

# ENGL 3023: Technical Writing, Fall 2021

**Professor:** Dr. Geoff Clegg  
**Meeting day/time:** T/R @ 2:00-3:20PM  
**Office:** 234 Bea Wood  
**Office Hours:** TBA  
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## Required Materials

Markel/Selber. *Technical Communication*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed. MacMillian. 2021.

ISBN: 9781319245009

**NOTE:** Older editions (11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>) are fine to buy.

You will need to use Microsoft Office Suite or Google Apps for this course. I will not accept any document in Pages or Word Perfect.

## Purpose and Goals

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.

## Learning Outcomes

The course will focus on the following learning outcomes:

- Analyze communication contexts rhetorically by understanding subject, readers (audiences), and purpose.
- Analyze and apply the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication.
- Write effective, meaningful technical prose.
- Apply concepts of information design to create convincing, usable, and informative documents.
- Create technical documents that solve problems and improve situations through communication.
- Communicate effectively with a diverse audience.

## Course Objectives

This course provides a hands-on introduction to the principles of organizing, developing, writing, and revising technical discourse and documentation in spheres both professional and technical. First, the course will focus on your ability to understand the social, generic, and rhetorical contexts and practices in which technical documents emerge and function. Second, the course will ask you to participate not only the analysis of such technical documents but the production of them as well. Rather than being a simple

“how to” course, the goal here is a more nuanced critical understanding of the characteristics of different forms of technical discourse, including when, where, and how to implement them effectively.

## Policies

**Students with Disabilities:** If any student has a disability or problem requiring accommodation in order to succeed in the course, please contact me as soon as possible. Confidentiality will be maintained, and every reasonable effort will be made to meet your needs. Any student requiring accommodation must be registered with MSU’s Office of Disability Services. If Disability Services recommends that you should be allowed to take exams in their office, it is your responsibility to schedule that exam with them for the same date and time as the exam will be administered to the other students in the class.

**Attendance:** the expectation is that each student will **attend every class**, except for MSU approved group activities (of which I should be informed in the first three weeks of class). Since attendance is expected, coming to class does not improve your grade; rather, missing class (except when excused) hurts your grade. Three unexcused absences reduces your final grade four percentage points, with every one after the first three reducing your final grade two percent. Since much of this course will be spent in written and verbal conversation with one another, attendance is crucial to its success.

**Academic Misconduct Policy:** Plagiarism (the act of taking and/or using the ideas, work, and/or writings of another person as one’s own) is a serious offense against academic integrity which could result in failure for the paper or assignment, failure for the course, and/or expulsion from Midwestern State University.

Cheating is an act of dishonesty with the intention of obtaining and/or using information in a fraudulent manner.

**Late Work Policy:** Late work will drop a letter grade for every day it is late. D2L will allow you to turn late work in, but it will report to me when it was submitted.

**Writing Proficiency Requirement:** All students seeking a Bachelor’s degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) completed 6 hours of Communication Core and 2) earned 60 hours. Students may meet this requirement by passing the Writing Proficiency Exam, passing two Writing Intensive courses, or passing English 2113. If you have any questions about the exam, visit the Writing Proficiency Office website or call 397-4131.

**Tutoring Support:** Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP’s Learning center provides tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Please see our schedule for more information about times and offerings. Remember that you don’t need an appointment to utilize these services.

Some departments also provide tutoring. Check the "Tutoring at MSU" tab in the portal for more information about all campus tutoring opportunities.

For Distance Education students, TASP has partnered with Thinkingstorm, an online tutoring company that provides you with high-quality, 24/7 tutoring support. Located at the top of your D2L course page, select the Distance Education Tutoring course to book an appointment with a tutor. If you are a distance education student (i.e. you live more than 50 miles from MSU and are in all online courses), but you do not see this course pop up under your courses, please contact Ashley Hurst.

**Grading.** Grades on major projects as well as your final grade will be assigned according to the 10-point scale (100-90 = A, 89-80 = B, 79-70 = C, 69-60 = D, <60 = F). You will be able to access your grades via D2L. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

<b>Weekly Work (quizzes, class work, and discussions)</b>	<b>10%</b>
Memo practice, quizzes, etc.	10%
<b>Projects</b>	<b>90%</b>
Résumé and Application Letter (indiv.)	10%
Field Overview (indiv.)	5%
Workplace Analysis (indiv.)	5%
Project Proposal (collab.)	20%
Literature Review (collab.)	10%
Project Report (collab.)	30%
Project Presentation (collab.)	10%

#### *How do I grade your assignments?*

The assignments you turn in must adhere to the normal standards of a 3000 level writing course, which means that:

1. You have taken the time to read through the material and engage with it. This means you are not simply summarizing basic points without any contributions of your own. Likewise, you are adapting your writing style to meet the conventions of an assignment's genre.
2. You accurately use APA or MLA citation throughout the document. (Your choice, although APA is the industry style for technical communications.)
3. Your submission is free from grammatical, spelling, syntactical, and other mechanical errors. Show me that you actually care about what you produce.
4. Integration of outside research into your projects (when required) is key.
5. No plagiarized material whatsoever. By now you know not to do this.

It is in your own best interest to save ALL graded work for the course of the semester. I strongly suggest opening up a Google Drive account so you have constant access to your documents.

## Course Schedule

- Readings will be discussed in class on the days they are listed.
- Participation homework assignments are due by the start of class on the days they are listed (unless otherwise indicated).
- Major Projects are due at 11:59pm on the days they are listed (unless otherwise indicated).

Week	Date	Reading & HW	Major Projects Due
1	8/24	<i>Introductions</i> <i>Syllabus Overview</i> <i>What are we doing here, anyhow?</i>	--
2	8/31	<i>Intro to Employment Project</i> <i>Review Field Overview &amp; Workplace Analysis</i> <i>The Basics of Genre</i>  <u>Read:</u> 1) Employment Project assignment sheet; 2) Bazerman, <i>A Theory of Literate Action, Vol. 1, Ch. 2: Knowing Where You Are: Genre</i>	--
	9/2	<i>The resume genre</i> <i>The cover letter genre</i>  <u>Read:</u> 1) sample resumes; 2) sample cover letters	
3	9/7	<i>The “professional online presence”</i> <i>Intro to basic design principles</i>  <u>Read:</u> 1) Hagen & Golombisky, <i>White Space is Not Your Enemy</i> , Ch. 4: Layout Sins; 2)	Field Overview Workplace Analysis due Tuesday @ 11:59pm
	9/9	<i>Intro to MS Word styles</i>  <u>Read:</u> -- Selber, Chapter 15: Applying for a Job	
4	9/14	<i>Review resume drafts</i>  <u>Read:</u> --	Resume Cover Letter due Sunday @ 11:59pm

	9/16	<p><i>Review cover letter drafts</i> <i>Review Professional Online Presence drafts</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> --</p>	
5	9/21	<p><i>Introduce Proposal, Proposal parts</i></p> <p><i>Generating ideas and gathering information</i></p> <p><i>Brainstorming</i></p> <p><i>Assignment #2: Proposal for a Formal Report</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> Selber: Chapter 16. Proposal, <i>look over sample proposals</i></p>	--
	9/23	<p>Argument and Style</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Selber, Chapter 5: Analyzing Audience and Purpose, Chapter 6: Researching Your Subject</p>	
6	9/28	<i>Draft workshop</i>	Proposal due Sunday by 11:59 pm
	9/30	Draft workshop	
7	10/5	<p><i>Assignment 3: Introducing the Literature Review</i> <i>Understanding the role of research in writing</i></p> <p><i>Intro to Secondary Research: Library Resources</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p>	--
	10/7	<p>Understanding how to skim research and find the important stuff!</p> <p><u>Read:</u> -- <u>Read:</u> 1) Pacheco-Vega, Different reading strategies I: Skimming, scribbling and crosslinking; 2) Pacheco-Vega, Different reading strategies II: Engaging at the meso-level; 3) Pacheco-Vega, Different reading strategies III: Deep engagement.; 4) Pacheco-Vega, Finding the most relevant information</p>	

		in a paper when reading: A three-step method (the AIC technique) <a href="http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/reading-strategies/">http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/reading-strategies/</a>	
8	10/12	How to Write Up Data Punctuation Basics (That'll Cover 95% of Your Needs) Review findings/results & application of findings section(s) drafts  Read: Wolfe, "Writing About Data," pp. 26-57 [not textbook; PDF on Canvas]	--
	10/14	Finishing up research. Bring in Literature Review draft.	
9	10/19	Draft workshop	<b>Literature Review</b>
	10/21	Draft workshop	Due Friday, 3/8 @ 11:59pm
10	10/26	Intro to Final Report Intro to Executive Summaries  <u>Read:</u> 1) Selber, Chapter 17: Writing Informational Reports, Chapter 18: Writing Recommendation Reports	--
	10/28	Audience and stakeholders Report structure (front matter and back matter)  <u>Read:</u> Selber, Chapter 11: Design Print and Online Documents, Chapter 12: Creating Graphics	
11	11/2	Solutions (feasible and easy) and Research Methods Go over sample reports	--
	11/4	Draft workshop	
12	11/9	Draft workshop	--
	11/11	Draft workshop	

13	11/16	Draft workshop	-- <b>Final Report due 11/19 @ 11:59 PM</b>
	11/18	Draft workshop <i>Giving Presentations &amp; Making Hand-Outs</i>  <u>Read:</u> 1) Reynolds, <i>Presentation Zen Design</i>	
14	11/23	<b>THANKSGIVING Break</b>	--
	11/25	<b>THANKSGIVING Break</b>	
15	11/30	<i>Professional Presentations</i>	■ <b>Turn in Presentations before class</b>
	12/2	<i>Professional Presentations</i>	
		No more technical writing!	