging in.)
 - [Student D2L Aids](#): helpful tips and how-to guides.

Assignments/Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Individual Assignments	
Discussion Posts (3)	15
Instructions	10
Citations	10
Résumé/Cover Letter	10
Individual Research Report	20
(65%)	
Team (Collaborative) Assignments	
Proposal	10
Final Team Report	10
Team Slideshow	10
Project Mgmt. site (Google folder)	2.5
Team member evaluation	2.5
(35%)	
Total Possible Points	100

Table 2: Total points for final grade

Grade	Points
A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	< 60

Collaborative Team Assignments

Collaborating with a team member on the team assignments is a **requirement** (i.e., you cannot complete these assignments on your own nor receive a grade for an assignment for which you did not contribute). Should your teammate not contribute or withdraw from the course, you will be re-assigned to a different team. (The final team assignments often are some of the highest grades received in the course.)

University and Course Policies and Procedures

Professionalism

Members of this class are expected to treat one another with courtesy, professionalism, and respect.

Instructor Response Policy

I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays, and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays. I typically grade and return assignments within one week following the due date.

Late Assignment Policy

All assignments will be due on dates assigned. No late work will be accepted. Students falling two assignments behind are subject to administrative withdrawal from the course by the instructor.

University Academic Dishonesty Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty is defined as “Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given).” Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Student Handbook](#), under Academic Dishonesty Procedure or through the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Course Academic Dishonesty Policy Details and Advice

All work submitted to D2L will be scanned by the Turnitin program which flags text that is quoted from a source or generated by AI. If quoted text is not placed in quotation marks **and** the correct source cited, 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 rule. To avoid this from happening, I suggest the following:

- **Ask for help:** First, and importantly, as the instructor of this course, I am available to assist you with any questions you have about the use and citation of sources. Just contact me several days before the assignment is due with a link to the source so that I have adequate time to look over the article and meet with you to discuss your concerns or need for assistance.
- **Don’t use AI:** Generally speaking, you are not allowed to use artificial intelligence (AI) engines, software, or artwork generating programs to produce content submitted for grading in this class **unless** the assignment instructions specifically call for the use of AI. I will provide more information about any specific assignment that involves the use of AI when the time is appropriate in the course. You may not, however, construe this limited use as permission to use these technologies in any other facet of this course.

- **Provide Instructor access to all sources used in assignments:** All sources cited in an assignment must be available, accessible online for me, the instructor, to review as I grade your assignments. Simply provide a working link (URL) to the **complete article** at the end of each source cited in your Reference or Works Cited list, which should be included at the end of the document. If you cannot link to the article, upload the article to the dropbox for the submission. A link to an abstract or to an online database which has a paywall won't work: I need to be able to read the entire article, just as you did.
- **Accurately cite sources:** When using the ideas of other published and/or unpublished sources, students must use accepted documentation conventions (i.e., MLA or APA). All quoted content must be placed in "quotation marks," and for quoted, paraphrased, and summarized content, the correct source must be cited in the text. Stating, "I meant to put the text in quotation marks but forgot to do so," "I cited the name of the source but forgot the quotation marks," or "I cited the wrong source" are not acceptable explanations for inaccurately citing sources.
- **Be aware of the penalty:** Please don't allow inaccurate use and citing of sources to negatively impact your grade. 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.

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.

Constitutional Carry and Campus Facts Policies

Information on the University's policy may be found at [Campus Carry at MSU Texas](#).

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult [Academic Affairs Grade Appeals](#) for instructions.

University Opportunities and Services

Research & Creative Opportunities

Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities (EURECA) is a program that provides opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in high-quality research and creative activities with faculty. EURECA provides incentives and funding through a system that supports faculty and students in a cooperative research process. For more information, contact the Office of Undergraduate Research, (940) 397-6274 or eureca@msutexas.edu. Information and resources are available on the [EURECA website](#).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP)

MSU's TASP provides on-campus and distance education students tutoring options.

Assignment Schedule

Table 3: Readings and Assignments

Readings for online text books: *Technical Writing* (TC). *Open Technical Communication* (OTC)

Week	Readings and Assignments
Week One Tues. Jan. 20	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course syllabus and schedule (this document)• <u>Introduction to Technical Communication</u>, Chpt 1 OTC• "Who TC Are" and "What Do TC Do" (see Link to the articles in D2L)
Week Two Mon. Jan. 26	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructions assignment description (for assignment due at the end of next week)• "Technical Communication Team Project and Topic Development" assignment description. <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion Post 1: "What is technical communication; how does/can it apply to my career?" by Sun., Feb. 1, 11:00 p.m.
Week Three Mon. Feb. 2	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify your assigned teammate is so that you can complete Discussion Post 2, which is due at the end of next week. (Team Assignments will be posted to D2L News during the 3rd week of class.)• Before you contact your teammate, check your own settings within D2L to see if/where you are forwarding your D2L emails so that you know which accounts to check for a reply from your assigned teammate. <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructions assignment description• <u>Writing Instructions</u>, 2.6 OTC <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instruction assignment, upload to the dropbox by Sun. Feb. 8, 11:00 p.m.
Week Four Mon. Feb. 9	<p>Team member assignments posted to D2L NEWS.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citation Assignment instructions (for assignment due next week.)• <u>Citations: Chpt 5.1, TW</u> <p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Research Tools</u>, Chpt 4.4, TW• <u>Search Strategies</u>, Chpt 4.5, TW• <u>Evaluate Sources</u>, Chpt 4.6, TW

Week	Readings and Assignments
	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Post 2: Understanding the Team Project, by Sun., Feb. 15, 11:00 p.m.
Week Five Mon. Feb. 16	<p>By Wed. Feb. 18, email me, your professor, if you have not been in contact with your teammate (i.e., you sent them an email but they have not responded).</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Project Proposal instructions (due in two weeks) <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Topic & Citation Assignment, upload to dropbox, by Sun. Feb. 22, 11:00 p.m.
Week Six Mon. Feb. 23	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Project Proposal instructions (due in two weeks) • <u>Plagiarism</u>: Chpt 5.2 in TW <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Google Drive, one teammate needs to create and share the following with their teammate. (Make sure the teammate is given Editor rights): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Google folder that will serve as the team project management (PM) folder. ○ A Google document titled Team Proposal within the folder. ○ Contact the teammate to be sure they have accessed the folder and that they can edit and add content to the Team Proposal document.
Week Seven Mon. Mar. 2	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Research Report (IRR) assignment description (due in 2 weeks) • <u>Common Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation Problems</u>, 5.8 OTC • <u>Common Spelling Problems</u>, 5.9 OTC <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Project Proposal, upload to the dropbox by Friday Mar. 6, by 5:00 p.m. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From within the team Google PM Folder, one team member should download the document as a PDF, and then upload the PDF to the dropbox.
Week Eight Mon. Mar. 9	<p>Spring Break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research your IRR Topic.
Week Nine Mon. Mar. 16	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions for the IRR to be sure you are following the needed format and other requirements. <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Strategies for Peer-Reviewing and Team Writing</u>: Chpt 5.10 in OTC

Week	Readings and Assignments
	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share draft of your Individual Research Report (IRR) with your teammate by Friday Mar. 20, by 5:00 p.m.
Week Ten Mon. Mar. 23	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read your team member's IRR draft • Make any needed changes to your IRR <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Post 3: Team Peer Review before Sun, Mar. 29, 11:00 p.m.
Week Eleven Mon. Mar. 30	<p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Zoom Meetings during Week 13. There will be signup list on D2L NEWS a week prior. <p>Read for upcoming assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Employment Materials</u> Chpt 12-12.5 in TW • Résumé/Cover Letter assignment instructions (due April 19) • Final Team Report assignment instructions <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Research Reports, final draft for grading, upload to the dropbox by Sun. April 5, 11:00 p.m.
Week Twelve Mon. April 6	<p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a Team Zoom meeting with instructor for next week (Week 13). <p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Résumé/Cover Letter assignment due end of next week.
Week Thirteen Mon. April 13	<p>Attend: Team Zoom Meeting with instructor.</p> <p>Before team meeting read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feedback on your graded IRR • final team report assignment instructions • team slide presentation assignment instructions <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Collaborative Writing</u>, Chpt 7 OTC • <u>Technical Editing</u>: Chpt 8 in OTC <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any changes to IRR and then uploaded to Team Google folder by Fri. April 17. <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Résumé/Cover Letter assignment, upload to dropbox by Sun. April 19, 11:00 p.m.
Last day to Withdraw	Wed. April 29, 2026 , before 4:00 p.m., last day to withdraw from long-semester courses. Drops after this date will receive grades of "F."

Week	Readings and Assignments
Week Fourteen Mon. April 20	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ethics in Technical Writing</u> Chpt. 9 TW • <u>Federal plain language guidelines</u> <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of Team Report saved in team Google folder for team members to proofread and edit, before Friday, April 24, 11:00 p.m.
Week Fifteen Mon. April 27	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Slides assignment instructions (due next week) <p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Basic Design and Readability in Publications, CRAP design principles</u> Chpt 11-11.4 in TW • <u>Creating and Integrating Graphics</u>, Chpt 8 (8.1-8.5) in TW <p>Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Team Report, upload to the dropbox by Fri. May 1, by 5:00 p.m.
Week Sixteen Mon. May 4 Last week of classes Final exams begin on Saturday, May 9	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Slide Presentation, upload to the dropbox by Friday, May 8, by 5:00 p.m.
Week Seventeen Mon. May 11	<p>We do not have a final exam, but the following assignments are due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Google PM Folder: one teammate re-share with the instructor an access link to the folder containing all team assignments and IRR for grading, by Mon. May 11, by 5:00 p.m. • Complete the team member evaluation (under Assessments > Surveys), by Tues. May 12, by 5:00 p.m.