

# English 219: Technical & Professional Writing

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*Welcome to Technical & Professional Writing!*

The ability to write clear, concise, and professional documents is a prerequisite for most jobs these days. Therefore, the purpose of this course is to introduce you to the kinds of documents found in the workplace and give you the chance to practice writing them.

This class is practical and practice-oriented. You will learn useful methods for creating effective workplace documents that you can apply immediately to a variety of writing assignments from one-page letters to multi-page reports or proposals. As you learn to analyze and understand your readers' needs as well as develop a coherent structure, clear style, and compelling page layout, you will be able to create documents that produce action and results.

Because workplace writing is often done collaboratively, one of the writing assignments will be done as a group-writing project. You will not be required to meet with other class members; instead, you will use the computer to communicate with your group members, send copies of your writing, and suggest changes to the document you are creating. You will receive instruction on how to use Microsoft Word and the Internet to effectively communicate with your group members and produce a professional document.

As much as possible, I encourage you to write documents to do with your future profession. You'll find that writing on topics that interest you will help make the class more enjoyable.

I know that writing can often be a difficult task that can lead to anxiety. You may have lots of ideas you want to communicate but have difficulty determining how to present them effectively. Add writer's block, and writing can become a real nightmare. My hope is that in this course will help you overcome your anxieties as you learn skills that will help you communicate effectively when you leave the university and join the workplace.

## **Projects and Grading**

The larger writing projects in this course include a descriptive letter and memo, a set of instructions, a report, a proposal, and a career portfolio. There will also be various exercises to allow you to practice concepts introduced in class. Additionally, you will be required to participate in an on-line discussion group weekly.

The grading breaks down as follows:

Description Memo	15%
Instructions	15%
Recommendation Report	20%

Proposal	20%
Job Application Package	15%
Exercises & Discussion Participation	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Each assignment will be given a percentage grade. You can calculate the letter grade for your assignments as follows: A+ = 97-100%, A = 93-96%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%, C- = 70-72%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 63-66%, D- = 60-62%, F = 0-59%. I try to be fair when I put a grade on a paper. Nevertheless, if you think I have misjudged or misinterpreted your work, talk to me about it.

My job as an instructor is to give you clear and informed commentary on your writing. I will not mark or comment on every problem in your writing, because part of the learning process is for you to learn to identify and correct problems yourself. For each project, I will base my judgment on your success in analyzing your reader's needs and in creating a clear, accurate, concise yet comprehensive document that is professional in appearance.

Here's the meaning behind the grade I put on your paper:

- 90-100% *A*: You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed for a B; but it also demonstrates that the author took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a verbal or visual style.
- 80-89% *B*: You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style and visual design.
- 70-79% *C*: You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style, verbal and visual, is straightforward but unremarkable.
- 60-69% *D*: You did what the assignment asked for at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Verbal and visual style is often non-existent or chaotic.
- 0-59% *F*: Failure is reserved for people who don't do what the assignment asked for or plagiarize someone else's work.

### **Late Work**

All assignments are to be turned in on the day they are due. If you submit work late, there will be a five percent per day deduction from your grade for the assignment. If you will be late with an assignment, you must write me an e-mail that tells me that you will be handing the assignment in late and when I should expect the assignment. I don't need excuses. If you do not submit an email explaining why your assignment will be late, the assignment will not be accepted and you will receive a zero.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the improper use of someone else's text. Improper use of someone else's work means lifting phrasing from a published or unpublished work, using someone else's ideas without citing them, or handing work in for a grade that you did not produce.

Plagiarism is not as hard to detect as you may think. The Internet offers me an easy way to check whether your assignment was taken from another source. Additionally, writers have a style to their writing that is easy to detect. I can usually tell when a student has not written an assignment because it will not sound like their writing. Therefore, your best course of action is to do your own work and learn something. Cheating to receive higher grades only hurts you. After all, if you cannot write in the workplace, you will not be able to hide behind your inflated GPA. Additionally, *if you plagiarize, in most cases you will fail the course.*

## Grammar & CAPS Writing Center

In this class, we will talk about some grammar issues when appropriate, but you should have mastered English grammar by this point in your academic career. *If I find grammatical mistakes in your work, they will negatively affect your grade.* More importantly, though, they will hurt your career in the future. After all, your boss might not recognize good style or organization, but he or she will know when you make grammar mistakes or spelling errors.

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignment
Week 1	1/20-1/24	Introduction to Technical and Professional Writing Analyzing Readers and Contexts	
Week 2	1/25-1/31	Writing Descriptions Writing Effective Memos and Letters	
Week 3	2/1-2/7	Using the "You" Perspective Writing Plain Sentences & Paragraphs	Due 2/6: Description
Week 4	2/8-2/14	Writing Instructions & Manuals Considering What Your Reader Needs to Know	
Week 5	2/15-2/21	Using Organization to Enhance Readability Basic Page Layout	
Week 6	2/22-2/28	Revision Writing Reports	Due 2/25: Instructions
Week 7	2/29-3/6	Conducting Research (Methodologies) Presenting and Discussing Results	
Week 8	3/7-3/13	Using Visuals and Graphics Creating Front & Back Matter	
Week 9	3/14-3/20	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	3/21-3/27	Writing Strong Introductions and Conclusions Writing Proposals	Due 3/24: Report
Week 11	3/28-4/3	Describing the Situation & Need Setting Objectives & Describing a Work Plan	
Week 12	4/4-4/10	Writing Persuasively Creating Budgets	
Week 13	4/11-4/17	Presenting Qualifications Advanced Document Design	

Week 14	4/18-4/24	Creating a Job Application Package Vision Statements/Creating a Job Announcement	Due 4/19: Proposal
Week 15	4/25-5/1	Writing and Designing a Resume Writing an Application Letter	
Week 16	5/2-5/8	Revision Overview	Due 5/7: Job Application