

2205F: Technical Writing

Fall 2013

Section: 001	Email: Please use OWL Message
Time/Room: Wednesday 12:30-3:30, UC 2	Office: Lawson Hall 3270
Instructor: Dr. Tim Freeborn	Office hours: Monday 5-6, Wednesday 3:30-4:30, or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

In this course, you will become acquainted with the forms, functions, and rhetorical lives of technical documents. You will examine and produce a variety of technical documents:

- information reports and memos
- usability reports
- technical instructions
- technical descriptions
- technical reports
- technical manuals

In the course of preparing these documents, you will consider concepts such as how audiences affect these texts, document design principles, and the role of visuals or graphics in both written and oral texts. Students will combine analysis, organization, and visual elements to pursue high standards in document design culminating in a major technical writing project.

Required Text

Mike Markel. *Technical Communication*. Tenth Edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.

Course Requirements

In-class writing assignments (4 x 2.5)	10%
Technical Instructions	10%
Proposal	10%
White Paper	20%
Oral Presentation	10%
Technical manual and usability report	30% + 10%

In addition to submitting final drafts on the due date for each assignment, you are required to bring a draft of each assignment to class for each of the scheduled peer-review sessions. Failure to attend a scheduled peer-review session with a draft sufficiently complete (in your instructor's opinion) to permit meaningful review, or to participate actively in the peer-review session, *will* result in a 10% penalty being applied to the earned grade for that assignment. In other words, an assignment that would have earned 80, for example, will receive instead a recorded grade of 70. This penalty will be applied in addition to any other

penalties incurred (e.g., for late submission). In-class writing assignments will be based on that class's assigned readings.

Assignment Format

All assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, and stapled.

All assignments must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor's name on the first page.

When using sources in a paper, you will be expected to follow appropriate standards for documentation, detailed in *Technical Communication*, Appendix B.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due in-class on the date specified on the schedule. Late assignments will receive a grade no higher than 65% unless you negotiate a new deadline with me prior to the original due date by making a request in writing for a new deadline in either a memo or an email that clearly states your reason(s) for needing the extension (see also Medical Accommodation Policy below).

If necessary, please submit essays to the Writing Studies Drop Box outside Lawson Hall Room 3270, making sure you include your instructor's name and your section number. However, do not fax or e-mail assignments.

You must keep copies (electronic, paper, or both) of all assignments submitted.

Attendance policies

Attendance is required to improve as a writer. If you miss more than six hours of class meetings (the equivalent of two weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be penalized a full letter grade (e.g., an earned grade of 80% would be reported as a 70%); if you miss more than nine hours of class meetings, you will not be given a passing grade for the course.

This policy will only be waived for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting, discuss these with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course will count as non-attendance, and will attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the Western University shall not require a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counselor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is your choice; your absence will not be excused.

See also: **Medical Accommodation Policy** below.

Classroom Policy

You will be expected to read the chapters assigned from your textbook before coming to class. I will not summarize the required reading. Instead, I will explain the salient issues arising from a particular chapter.

Also, expect intermittent lessons on unassigned topics (e.g., the pronoun) in response to repeated writing errors.

E-Mail Policy

When you contact me through OWL mail, you can expect a response within twenty-four hours. If you e-mail me using Convergence, you can expect a response within one week. If you e-mail me using a non-UWO account, you will not receive a response. If I foresee that I cannot respond to e-mails within that period of time, I will post an announcement on OWL. Please keep in mind that you should use e-mail to arrange appointments, to inform me that you will miss a class, and to ask relatively simple questions (i.e., questions that I can answer in one or two sentences).

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 85 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.

Medical Accommodation Policy

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e., non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g., to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western -- <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> -- for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the "Information for All Students in a Writing Course" for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean's office of your home faculty.

Class Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting focus	Readings / Graded Work Due
September 11	Introduction to the course	
September 18	Analyzing audience and purpose	Chapter 5 In-class exercise 1 (2.5%)
September 25	Writing definitions, descriptions, and instructions Technical Instructions Assignment assigned (10%, due October 9)	Chapter 20
October 2	Writing effective sentences	Chapter 10 In-class exercise 2 (2.5%)
October 9	Writing proposals Manual Proposal assigned (10%, due October 23)	Chapter 16 Technical Instructions Assignment (10%)
October 16	Designing documents	Chapter 11 In-class exercise 3 (2.5%)
October 23	Reporting technical information White Paper assigned (20%, due November 13)	Chapter 17 (informational reports), 19 (recommendation reports), chapter 22, pp. 644-46 Manual Proposal (10%)
October 30	Researching technical subjects	Chapter 6
November 6	Reviewing, evaluating, and testing documents	Chapter 13 In-class exercise 4 (2.5%)
November 13	Creating graphics [or Communicating online]	Chapter 12 White Paper (20%)
November 20	Understanding ethical and legal considerations	Chapter 2
November 27	Making oral presentations Peer review of technical manuals	Chapter 21
December 4	Oral presentations (10%)	Technical manuals (30%) and usability (10%)