# ENGL 3203-X20, X21: Technical Writing

Spring 2024

## Syllabus & Schedule

### Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sally Henschel
Office: PY 211
Office hours: We can visit in person, by phone, or in Zoom (Central Time)

> Tues.   12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
> Wed.    12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
> Thurs.  12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
> Other times by appointment

E-mail: sally.henschel@msutexas.edu

### Important Dates

- Academic Calendar (See 2023-2024)
- For long semester courses, last day to drop with a grade of "W": **April 24, 2024** before 4:00 pm (See: Drops, Withdrawals & Void )
- Deadline for May graduates to file for graduation: Feb. 12, 2024

### 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, communication ethics, collaboration, information design, technical editing, and professional writing genres (letters, e-mails, memos, instructions , proposals, reports, and presentations). **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 (4) | 20 |
| Citation assignment | 5 |
| Individual Research Report | 20 |
| Peer Review & Zoom Meeting | 5 |
| Résumé, Ad, and Letter | 10 |
| Instructions | 5 |
| | (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.

**University Closures 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.

**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.

**Class Academic Dishonesty Policy Details and Advice**
- **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.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

**Campus Carry Rules/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 the Midwestern State University MSU Catalog :
Select the current catalog > under the Catalog Search menu, select **Registrar** > **Appeal of Course Grade**

## 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

Notice: Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

*Table 3: Tentative Readings and Assignments*

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

| Week | Readings and Assignments |
|---|---|
| Week One<br>Tues. Jan. 16 | Read:<br>• Course syllabus and schedule (this document)<br>• "Who TC Are" and "What Do TC Do" (On the course Menu, click Communications > Discussions)<br>• Introduction to Technical Communication, Chpt 1 OTC<br><br>Due**:**  Discussion Post 1: "Technical Communicators: Education and Industries" post by Sun. Jan. 21, 11:30 p.m**.** |
| Week Two<br>Mon.  Jan. 22 | • Read "Technical Communication Team Project and Topic Development" and the Discussion Post 2 prompt.<br>• Team Assignments will be posted to D2L News on Wed., Jan. 4: identify and contact your assigned teammate so that you can complete Discussion Post 2, which is due next week.<br>   o Contact you teammate through D2L and check your own settings within D2L to see if you are forwarding emails to a different account (i.e., Gmail accounts may not forward correctly). |
| Week Three<br>Mon.  Jan. 29 | On Monday, Jan. 29, email the professor if you have not been in contact with your teammate.<br><br>Read:<br>• Individual Topic and Citation assignment instructions (for assignment due next week)<br>• Citations: Chpt 5.1, TW<br>Review:<br>• Research Tools, Chpt 4.4, TW<br>• Search Strategies, Chpt 4.5, TW<br>• Evaluate Sources, Chpt 4.6, TW<br><br>Due: Discussion Post 2: Understanding the Team Project, by Sun., Feb. 4, 11:30 p.m. |
| Week Four<br>Mon. Feb. 5 | Read: Team Project Proposal instructions<br>Create and share Google Folder and Team Proposal doc:<br>• Using Google Drive, one teammate needs to create and share the following with their teammate. (Make sure the teammate is given Editor rights.):<br>   o A Google folder that will serve as the team project management (PM) folder.<br>   o A Google document titled Team Proposal within the folder. |

| Week | Readings and Assignments |
|---|---|
|  | • Contact the teammate to be sure they have accessed the folder and that they can edit and add content to the Team Proposal document.<br><br>Due: Individual Topic and Citation Assignment, upload to dropbox, by Sun. Feb. 11, 11:30 p.m. |
| Week Five<br>Mon. Feb. 12 | Read:<br>• Team Project Proposal instructions (due next week)<br>• Strategies for Peer-Reviewing and Team Writing: Chpt 5.10 in OTC<br>• Collaborative Writing, Chpt 7 OTC |
| Week Six<br>Mon. Feb. 19 | Read: Individual Research Report (IRR) assignment description (due next week)<br>Review:<br>• Basic Design and Readability in Publications, CRAP design principles Chpt 11-11.4 in TW<br>• Creating and Integrating Graphics, Chpt 8 (8.1-8.5) in TW<br><br>Due: Team Project Proposal by Sun. Feb. 25, 11:30 p.m.:<br>       ○ From the team Google PM folder, one team member should download the document as a PDF, and then upload the PDF to the dropbox. |
| Week Seven<br>Mon. Feb. 26<br>(Conference this weekend.) | Read:<br>• Team IRR Peer Review assignment description (draft due next week)<br>• Plagiarism: Chpt 5.2 in TW<br>• Common Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation Problems , 5.8 OTC<br>• Common Spelling Problems, 5.9 OTC<br><br>Due: Discussion Post 3: Managing & Resolving Team Conflict, due by Sun., Mar. 3, 11:30 p.m. |
| Week Eight<br>Mon. Mar. 4 | Due: Team members Complete a Peer Review of their teammate's IRR draft:<br>1. By Mon. Mar. 4, 11:30 p.m.: Both teammates need to have saved a complete draft of their Individual Research Reports to their team PM folder for your teammate to read and review.<br>2. The "Owner" of the team PM folder needs to share access to the folder with the instructor so that I can view the two IRR drafts and read your peer review comments. Please add and invite me using this email: sally.henschel@msutexas.edu   (Don't sending me a link through D2L.)<br>3. By Fri. Mar. 8, 11:30 p.m., read your team member's IRR draft and complete the Team Peer Review Discussion Post. |
| Week Nine<br>Mon. Mar. 11 | <span style="color:red">Spring break: no classes.</span> |
| Week Ten<br>Mon. Mar. 18 | Schedule a Team Zoom meeting with instructor during Week 12. There will be signup list posted on D2L NEWS.<br><br>Due:  Final draft of your Individual Research Reports for grading, upload to the dropbox by Sun., Mar. 24, 11:30 p.m. |
| Week Eleven<br>Mon. Mar. 25 | Schedule a Team Zoom meeting with instructor **for next week** (Week 12). There will be signup list on D2L NEWS a week prior. |

| Week | Readings and Assignments |
|---|---|
| *Holiday: No class Thurs.–Fri.* | Read for assignment due next week:<br>• Résumé/Cover Letter/Ad assignment instructions<br>• Employment Materials Chpt 12-12.5 in TW |
| Week Twelve Mon. April 1 | **Attend: Team Zoom Meeting with instructor**<br><br>Before team meeting review:<br>• feedback on your graded IRR<br>• final team report instructions<br>• team slide presentation instructions<br><br>Due: Résumé/Cover Letter assignment, by Sun. April 7 , 11:30 p.m. |
| Week Thirteen Mon. April 8 | Read:<br>• Instruction assignment description (due next week)<br>• Ethics in Technical Writing Chpt. 9 TW<br><br>Due: Discussion Post 4: Ethics, by Sun. April 14, 11:30 p.m. |
| Week Fourteen Mon. April 15 | Read:<br>• Instruction assignment description<br>• Writing Instructions, 2.6 OTC<br><br>Due: Instructions, upload to the dropbox, by Sun. April 21, 11:30 p.m. |
| <span style="color:red">Wed. April 24, before 4:00 pm, last day to withdraw from long-semester courses.  Drops after this date will receive grades of "F."</span> ||
| Week Fifteen Mon. April 22 | Read:<br>• Team Slide Presentation instructions (due next week)<br>• Federal plain language guidelines<br>• Technical Editing: Chpt 8 in OTC<br><br>Due:<br>• Draft of Team Report saved in team Google folder for team members to proofread and edit, by Mon. April 22, 11:30 p.m.<br>• Final Team Report, upload to the dropbox by Sunday April 28, 11:30 p.m. |
| Week Sixteen Mon. April 29 Last week of classes | Read:  Team Slide Presentation instructions.<br><br>Due: Team Slide Presentation, upload to the dropbox by Sun. May 5, 11:30 p.m. |
| Finals Week (May Sat. 4 – R 9) | We do not have a final exam, but the following assignments are due:<br><br>• Team Google PM Folder: Be sure all team project related documents are in the team PM folder, and then one teammate re-share with the instructor an access link to the folder for grading, by Mon. May 6, 11:30 p.m.<br>• Complete the team member evaluation (under Assessments > Surveys), due by Mon. May 6, 11:30 p.m. |