

## TECM 2700 Introduction to Technical Writing

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**Text & Materials** Sims, Brenda. *Technical Communication in the Information Age*. Kendall Hunt Publishers, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4652-0242-0

Flash drive or other memory saving device

### Course Objectives

In this course you will learn

- To write clearly, concisely, and correctly
- To develop good writing skills to use in business and industry
- To learn and practice writing various technical documents common in business and industry
- To learn to use word-processing to create effective technical documents
- To learn to write as a member of a team

### Your Semester Grade

Major Technical Documents:

**Case Study** **20%**

*Description: Students respond to an in-class writing prompt designed to test the student's knowledge of technical style and design. This assignment functions as the mid-term style exam.*

**Feasibility Study** **10%**

*Description: Students work as a group to compare three options, such as the best place to purchase gas within a 5 mile radius of the UNT campus.*

**Proposal** **20%**

*Description: In this individual assignment, the student proposes the topic for his or her manual project.*

**Instructions Project** **10%**

*Description: In this group project, students rewrite and redesign a document to include numbered steps and labeled graphics.*

**Manual Project** **30%**

*Description: The manual project, an individual project, is a multiple page instruction manual, written for a specific audience.*

**Daily Work, Style Quiz, Online Portfolio,  
Progress Report & Participation** **10%**

*Description: Students complete the following:*

- *Daily work exercises and document re-design projects during class time to practice the principles discussed in class.*
- *Style quiz, which allows the students to demonstrate mastery of the basic principles of technical writing.*
- *Online portfolio, a webpage that contains all of the student's work for the semester.*
- *Progress report is written during class; in it, the student responds to a directive about reporting the progress he or she has made towards completing the manual project.*
- *Participation is evaluated on a sliding scale of the student's attendance & professionalism.*

## **Daily Work**

Each day, we will work on something that related to completing the formal assignments. You must come to class prepared to take notes and to participate in class discussions. You should also prepare for unannounced reading quizzes, in-class writing and completion of homework assignments.

Except where otherwise noted, homework assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you must miss class, you must turn in any work that is due – as scheduled.

**I do not accept late work for any reason.**

## **Participation**

A small, yet significant portion of your grade will depend upon your participation in class discussions, as well as my estimation of your progress in the course. Think of our classroom as your workplace, and conduct yourself with the same professionalism with which you would treat a job. Arrive on time, prepared to work. Actively demonstrate that you understand professional behavior. Keep in mind that I assess your participation each class day.

## **Late Papers**

**I do not accept late papers for any reason.** Except where otherwise specifically noted, papers are due at the beginning of the class period, on the assigned dates.

## **Open Door Policy**

I welcome and encourage you to visit me whenever you wish to discuss a paper or an issue as it relates to this class. If you need to contact me outside of class, e-mail me ([LJackson@unt.edu](mailto:LJackson@unt.edu)).

Please put your first and last name, as well as the course number, the days, and time you attend class in your e-mail. I try to read my e-mail frequently and will send you a prompt reply.

## Absence Policy

**I both expect and demand regular and punctual attendance.**

Good students attend class. That says it all. You will be counted absent if you are more than ten minutes late for class. Although I will take attendance on a daily basis, you are responsible for keeping up with the number of absences you incur.

Neither the university nor I recognize temporary illness or personal emergencies as excused absences. If you are ill, please stay at home; send me an e-mail at [Ljackson@unt.edu](mailto:Ljackson@unt.edu) to notify me that you will miss class. You may miss class up to three times for illness or personal emergencies. Use your allotted absences wisely. For more information on the university's policy on temporary illness, go to: [http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/temporary\\_illness](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/temporary_illness)

**Students who are late two or more times will make a zero in participation for the semester. Students who miss class three or more times will fail the course. No exceptions.**

Whether you are in class or not, you remain responsible for all assignments made and policies announced each day. If you must miss class, you must still turn in any work that is due – as scheduled.

## UNT's Criteria for Excused Absences

The only excused absences recognized by the University of North Texas are those wherein a student is representing the university in an official capacity. You must bring me appropriate documentation to have your absence excused. Athletes and other students who will miss class for an official university activity must advise me in writing at least 48 hours in advance of the absence.

**Classroom  
Correspondence—  
BlackBoard &  
Text Messages  
Via Remind.com**

Occasionally I may need to communicate with you and your classmates. I will use your university e-mail address for this purpose. If you do not use your university e-mail as your primary e-mail account, you will need to change your e-mail settings in MyUNT.edu to forward your messages to your primary account. To access MyUNT.edu, go to:

<https://my.unt.edu/>

I will also use BlackBoard to post copies of the course syllabus, assignments sheets for major technical documents, copies of TC Lab orientations, course materials, and miscellaneous announcements. You are responsible for regularly checking on this type of information. To access BlackBoard, go to:

<https://learn.unt.edu/>

You may want to sign up for Remind.com, which allows me to send you text messages about this course. To receive text messages about class assignments and announcements via Remind.com, you should

- Use any mobile device
- Send the text @tecm2700 to 81010
- Receive a confirmation text that you're enrolled
- Complete your enrollment by responding with your name

Neither your phone number nor mine will ever be displayed. These texts are for classroom purposes only. You cannot text me from this number.

You should consider exchanging e-mail addresses or other contact information with one of your classmates so that you may contact them to get notes or assignments you may have missed.

## **UNT Eagle Alerts & Inclement Weather Notifications**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an emergency. Eagle Alert allows UNT administrators to quickly contact campus community members by phone about emergency situations affecting the safety and well-being of people on and around the UNT campus. The system sends voice messages to the phones, including cell phones, of all active faculty, staff and students. The system also can send text messages to cell phones if you grant the system permission to do so beforehand. **I strongly urge you to sign up for these notifications.**

Eagle Alert is only used in critical situations including:

- severe weather with imminent dangerous conditions affecting campus, such as tornado warnings
- campus closings due to inclement weather
- health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence

If the university is closed for more than one day, you should check the UNT website for the latest information. The university will continue providing updated information on Facebook and Twitter, to campus telephone operators, and will inform news media. For more information on the UNT Eagle Alert system, go to:

<http://www.unt.edu/eaglealert/>

UNT Website

<http://www.unt.edu>

UNT Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/northtexas>

UNT Twitter

<https://twitter.com/untnews>

**Technical  
Communication  
Computer Lab  
(TC Lab) &  
Color Printing**

As a technical communication student, you may use the Technical Communication Computer Lab (TC Lab) in the Auditorium Building, room 307. The TC Lab has IBM-compatible computers for you to use. These computers have the latest version of Microsoft® Office, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, as well as Adobe® software including InDesign and Photoshop.

We will have several orientations in the TC Lab. You must attend these orientations because the TC Lab tutors do not give individual tutoring sessions.

The highly-trained TC Lab tutors are here to help you if you have computer issues while you are working in the TC Lab.

You may print as many copies of black and white documents for your technical communication class as you like. Later in the semester, you will receive a color copy card. This card entitles you to print four multiple-page documents in color. The card is only good for this semester, and it is only good for assignments for this course. If you lose your color copy card, you will not be issued a new card. Please mark your color copy card with your name and e-mail address, and place it in safe location like your wallet.

The TC Lab is open

Monday—Thursday 8:00 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.

Friday 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

**Computer  
Etiquette**

While we will be using the computers in the classroom to complete both homework assignments and papers, I expect you to use good computer etiquette during class time.

Turn off your monitor during class unless I direct you to do otherwise.

Do not hack, surf the net, send/read personal e-mails, or complete work for other courses during class time. **Students who use the computers during class for anything unrelated to this course will receive a zero for class participation for the semester.**

## **In-class Writing Workshops**

We will spend a significant amount of class time working on course assignments. Good students use this time to complete group and individual projects, and they benefit from working with the instructor on their assignments. Use this time wisely.

## **Group Work**

As you work towards entering the workplace, you need to develop and sharpen your collaboration skills. Therefore, you will complete several assignments as members of a group. Your attendance at group meetings, whether the group meets inside or outside of class, impacts your grade for this course.

Save all group work on the public drive in the Technical Communication Lab (TC Lab). Show proper respect and courtesy to your group by arriving promptly for class—especially on the day your group assignment is due.

If you miss more than one group meeting—whether your group meets inside or outside of class—the highest grade you can receive on a group assignment is 75% of the group's grade. This includes in-class writing workshop days. **Students who miss class on the day a group project is due will make a zero for the assignment.** Additional deductions as outlined in your group's statement of work may also apply.

Keep in mind that I assess your participation as a group member each day you and your group work in class. I reserve the right to give a zero on group assignments to students who cannot perform as members of a group.



## **Format Requirements**

As you prepare your assignments, make sure you

- Print the assignment on a laser printer
- Make the assignment look neat and visually appealing
- Proofread carefully so the assignment is absolutely free from spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors
- Staple the assignment once in the upper left-hand corner , or bind it in a manner appropriate for the assignment

This is not a suggestion—it is a mandate! Use spell check. Proofread. Do not hand write anything on your papers. Any assignment not prepared specifically according to instructions in format, organization, and/or style will receive an "F."

## **Essential Competencies**

Essential competencies for this course include the ability:

- To attend class regularly and punctually
- To read and follow the course syllabus
- To have a basic understanding of English grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- To read and analyze technical documents
- To write clear, concise, and visually appropriate technical prose for the intended readers in response to various types of assignments
- To discuss, both in class and in small groups, technical documents
- To use a personal computer with various word processing, e-mail, and graphics software applications

## **Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, you must advise me of your needs in writing no later than the end of the second week of class.

For more information on disability accommodation, go to:

<https://disability.unt.edu/>

## **UNT's Policy on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty**

The University of North Texas considers plagiarism as the use of another's thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student's intent, including but not limited to:

- the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation
- the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials

You will be dismissed with an "F" in this course if

- You turn in a piece of writing all or part of which you have plagiarized
- You use unauthorized assistance of any kind in taking quizzes, tests, or in completing assignments
- You submit materials you have written for another class or for current or previous employment

I reserve the right to consider further action within the context of university guidelines.

**Plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty are grounds for expulsion from the university.** For more information on the university's policy on this topic, go to:

<http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>

## **Classroom Civility**

I expect you to conduct yourself as adults who practice the utmost civility to the instructor, to the TC Lab staff, and to your fellow classmates.

**Do not read or send texts during class. Do not work on assignments for other courses or conduct personal business during class. Students who do so will automatically receive a zero in class participation for the semester.**

As colleagues engaged in mutual inquiry about a common goal—becoming more effective technical writers—we shall extend to one another professional courtesies such as:

- Attending all meetings and arriving on time
- Preparing work by the date expected
- Respecting and learning from differences of opinion and experience
- Accepting responsibility to help the group and individuals within the class to achieve their goals

Failure to extend these courtesies will affect my evaluation of your work.

Any behavior that I deem as uncivil and/or inappropriate in any way will result in an "F" in the course and/or your permanent dismissal from the classroom. I reserve the right to pursue further action within the context of university guidelines. For more information on the university's policies on student conduct, go to: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

## **Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT)**

The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. For more information on SPOT, go to:

<http://spot.unt.edu/content/welcome-spot>

## Schedule of Readings, Activities, and Assignments

### Week 1

Jan. 20	What we'll do in class:	Attendance Policy, Texts, Syllabus
Jan. 22	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Writing for Your Readers Writing Lab Orientation Sims, Chapter 2

### Week 2

Jan. 27	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Writing Easy-to-Read Documents Sims, Chapter 7 Chapter 7: Exercises 1-5
Jan. 29	What we'll do in class: What to read: What's due:	Using Reader-Focused Language Sims, Chapter 8 Chapter 8: Exercises 1-11

### Week 3

Feb. 3	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Organizing Information Maintaining Parallel Structure Writing Reader-Oriented Headings Sims, Chapter 6
Feb. 5	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Designing Documents Graphics Orientation Sims, Chapter 10

### Week 4

Feb. 10	What we'll do in class:	Designing Documents, continued In-class writing assignment: Lyme Disease Document (You will write this in class)
Feb. 12	What we'll do in class:  What to read:	In-class writing assignment: Lyme Disease Document (You will write this in class) Collaborating in the Workplace Sims, Chapter 3

**Week 5**

Feb. 17	What we'll do in class:  What to read:	Reader-Focused Letters, Memos, and E-mail Sims, Chapter 12
Feb. 19	What we'll do in class:  What's due:	Style Quiz ( <i>You will take this quiz during class to demonstrate your mastery of the basic principles of technical writing as we've discussed them in class. The style quiz counts as a daily grade.</i> ) Due at end of class

**Week 6**

Feb. 24	What we'll do in class:  What's due:	Complete Lyme Disease Document Redesign Due at end of class
Feb. 26	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing assignment <b>Major Document I: Case Study (You will write this in class) Due at end of class</b>

**Week 7**

March 3	What we'll do in class:  What to read:	Writing Feasibility Studies Saving Files as PDFs Sims, Chapter 15
March 5	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop

**Week 8**

March 10	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop
March 12	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document II: Feasibility Study Due at end of class</b>

**Spring Break from March 16 to March 20****Week 9**

March 24	What we'll do in class:  What to read:	Instructions & Manuals Brochure Orientation In-class writing workshop Sims, Chapter 18
March 26	What we'll do in class  What to read:	Writing Persuasive Proposals Introduction of Manual Project Gantt Chart Orientation Sims, Chapter 16

**Week 10**

March 31	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop
April 2	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document III: Proposal Due at beginning of class</b>

**Week 11**

April 7	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document IV: Instructions Project Due at end of class</b>
April 9	What we'll do in class:	Preparing Front & End Matter Manual Orientation

**Week 12**

April 14	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Writing Progress Reports Online Portfolio Orientation Sims, Chapter 14
April 16	What we'll do in class: What's due:	In-class writing workshop <b>Major Document V: Progress Report – Written in class Due at end of class</b>

**Week 13**

April 21	What we'll do in class: What to read:	Writing Résumés & Cover Letters Sims, Chapter 13
April 23	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop

**Week 14**

April 28	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop
April 30	What we'll do in class:	In-class writing workshop

**Week 15**

May 5	What's due:	<b>Manual Project Online Portfolio Due at beginning of class</b>
May 7	What we'll do in class:	<b>Reading Day No class</b>

**Week 16**

Your final exam will consist of

- Receiving your graded manual project
- Saving PDF copies of all of your work for the semester on the instructor's hard drive in the computer lab. You will receive instructions for completing this task during the final exam period

<b>Your Section</b>	<b>Your Regular Class Time</b>	<b>Your Final Exam Is On</b>
2700.019	TR 11-12:20 P.M.	Tuesday, May 12 from 10:30 A.M.—12:30 P.M.
2700.014	TR 12:30-1:50 P.M.	Thursday, May 14 from 10:30 A.M.—12:30 P.M.
2700.012	TR 2-3:20 P.M.	Thursday, May 14 from 1:30 P.M.—3:30 P.M.

You must arrive at the beginning of the final exam period.