

ENC 3254: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Rebekah Fitzsimmons

Email: rfitz@ufl.edu

Google+ Contact: rfitzufl@gmail.com

Class Time: Online (expect to check Sakai every day, and spend a minimum of 6 hours a week on class work)

Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Professional communication is the practice of conveying technical information to multiple audiences who may have very different goals and varying technical needs for that information. In this class you not only learn how to research, organize, and present technical information, but also how to write effectively, work in collaboration with other professionals, and use various technologies to support your communication efforts.

This course is designed to help students master a variety of communication strategies and genres of writing relevant specific professional disciplines. We will focus primarily on the composition and design of larger documents such as proposals, instructions, and formal reports using collaborative writing; however, we will also compose and design smaller documents such as memos, letters, resumes, and informal reports--as well as construct formal presentations.

We will practice analyzing writing situations in the technical workplace; then we will use the strategies for audience-analysis, organization, style, and page layout to develop documents that address those rhetorical situations. The objective of this class is to help you learn how to write, revise, and edit technical documents for the professional community you will join.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mike Markel. *Technical Communication e-book*, 10th ed. Boston: Bedford (2012).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GROUP PROJECTS

The assignments below include two group projects. For the group projects, a portion of the written work must be completed by each student; students will be graded individually on their portions of the project, and the group will earn a separate grade for the collaboration.

Introductory E-mail Message

Using a standard e-mail format and an effective professional style, you will send a message to the class introducing yourself, your career goals, your areas of specialization, and your writing experiences. Include your schedule, indicating times available outside of class for group project work.

Job Application Packet (Cover Letter, Resume, Follow-Up Letter)

In this multi-part assignment you will first identify an internship or job you hope to have. Next, you will research the field and construct a profile for the ideal candidate for this position. Finally, you will write a cover letter and a resume for this particular job, as well as a follow-up letter thanking your prospective employer for your interview which restates your interest.

Technical Definition

You will first select an item from a list of technical terms and then identify an audience and a purpose for the term using a profile sheet. You will first write a sentence definition of the term, then an expanded definition for a first-year student in your professional field. Next, you will write an expanded definition for a lay person. You will also detail the four expansion strategies you use for both versions, including at least one visual and one rough diagram. You must cite and document at least four outside sources, using APA style, for both expanded versions.

Instruction Manual

You will construct an instruction manual for a product, process, or task. The actual technical instructions will be for a “thing” any and all students at UF would find useful. The manual will contain descriptions and specifications, product warnings, maintenance and troubleshooting advice, and any other information the user is likely to need to complete the task, use the product, or fulfill the process. The manual will be assessed on the quality and readability of the instructions, on the functionality of the instructional visuals, on the effectiveness of the design, and on the rhetorical style of the steps, sequencing, and transitions.

Formal Analytical Report

Working in a small group, you will produce a formal analytical report responding to a case study provided to you by your instructor. The report will include an introduction, a methodology, an empirical research or data section, a discussion of the facts, and a conclusion with recommendations. The report will be graded on both content and the design levels, and must adhere to the research outlines presented in the case study. The report must be based on empirical research the group conducts and will follow the formal guidelines presented in the text.

Progress Report

During the process of writing the proposal, you will write an individual progress report. This will track activities, problems, and progress for both your individual assigned tasks, and the group's overall task. The focus will be on schedules, setbacks, problems solved, and the dates and stages of your progress.

Proposal

Your final small group project will be a technical proposal for the campus or for an academic unit within UF. Your proposal will seek to persuade a target audience that something needs to be done, and offer a specific solution to a problem your group has identified. The assessment of this final project will be on the proposed course of action, your audience analysis, your rhetorical strategy, your document design, and the visual quality and effectiveness of your graphics.

Grading

Grading for this course will be rigorous. Do not rely on the instructor for copy-editing, even on drafts. To receive a passing grade, each paper must reach the minimum assigned word count.

Assignment Values

Individual Assignments

Introductory E-Mail (250 words)	25
Job Application (1000 words)	50
Technical Definition (900 words)	100
Instructions (1200 words)	100
Annotated Bibliography (300 words)	50
Progress Report (600 words)	25
Reading Quizzes (10 x 10 points, drop lowest score)	90
Peer Reviews (3 X 20)	60
Activities (10 x10)	100

Group Assignments

Formal or Feasibility Report (800 words per student)	200
Proposal (1000 words per student)	200

Total Possible Points	1,000
------------------------------	--------------

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Course Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Participation

Unlike some of your classes, this course is skills-based. In other words, practice makes all the difference to writing; the more you write, the better you become. Consequently, the effects of this course are cumulative. While we do not meet in a traditional classroom on a daily basis, you should plan to “attend” class every day: gaps in your writing practice will affect your progress and success dramatically. Additionally, as this is a compressed summer class, you will need to be working every day to keep up with the volume of writing, quizzes and activities due in 6 short weeks. This is not a course where you can “catch up” on what happens during class. If you fall behind, you will stay behind. Writing is process and experience based

Participation is a crucial part of the class and your grade. As you may have noticed, many points of your grade are based on collaborative work. If you are not willing to engage in collaborative projects, you don't want to take this course, as non-participation is not an option. This is a deliberate aspect of the course since so much of professional writing is collaborative. Additionally, peer review, participation in Google Hangouts, virtual conferences with the instructor, online office hours and online discussions with peers will be a vital part of your understanding of the material and your overall grade in the class. Plan to participate in class EVERY DAY by checking Sakai, the class listserv, your Google+ groups, in addition to completing your readings, quizzes, activities and assignments. You should a lot AT MINIMUM an hour a day to completing your work for this class, or 6 hours a week. During group work and when assignments are due, this time commitment will likely be higher.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Florida student, your performance is governed by the UF Student Honor Code, (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>). The Honor Code requires Florida students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all defined in detail at the above site.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8 July 2011)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very seriously, and treats instances of plagiarism as dishonesty and as a failure to comply with the scholarly requirements of this course. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own.

Important tip: There should never be a time when you copy and paste something from the Internet and don't provide the exact location and citation information for the source.

If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, he or she will be awarded a failing grade on the assignment. Additionally, University policy suggests that, as a MINIMUM, instructors should impose a course grade penalty (depending on the severity, this may mean deducting a letter grade or failing the student for the entire semester). All incidents of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students and students may be additionally assigned to take an academic honesty workshop. Each student's work may be tested for its originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute PROOF of plagiarism. Other forms of academic dishonesty will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty. Examples include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations to include in your assignments.

General Education Learning Outcomes

Students must pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C). Earning general education composition credit, students will

- Demonstrate forms of effective writing (focusing on analyses, arguments, and proposals)
- Learn different writing styles, approaches, and formats and successfully adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts; effectively revise and edit their own writing and the writing of others
- Organize complex arguments in writing, using thesis statements, claims, and evidence
- Employ logic in arguments and analyze their own writing and the writing of others for errors in logic
- Write clearly and concisely consistent with the conventions of standard written English
- Use thesis sentences, claims, evidence, and logic in arguments

The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. To receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6), papers must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Requirement, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

Late Work

Students are responsible for submitting assignments by their due dates. **Quizzes, activities and papers are due at the listed time on the assigned date.** Late papers will not be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.

Readings

Reading assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the date on which they are due. All reading assignments will be drawn from the online textbook, or will be supplied in the Sakai "Resources" tab.

Lecture and Reading Quizzes

Quizzes on the readings will be given during the semester. Quizzes cannot be made up, and are due by the date and time listed on Sakai. Quizzes will be based on the reading material and video lectures for that module and will not be cumulative across modules.

Paper Submissions

All assignments should be computer generated and professional in appearance. This should include a proper, professional font, font size, font color, margin size, formatting, and document appearance. All documents will be turned in via Sakai, though some documents may be exchanged with peer-review partners and group members via email or Google Docs. All documents turned in for a grade must be saved as either a Word doc (.doc/.docx) a PDF or RTF document. Files submitted in a different format will not be accepted.

All files submitted to Sakai should have an appropriate, professional file name. This should include your last name and a recognizable title for the document and should be free of spaces. For example: "FitzsimmonsTechnicalDef.docx" would be an acceptable document name. "FinalFINAL draft2(3)Stupid English Class" would not be an acceptable document name.

Peer Reviews

All drafts submitted for peer-review should be COMPLETE, meaning they must meet the minimum word count, must contain the minimum required elements and should be somewhat polished and refined. Drafts that do not meet these requirements will not receive credit for peer review. Half of the peer review points are awarded based on the quality of your work submitted for review. The other half of the points are awarded based on your response to your peer's work.

When responding to peers, please maintain professional communication standards at all times. The main purpose of peer review is to help improve and refine a document, so please aim to keep all communications constructive, productive and professional. This necessarily includes suggesting improvements, noting specific areas of difficulty, or indicating places where changes might be made. A peer review that is essentially "Looks good!" or "I like it!" cannot receive full points. Writing is a process and should never be considered "finished" or "perfect."

Email and Conferences

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor via email to set up a video conference if there are questions about progress in the course, work underway, or any other course-related concerns. Group conferences will be held with the instructor via Google Hangouts during group work weeks and students will be expected to "attend" these conferences. Having conferences on assignments is frequently the best way to improve the quality of final drafts.

Please allow 24 hours for the instructor to respond to your emails before sending a follow-up.

Since this is a writing class, all of your emails to your instructor should reflect the lessons we have covered on professional communication: your emails should reflect proper spelling, grammar, and email etiquette, and should include your contact information and class section information.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

COURSE MODULES

The following is a general outline of the topics covered in this course by module. Readings are listed in the lessons portion of the course website, and assignment due dates are listed in the website calendar.

Module 1: The Rhetoric of Professional Communication

Module 2: Correspondence--E-mail, Memoranda, Letters

Module 3: Job Applications

Module 4: Research for Professional Reports Process

Module 5: Technical Definitions and Descriptions

Module 6: Document Design and the Use of Graphics

Module 7: Instructions and Procedures

Module 8: Working Collaboratively and Running Meetings

Module 9: Formal Analytical Reports

Module 10: Proposals

Schedule:

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments, quizzes and activities are due 11:55 pm the date listed

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	July 1	July 2	July 3	July 4	July 5	July 6
	<u>Begin Module 1:</u> Read Ch 1, 2, 3 Watch Intro	Syllabus Quiz	Quiz 1	<u>Begin Module 2:</u> Read Ch 10, 14 Watch Video	Quiz 2 Activity 1	Activity 2
July 7	July 8	July 9	July 10	July 11	July 12	July 13
<i>Due: Intro Email</i>	<u>Begin Module 3:</u> Read Ch. 15, 7 Watch video Research jobs	Quiz 3	<i>Due: Job Packet materials to Peer Reviewers</i>	<u>Begin Module 4:</u> Read Ch 6 Watch Video Activity 3(Jobs)	Quiz 4 Complete Job Materials Peer Review Activity 4 (research)	
July 14	July 15	July 16	July 17	July 18	July 19	July 20
<i>Due: Job Application Packet</i>	<u>Begin Module 5:</u> Read Ch 20, 10 Watch Video	Quiz 5 Activity 5	<i>Due: Annotated Bib, Tech Def to peer review</i>	<u>Begin Module 6:</u> Read ch 11, 12 Watch video	Quiz 6 Activity 6 Complete Tech Def peer review	
July 21	July 22	July 23	July 24	July 25	July 26	July 27
<i>Due: Tech Def</i>	<u>Begin Module 7:</u> Read Ch 20 Watch video	Quiz 7 Activity 7 Part 1		<u>Begin Module 8</u> Read Ch 4 Watch Video Activity 7 Part 2	Quiz 8 Activity 8	
July 28	July 29	July 30	July 31	August 1	August 2	August 3
<i>Due: Instruction Manual to peer review group</i>	<u>Begin Module 9:</u> Read Ch 19 Watch Video Return Manual peer review	Quiz 9 Group Work	<i>Due: Instruction Manual</i> Group Work	Activity 9		
August 4	August 5	August 6	August 7	August 8	August 9	August 10
<i>Due: Formal Research Report</i>	<u>Begin Module 10:</u> Read Ch 16, 17 Watch Video	Quiz 10 Activity 10 Group Work	Group Work <i>Due: Progress Report</i>		<i>Due: Proposals</i> By 9AM	