



## ENGL 3203: Technical Writing

2025 Spring | MW 12:30 pm-1:50 pm | 23559 | BW117

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.

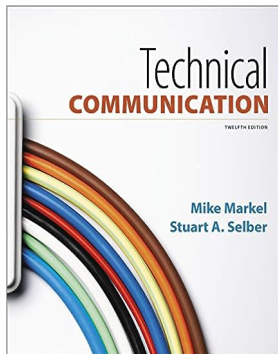
# Contact Information

Instructor: Meng Yu, PhD.  
Email: [meng.yu@msutexas.edu](mailto:meng.yu@msutexas.edu)  
Phone: 940-397-4086

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. 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: BW201  
Office Hours: Monday to Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. or by appointment over Zoom

## Texts



Markel, Mike, and Stuart Selber. *Technical Communication*. 12th edition. Bedford/St. Martins, 2017.

## 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.

- Correspondence Major Assignment (10%)
- Job Search Packet Major Assignment (15%)
- Help Document (User Manual) & Usability Test Package Teamwork (35%)
- Technical Reports Major Assignment (25%)
- Weekly Discussions, Homework & Quizzes, peer reviews (15%)

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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## Attendance & Participation

- Your attendance is reflected through participation score (15%). In-class assignments cannot be made up for credit if you are absent. I will drop one of your lowest grades in the participation category.
- It is possible to miss up to 2 classes without having your grade adversely affected (as long as all due dates are met). If you miss more than 2 classes without any excuse, your final grade for the course will be affected.
- If you have legitimate reasons for not being able to attend class, please inform me prior to these absences so that arrangements, if warranted, can be made.
- 3 tardies or early leaves without notification equal one absence. If you are late or leave early and are not present for at least 30 minutes of class, you will be marked absent.
- I also reserve the right to mark you as absent if you are not actively “present” in class, which may be indicated not actively participating in class activities or discussion or zoning out of class by zoning into your phone or other devices.

## 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.

## Assignment Submission

- Peer review: Please bring all drafts of your assignments BEFORE coming to class. They can be typed or in your laptop. Peer review cannot be made up if you are absent.
- Assignment submission: It is the responsibility of the student to have and maintain access to D2L, to properly submit all work through this platform, and to contact the instructor immediately if they have issues with paper submission.
- All assignments should be submitted on time, and in the correct format. In-class assignments cannot be made up for credit if you are absent. Please email your instructor if you are having any difficulty completing an assignment before it becomes late and affects your grade.

## 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 Spring 2025 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.

Week	Date	In-Class Activities	Homework & Readings (Read the assigned text before the class)
Week 1	Jan. 20 (M)	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	
Week 1	Jan. 22 (W)	Intro to class & syllabus What characteristics a technical writer should possess?	
Week 2	Jan. 27 (M)	What is technical writing? Developing quality technical information Creating user-centered document	Markel, Ch. 1: Introduction to Technical Communication Avoid These Technical Writing Mistakes
Week 2	Jan. 29 (W)	Document analysis practice Ai writing	Markel, Ch. 5: Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose
Week 3	Feb. 3 (M)	Ethical considerations Plain Language	Markel, Ch. 2: Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations
Week 3	Feb. 5(W)	Plain Language	Markel, Chapter 10: Writing Correct and Effective Sentences
Week 4	Feb. 10 (M)	Intro to User Manual and Usability Test Teamwork setup Document Design	
Week 4	Feb. 12 (W)	Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions In class group work: drafting your help document	Markel, Chapter 20: Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions

Week 5	Feb. 17 (M)	User manual workshop: outline In class group work: Drafting your help document	Markel, Chapter 9: Emphasizing Important Information
Week 5	Feb. 19(W)	User manual workshop: using images. Finalizing your user manual & Initial Peer Review	Markel, Chapter 12: Creating Graphics
Week 6	Feb. 24 (M)	Intro to Usability Test Design your usability test. Eye-tracking technology & UX	
Week 6	Feb. 26 (W)	1:1 Conference (usability test) TBD	
Week 7	Mar. 3 (M)	1:1 Conference (usability test) TBD	
Week 7	Mar. 5 (W)	1:1 Conference (usability test) TBD Usability test report drafting & Reflective memo	
Week 8	Mar. 10 (M)	Spring Break	
Week 8	Mar. 12 (W)	Spring Break	
Week 9	Mar. 17 (M)	Usability test report drafting & Reflective memo	
Week 9	Mar. 19 (W)	Correspondence Assignment Intro	Markel, Chapter 14: Corresponding in Print and Online
Week 10	Mar. 24 (M)	Good news & bad news Letter analysis memo	
Week 10	Mar. 26 (W)	Correspondence Assignment Peer Review	
Week 11	Mar. 31 (M)	Intro to Job Search Packet	Using Storytelling as a Job Search Strategy Markel, Chapter 15: Applying for a Job
Week 11	April. 2 (W)	Resume workshop	Markel, Part C: Editing and Proofreading Your Documents

Week 12	Apr. 7 (M)	Cover letter Workshop	Markel, Chapter 11: Designing Print and Online Documents
Week 12	Apr. 9 (W)	Job Packet Peer Review	
Week 13	Apr. 14 (M)	Technical report basics Documenting the process documents	Markel, Chapter 17: Writing Informational Reports Markel, Chapter 18: Writing Recommendation Reports
Week 13	Apr. 17 (W)	Deciding on your technical report topics Doing research	Markel, Ch. 6: Researching Your Subject
Week 14	Apr. 21 (M)	Progress report	Markel, Ch. 7: Organizing Your Information
Week 14	Apr. 24 (W)	In-class Workday: completing the technical report rough draft	
Week 15	Apr. 28 (M)	Technical report peer review	
Week 15	Apr. 30 (W)	Preparing for the presentation	
Week 16	May. 5 (M)	Final Work Presentation	
Week 16	May. 7 (M)	Final Work Presentation	