



Department of English and Writing Studies

WR 3223G 001: Technical Writing (Winter 2023)

Professor Tim Freeborn

Room: UC 1220

Time: Thurs. 12:30-3:30

Office: UC 1426

Office Hours: Thurs. 3:30-5:30

or by appointment

Contact: Please Use OWL Message

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:

- job-package materials
- usability reports
- technical instructions
- technical descriptions
- technical reports
- technical manuals

In the course of preparing these documents, you will consider your audience and purpose, 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. This course will help you to refine your “ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences” (source: Ontario Council of Academic Vice Presidents’ statement on “Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations” 24 October 2005).

Required Text

Mike Markel and Stuart A. Selber. *Technical Communication*. Thirteenth Edition. Bedford, 2020.

Course Requirements

Technical Instructions	10%
Job Package	20%
Proposal	30%
Instruction Manual	40%

Assignments/Assignment Format

You will submit both paper and electronic versions of your final drafts on the specified due date. In addition to doing so, you are required to submit a draft of each assignment and to participate in each of the scheduled peer-review sessions. Failure either to submit 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 78, 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).

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

Submitting Assignments/Due Dates/Late Submission Penalties

Late assignments will receive a grade no higher than 65% and will not receive comments unless you negotiate a new deadline with me prior to the original due date: you must request a new deadline in a memorandum that clearly states your reason(s) for needing the extension (see also Medical Accommodation Policy below).

Email Policy

When you contact me using OWL Message, you can expect a response within twenty-four hours. If you contact me using Outlook/Western email, you can expect a response within one week. If you contact me using a non-UWO account, you will not receive a response. If I foresee that I cannot respond to emails within times listed above, I will post an announcement on OWL.

Scholastic Offences, Including Plagiarism

"Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.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.

"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 Western and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Academic Accommodation

Senate language requires all requests for accommodation for a grade component of 10% or more to go to academic counselling. That same section, however, allows for (and encourages) instructors to deal directly with accommodation requests for grade components less than 10%. Here's the relevant Senate language:

“Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course:

Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

“In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc. Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf), **instructors may not collect medical documentation.**”

Medical Accommodation Policy

“The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

“Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/

tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note—it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student ‘was seen for a medical reason’ or ‘was ill’.)

“Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.”

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Documentation from Student Health Services

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.

Please note that individual instructors **will not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related 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 or Undergraduate office of a student’s home Faculty.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to

MentalHealth@Western:

(<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Other Student Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Intellectual Property and Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Class Meeting Schedule

Date	Lesson Focus	Readings
January 12	Introduction to Technical Writing	Chapter 1
January 19	Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions Assignment 1: Technical Instructions (10%, due February 2)	Chapter 20

January 26	Analyzing Audience and Purpose Peer Review of Assignment 1	Chapter 5
February 2	Writing Job-Application Materials Assignment 2: Job Package (20%, due February 16)	Chapter 15 Assignment 1 Due
February 9	Designing Documents Writing Effective Sentences Peer Review of Assignment 2	Chapter 11 Chapter 10
February 16	Writing Proposals Assignment 3 Assigned: Manual Proposal (30%, due March 16)	Chapter 16 Assignment 2 Due
March 2	Organizing Your Information Emphasizing Important Information	Chapter 7 Chapter 9
March 9	Researching Technical Subjects Citing and Integrating Sources Peer Review of Assignment 3	Chapter 6 Appendices A and B
March 16	Evaluating and Testing Documents Assignment 4 Assigned: Instruction Manual (40%, due April 6)	Chapter 13 Assignment 3 Due
March 23	Creating Graphics	Chapter 12
March 30	Peer Review of Assignment 4	Chapter 3
April 6	Concluding Thoughts	Assignment 4 Due