

WRIT 131/Technical Writing I: Basic Principles

Syllabus and Assignment Sheets

Instructor Information

Contact Information Trina Love
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Office Location and Hours SCAD Main Building, Room 652
Mon 10-11:30am
Tue/Thur 2pm-3pm
For additional times, please schedule an appointment with me.

About the Technical Writing I Course

Quarter Spring Quarter, 2011
Mondays and Wednesdays
2 pm to 4:30 pm

Course Description The Technical Writing I course teaches students the fundamentals of writing, structuring, and presenting usable and accessible technical information clearly, effectively, and accurately to technical and non-technical audiences.

Course Goals The general goals and objectives for Technical Writing I are:

- Students will gain exposure to basic technical writing principles.
- Students will learn how to plan for technical writing projects.
- Students will learn how to research for and write artifacts.
- Students will learn how to identify good and poor technical writing.

Student Learning Outcomes The measurable skills and competencies that the students develop as a result of completing this course are:

- Learn basic principles of technical writing and how to apply them, including the paramedic method and information mapping Methodologies
- Learn how to write definitions, concepts, and procedures for technical documents

- Learn to aptly present information visually for technical documents
 - Learn how to analyze and gather information and plan for technical projects
 - Learn to work with other technical professionals on projects
 - Evaluate technical materials for clarity, ease of use, and accuracy
 - Evaluate their own work based on technical writing principles
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Additional Information

Except when noted in writing, you must create all work specifically for this class.

No late work accepted.

After receiving a grade, you can correct and resubmit specific assignments. Limit one time per assignment. I will let you know which assignments are eligible for resubmission.

Course Materials

Required Text

The required texts for this course are:

- Revising Business Prose, 4th Edition by Richard Lanham
ISBN #9780205309443
 - Technical Communication, 5th Edition by Rebecca E. Burnett
ISBN #9780155064485
 - Developing Quality Technical Information by IBM Press
ISBN #9780131477490
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Required Materials

The required materials for this course are:

- Information Mapping Packet, provided by the Professor
 - Corporate Style Guide, provided by the Professor
 - Reflective Reading Journal
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Reflective Reading Journal

In the Reflective Reading Journal, record concepts that really strike you as you study and read. You will turn these journal entries into me after each reading. These entries are 15% of your grade. The entries must be in your own words and NOT plagiarized from the text. Include a summary of the key points of each reading. This is not a critique of the reading; instead, tell me what you think about what you read and how you plan to apply it to your assignments. You can hand write or type these entries, but you will turn each entry into me.

Workshops

These workshops simulate various technical writing environments and situations that can occur in this career. They also help you to apply what you learned from your readings and our in-class discussions and exercises.

Date	Workshop	Objective
4/25/11	I	Making technical information readable
5/11/11	II	Definitions, Concepts, Procedures
6/01/11	III	Planning: Analysis and Artifacts

I will return your graded workshop materials the next consecutive class after the workshop. Use the feedback that I give you to update or change the material. You can resubmit specific material for a higher grade. You can only resubmit each piece one time.

Speakers

We have the following in-class speakers:

Date	Speaker	Focus
4/20/11	Technical Writer from Motorola	Writing
5/02/11	Technical Writer from AT&T	Types of information
5/16/11	Graphic Artist from Earthlink	Visual Presentations
5/23/11	Technical Writing Project Leader IBM	Project Management

The speakers arrive and present for the first hour of the class period. Pay attention to the weight attendance for these speakers weighs on your overall grade.

Schedule of Classes

This section includes information about assignment, project, workshop, and exam due dates.

Overview

This class-by-class breakdown delineates what we will discuss in each class and your assignment due dates. If anything is unclear, let me know. This schedule is subject to change, at which time I will announce the changes in class and send you the updates in an e-mail. You are responsible for making sure you are clear about your deliverable dates.

Complete the reading assignments before the date they appear. Be ready to discuss the reading material on the assigned date.

Daily
 Schedule

Date	Assignment
Monday 03/29/11	Overview of syllabus, course, & workshops Define Technical Writing Discuss the types of Technical Writing
Wednesday 04/02/11	Basic Technical Writing Principles IBM, Pages 103-120, 181-199 Reflective Reading Journal Entry Due
Monday 04/04/11	Word Choice & Punctuation Burnett, Pages UH2-UH6 & UH34-UH42
Wednesday 04/06/11	Sentence Structure Burnett, Pages UH6-UH34 IBM, Pages 181-188, In-Class Activity Reflective Reading Journal Entry Due
Monday 04/11/11	Capitalization & Numbers Discuss Burnett, Pages UH42-UH50
Wednesday 04/13/11	Paramedic Method Lanham Chapters 1-2 In-Class Writing Assignment Reflective Reading Journal Entry Due
Monday 04/18/11	Paramedic Method Lanham Chapters 3-4 In-Class Writing Assignment
Wednesday 04/20/11	Speaker: Technical Writer from Motorola—Have questions ready Review for workshop Reflective Reading Journal Entry Due
Monday 04/25/11	WORKSHOP I
Wednesday 04/27/11	Information Mapping & Headings Review www.informationmapping.com In-Class Writing Activity
Monday 05/02/11	Speaker: Technical Writer from AT&T Definitions, Concepts/Descriptions, & Procedures Burnett, Pages 327-346 IBM, Pages 215-243
Wednesday 05/04/11	Definitions, Concepts/Descriptions, Procedures Burnett, Pages 365-381

	In-Class Writing Activity Reflective Reading Journal Entry Due
Monday 05/09/11	Definitions, Concepts/Descriptions, Procedures Handouts and Presentation In-Class Writing Activity
Wednesday 05/11/11	WORKSHOP II
Monday 05/16/11	Speaker: Graphic Artist from Earthlink Visual Presentation: Graphics, Tables, Diagrams, & Flowcharts Information Mapping Packet Burnett, Pages 276-314 IBM, Pages 277-325 Graphic Activity Assigned
Wednesday 05/18/11	Gathering information: Subject Matter Experts, Interviews, & Research In-class activity Reflective Reading Journal Entry Due
Monday 05/23/11	Speaker: Technical Writing Project Leader IBM Planning for projects: Analysis and Artifacts Burnett, Pages 31-51 Graphic Activity due
Wednesday 05/25/11	Planning for projects: Analysis and Artifacts Burnett, Pages 61-82 Reflective Reading Journal Entry Due
Monday 05/30/11	In-Class work day and review for WORKSHOP III
Wednesday 06/01/11	WORKSHOP III

Grading Breakdown

This section provides a breakdown of your class work and how much your assignments are worth against your overall class grade.

Assignment and Weight

Assignment	Description	Weight Each	Total Weight
Workshop I: Making technical information readable	Style Guide	7.5%	20%
	Sentence Correction	7.5%	
	Role Playing Exercise	5%	
Workshop II: Writing content and using methodologies	Definitions	6.5%	25%
	Concepts/Procedures	6.5%	
	Rewrite manual	12%	
Workshop III: Using & creating artifacts	Audience Analysis	5.4%	16%
	Scope Document	5.3%	
	Topic List	5.3%	
Reflective Reading Journal Entries	7 separate entries are due	2%	14%
In-Class Activities/Assignments	5 different activities and writings	3%	15%
Speakers/ Class Participation	5 different speakers	2%	10%

Grading Standards and Range

The grading standards for ABC University are:

Standard	Range
Letter grade: A = Excellent	90–100%
Letter grade: B = Good	80–89%
Letter grade: C = *	70–79%
Letter grade: D = *	60–69%
Letter grade: F = Failing	0–59%

*Refer to the student handbooks and departmental standards for minimal acceptance for passing grade.

College Policies

This section provides information about ABC University's policies for all attending students.

Academic Integrity

Under all circumstances, ABC University expects students to be honest in their dealings with faculty, administration, staff, and fellow students.

In class assignments, students must submit work that fairly and accurately reflects their level of accomplishment. ABC University considers any work that is not a product of the student's own design, creation, and effort to be dishonest. Students must not engage in academic dishonesty; doing so has serious consequences.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating
 - Plagiarism
 - Faulty Submissions
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Cheating

Cheating at ABC University is defined as:

- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in producing assignments or taking quizzes, tests, or examinations
 - Depending on the aid of sources including technology beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments
 - Acquiring, without permission, tests or other academic material that belongs to a member of the college faculty or staff
 - Using unauthorized assistance in preparing your work
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Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to using, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement.

Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in selling term papers and other academic materials.

Faulty Submissions

Faulty submissions are:

- Submission of the same work in two or more classes without the prior written approval of the professors of the classes involved.
- Submission of any work not actually produced by the student submitting the work without full and clear written

acknowledgement of the actual author or creator of the work.

Attendance

Only students who properly register for a course can attend the class. ABC University expects students to participate in all scheduled classes and examination periods. Absences in excess of four per quarter, or 20 percent of the course, result in a failing grade for the course. Tardiness, early departure, or other time away from class in excess of 15 minutes is an absence for the class period.

**Personal
Conduct**

Your appearance and conduct must be appropriate and contribute to the academic and professional atmosphere of the University. ABC University reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to withdraw the privilege of enrollment from any student whose conduct is detrimental to the academic environment or to the well-being of other students, faculty, staff members, or to the University facilities.

**Enrollment
Policies**

You, the student, are responsible for assuring proper enrollment. See the college catalog for information about add/drop, withdrawals, incompletes, and academic standing.

**Midterm
Conferences**

Each student enrolled in WRIT 131 has a midterm conference scheduled outside of class time with the professor. You must schedule and keep this appointment. I will provide a sign-up sheet.

**Learning
Support
Resources**

You can obtain information about ABC University's learning assistance programs, including the Learning Resource Hive, The Writers Studio, Drawing and Design Center, Counseling and Student Support Services (CS3), Graduate Mentor Program, and ESL Program at: www.abcuniversity.edu

Workshop I Assignment Sheet

Objective: Make technical information readable

Using the Corporate Style Guide, go through the five-page technical document, and:

- Apply the paramedic method
- Ensure that the document adheres to the corporate style guide
- Rewrite the document using the basic technical writing techniques of word choice and sentence structure that we discussed the past two weeks

You have 45 minutes to complete this assignment. You cannot use your textbooks or notes; however, you can confer with your peers and use your Reflective Reading Journal.

Break into three groups of four.

I've given you several sentences that are unclear, ambiguous, and not readable. Correct the sentences to make them clear and readable. Use the Usage Handbook in your Burnett text to record why you are making any specific change.

You have 30 minutes to complete this assignment.

You have two documents, a before and after. One document a developer wrote and the other document a technical writer edited for clarity, sentence structure, and word choice. Break into groups of two. One person is the technical writer and the other is the disgruntled developer who thinks that the technical writer changed the words of the document. The technical writer must explain to the developer why she/he made the changes, and refer to the style guide. You have 25 minutes for this, and then switch personas. The technical writer must record on the document the reasons for the changes. You can use all of your textbooks for this exercise.

In your Reflective Reading Journal, record what you learned today. You have 10 minutes for this. The remainder of the class we will discuss this workshop.

Workshop II Assignment Sheet

Objective: Write Definitions, Concepts/Descriptions, and Procedures using the proper voice, the paramedic method, and the information mapping methodology.

In the excerpt of the *ABC Software Reference Guide* supplied in class:

- Identify the terms that are incorrectly defined, as per your readings and in class activities about definitions.
- Pick 10 incorrectly defined terms and write a formal definition of each term that is appropriate for your target audience.
- Use three additional definitional strategies to define further your term using the strategies we discussed in class.

From the list of terms that I gave you:

- Create a formal definition for each term.
- Create an extended definition. Identify if your definition is historical, etymological, by part, compare/contrast, negation, operating principle, example, analogy, illustration, or stipulation.

You have 45 minutes to complete this assignment. Use your textbooks, notes, and your Reflective Reading Journal.

On the provided excerpt of the *ABC Installation Guide*:

- Separate the concepts and the procedures, providing only the necessary information:
 - Use the yellow highlighting marker to identify the procedures
 - Use the blue highlighting marker to identify the concepts
 - Use the red pen to draw a single line through unnecessary content
- Add or change headings:
 - Use the red pen to draw a single line through headings that you don't want
 - Use the red pen to write the heading you prefer in the white space beside the heading

- Note if the bulleted and sequential lists are appropriate: are they parallel, in sequential order; should the bulleted list be numerical and vice versa:
 - Use the red pen and write in the white space next to the list. Briefly explain what is wrong with the list and how you would change it

You have 20 minutes to complete this part of the assignment.

On your computer is a softcopy version of the *ABC Reference Manual*. This three-page document is a jumble of words. There are no headings and the procedures are buried inside of the paragraphs. Rewrite the document:

- Use the Information Mapping Principles
- Identify where you would use visuals in place of words or in addition to words.
- Find the procedures and rewrite them in a separate Word document.
Remember:
 - The Information Mapping format for procedures.
 - There is only one task per step.
 - To add stem sentences.
 - No more than 7 to 9 steps in a given procedure.
- Add sequential or bulleted lists where appropriate.
- Make sure lists are parallel.

You have 90 minutes to complete this assignment. You can use your Reflective Reading Journal.

In your Reflective Reading Journal, record what you learned today. You may do this at home if you do not have enough workshop time.

Workshop III Assignment Sheet

Objective: Planning for projects using analysis. Creating artifacts for the technical project.

The functional specification, marketing document, Subject Matter Expert (SME) interview notes, and diagrams are the only resources that you have for a new project that your boss just gave you. I am your SME. The project requires a quick turnaround, only a week. You are to document the 2nd module of the TrustedLink Distributor software for Harbinger Corporation. There are materials here at my desk for research purposes, but you will need to ask me for them based on your analysis:

- As a class, each of you can ask me preliminary questions off the top of your head about this software project.
- Using the resources that you have in front of you, me, and the resources that I have at my desk (which you must ask for...I won't tell you what they are), write:
 - An audience analysis
 - A scope document
 - A topic list

You have 90 minutes to complete this assignment. You can use your Reflective Reading Journal and me.

In your Reflective Reading Journal, record what you learned today. You have 10 minutes for this. The remainder of the class we will discuss this workshop.