

**Spring 2016**      **T/Th 2:00–3:15**      **Case Annex 176 (computer lab)**  
Office Location:      Case Annex 388  
Office Hours:      MWF 10:00–11:00 and By Appointment

### Course Description

Introductory course in principles of effective writing for professions and technical fields. Experience in writing with technology for various purposes and audiences relevant to students' career interests.

Prerequisite: ENG 102 or 105 or HON 102.

In particular, the course emphasizes writing technical and professional communications for tightly defined audiences, purposes, and situations, and explores document design principles.

### Required Text

Johnson-Sheehan, Richard. *Technical Communication Strategies for Today*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson, 2015. ISBN: 0-321-90797-3

### Technology

Digital technology has drastically changed the face of professional writing. To build familiarity and understanding of these technologies and their potential for reaching audiences, the course will make extensive use of online composing platforms such as Google Docs, Google Drive, and Wordpress.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will use critical and creative thinking.
- Students will communicate effectively.
- Students will use technology to create well-designed, audience-appropriate documents

### Attendance

This course is highly dependent on student interaction and discussion. For this reason, class attendance is mandatory to successfully complete the course. ***You may miss no more than 3 classes during the semester (one week of meetings for a Tuesday/Thursday class) without penalty.***

***Additional absences will accrue penalties to your final course grade. For each additional unexcused absence, your course grade will drop by half a letter grade.***

*Exceptions to this policy may be made for certain absences.* For the purposes of this course, "excused absences" include verifiable medical or family emergencies, university approved activities (accompanied by a university excuse), illness, and other absences as outlined in the University's "Student Absence from Class" policy

[http://policies.eku.edu/sites/policies.eku.edu/files/policies/4.1.6\\_student\\_absence\\_adopted\\_12.1.14.pdf](http://policies.eku.edu/sites/policies.eku.edu/files/policies/4.1.6_student_absence_adopted_12.1.14.pdf).

Students asking for an absence to be excused must bring documentation of the reason for the absence. Students whose absences are not excused will not normally be allowed to make up tests, quizzes, and/or assignments. Students who anticipate having a high number of *excused* absences should contact their instructor as soon as the situation arises so that they can make arrangements for how to handle

missed class time. Late arrival or early departures from class that are unexcused will be considered in the tabulation of absences as well.

**Last Date to Drop the Course**

Please visit the Colonel's Compass online (<http://colonelscompass.eku.edu/>) for the last date to drop the course.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

A student with a "disability" may be an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning, seeing or hearing. Additionally, pregnancy or a related medical condition that causes a similar substantial limitation may also be considered a disability under the ADA.

If you are registered with the [Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities](#), please obtain your accommodation letters from the [OSID](#) and present them to the course instructor to discuss any academic accommodations you need. If you believe you need accommodation and are not registered with the [OSID](#), please contact the office in the Whitlock Building Room 361 by email at [disserv@eku.edu](mailto:disserv@eku.edu) or by telephone at (859) 622-2933. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in an alternative format.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are advised that ECU's Academic Integrity policy will strictly be enforced in this course. The [Academic Integrity policy](#) is available at the [policy website](#). Questions regarding the policy may be directed to the Office of Academic Integrity.

**Mutual Respect**

I encourage vigorous and lively discussion and debate in this class and within our university community. However, personal insults on an individual person's race, class, gender, sexuality, age, veteran status, or ability will not be tolerated. Practice empathy and help maintain our classroom and university as a safe and inclusive place.

**Official Email**

An official ECU email is established for each registered student, each faculty member, and each staff member. All University communications sent via email will be sent to this ECU email address.

**Email Etiquette**

Because this is a class where you are following a professional business model in your correspondence, I expect you to practice proper email etiquette, which includes the a subject line announcing the main point of the email, an appropriate salutation (e.g. Dear Dr. Ashby , Hi Dr. Ashby, or simply, Dr. Ashby), and a signature (e.g. Regards – John Smith; Best – John Smith).

**Cell Phones, Text Messaging, and Other Distracting Stuff**

How do you react when somebody's cell phone starts ringing in a movie theater or in the middle of a business meeting? How do you feel when you're giving a presentation and someone in the audience is checking Facebook or texting their friends? In general, the policy is this: Do not interrupt the class in any way, or distract your classmates, or show disrespect for the instructor or other students in the class. Turn cell phone ringers to Off. If you must (say, you are waiting on an update on a close relative's condition), take calls and do text messaging outside the classroom, not in it.

## Evaluation Methods

In this course, you will complete a number of writing assignments focusing on different aspects of effective technical and professional communication. Each major assignment will include a drafting and revision process, during which you will receive feedback from your instructor and your peers, before you turn in a final draft for a grade. In addition, I will ask you to complete weekly reading-response blog posts, which will be evaluated on a complete/incomplete basis. Since collaboration is an important part of successful professional and technical communication, several of your projects will involve an element of collaboration, for which you and your team will also receive credit.

Here are the course assignments and their point values:

| Assignment  | Points Possible |
|---|-----------------|
| Summary and Recommendation Memo                   | 150             |
| Instructions and Documentation                    | 150             |
| Job Application Packet                            | 200             |
| Local Issue Research and Report (in small groups) |                 |
| • Proposal  | 25              |
| • Progress Report                                 | 25              |
| • Final Report                                    | 200             |
| • Presentation                                    | 50              |
| Blog Posts & Responses                            | 200             |
| <b>Total Points:</b>                              | <b>1000</b>     |

- In order to pass the class, **you must complete all assignments** indicated above.
- Your final grade will be based on the total possible points you have earned, as follows:
 

|          |   |         |   |
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| 900–1000 | A | 600–699 | D |
| 800–899  | B | 0–599   | F |
| 700–799  | C |         |   |

## Course Requirements

**Blog Posts and Responses:** These are meant to be low-stakes writing opportunities where you can explore and practice concepts and ideas covered in the readings and course discussions. So long as you complete these entries on time, respond to the topic, write at least 250 words (for reference, this paragraph is 106 words), and employ some basic proofreading, you will receive a full 10 points for each entry. You may submit a blog post late for 5 points; however, they must be submitted by the next class period. One missed, late, or incomplete blog entry (so, your lowest score) will be dropped from the final grade.

**Blog posts:** For each post, raise questions, challenges, and ideas about the day's reading topic.

Also, explore how one or some of the concepts apply to your area of professional focus: choose a concept and give an example.

**Blog responses:** Each week when a blog post is due, comment on and respond to at least two classmates' posts.

**Summary and Recommendation Memo:** This assignment sequence will focus on the conventions of memo writing, including consideration of audience, purpose, and layout. The assignment will also focus on strategies for writing effective summaries for readers unfamiliar with the source material. Additionally, during this sequence, we will look at and analyze examples of a related genre, the executive summary.

Instructions and Documentation: This sequence focuses on writing clear instructions for readers unfamiliar with or new to using a device or completing a task. Attention will also be given to effective use of headings, fonts, and visuals for the purpose of enhancing readability and comprehension.

Job Application Packet: This project will include designing a resume and writing a job application letter targeted to an employment or internship opportunity of your choice. The sequence will pay particular attention to the content and visual design of the resume; it will also introduce the conventions of writing a business letter.

Local Issue Research Project: This project, broken into several steps, will be undertaken in groups and will span across the semester—you and your group will be working on the early parts of this project at the same time that you are working on other assignments and then we will focus exclusively on the project toward the end of the semester. While many of your classes prepare you to do research and to write on your own—tasks you will be asked to do on the job—work-place writing also often involves a great deal of collaborative work and writing; I include this group project in ENG300 to help prepare you for what can be a challenging writing task.

In addition to developing effective collaborative writing practices, this assignment sequence will introduce you to several important mini-genres of workplace writing: proposals, progress reports, and formal finished reports. While working on the finished reports, you'll learn a lot about document design and ways of making the report read and look like a professional document.

Finally, as future degree-holders you will often be put into leadership positions in your future jobs, which means you will often have to give oral reports or presentations—sometimes formally (such as during a product pitch), sometimes informally (say, during a team meeting). Again, this assignment sequence will help you develop work-place related presentation skills, focusing on formal presentations; to this end, we'll focus on effective use of presentation software (how to design visuals that don't put viewers to sleep or distract from the content) and how to design effective handouts.

It looks like a lot (and it is!) but you'll also be working in groups and with a lot of in-class support from your instructor.

### **General Assessment Criteria**

Specific criteria for each major assignment will be explained and developed in class. However, all writing you produce in ENG300 should meet the following general criteria: (a) The writing meets the requirements and parameters for the assignment; (b) the writing is intelligent, well-informed, respectful of others, grammatically competent and stylistically fluent, well organized, and, most importantly, rhetorically effective for its purpose, audience, and context.

## Weekly Schedule for ENG300: Intro to Technical Writing

### Spring 2016

Schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class (when possible), on Blackboard, and via email; emergency cancelations or changes will be announced via email and Blackboard—please check your ECU email account regularly.

**You are responsible for keeping up with material covered and assignments due on any days that you miss class.**

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| Week 1<br>1/18–1/22 | Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course introduction</li> <li>• Review of best writing practices from your composition classes, and how they apply in technical and professional writing</li> </ul> Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 1: Communicating in the Technical Workplace and Chapter 2: Readers and Contexts of Use</li> <li>• In class: Audience and the professional rhetorical situation</li> </ul> |
| Week 2<br>1/25–1/29 | Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 3: Working in Teams</li> <li>• In class: Set up Google Drive;</li> </ul> Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 5: Letters, Memos, and E-Mails</li> <li>• In class: summary writing exercise; introduce memo assignment</li> </ul>   |
| Week 3<br>2/1–2/5   | Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce Team Projects</li> <li>• Read Chapter 4: Ethics in the Technical Workplace</li> <li>• Draft of first memo due</li> </ul> Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noel Studio session on topic selection and drafting research questions, determining audience</b></li> </ul>   |
| Week 4<br>2/8–2/12  | Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memo drafts (all) due</li> <li>• In-class workshop for clarity and concision</li> <li>• Discuss transmittal documents</li> </ul> Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Memo final draft due</b></li> <li>• Read Chapter 8: Proposals</li> <li>• In class: Work on project proposals</li> </ul>   |
| Week 5<br>2/15–2/19 | Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals Due; Group Conferences</li> </ul> Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 12: Researching and Research Methods</li> <li>• Designing surveys and interviews</li> </ul>  |

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| Week 6<br>2/22–2/26  | <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 6: Technical Descriptions and Specifications</li> <li>• In class: Technical description exercise</li> <li>• assignment</li> </ul> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 7: Instructions and Documentation</li> <li>• In class: writing instructions; introduce Instructions and Documentation</li> </ul> |
| Week 7<br>2/29–3/4   | <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 13: Designing Documents and Interfaces</li> <li>• In class: lecture on basics of visual design; evaluate documents for user-friendly visual design</li> </ul> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft of Instructions and Documentation due</li> <li>• In class: peer review; plan usability tests</li> </ul>     |
| Week 8<br>3/7–3/11   | <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 9: Activity reports</li> <li>• In class: Mini-presentations—what you learned from your usability tests</li> </ul> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final draft of Instructions and Documentation due</li> <li>• In class: finish up mini-presentations; workshop on audience and delivering bad news</li> </ul>  |
| Week 9<br>3/9–3/18   | <b>Spring Break</b>   |
| Week 10<br>3/21–3/25 | <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 11: Starting Your Career</li> <li>• In class: Introduce Job Application Packet</li> </ul> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring in a draft of your resume and some job/internship postings you are interested in</li> <li>• In class: workshop on cover letter writing; workshop on resume design</li> </ul>    |
| Week 11<br>3/28–4/1  | <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini presentations: Your design and rhetorical choices in your job packet</li> </ul> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Application Packets due</li> </ul>  |
| Week 12<br>4/4–4/8   | <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity Reports due—how are the team projects progressing?</li> <li>• Read Chapter 10: Analytical Reports</li> </ul> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Packet conferences</li> </ul>  |
| Week 13<br>4/11–4/15 | <p>Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 14: Creating and Using Graphics and review Chapter 13: Designing Documents and Interfaces</li> <li>• <b>Noel Studio workshop on creating simple graphics</b></li> </ul> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop: Report front and back matter; layout choices; readability</li> </ul>                          |
| Week 14              | Tuesday:  |

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| 4/18–4/22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-class time to work on documents</li></ul> Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Chapter 15: Preparing and Giving Presentations</li></ul> |
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| Week 15<br>4/25–4/29 | Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final Reports Due</li></ul> Noel Studio workshop on presentations<br>Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-class time to work on visuals and handouts for presentation</li></ul> |
| Week 16<br>5/2–5/6   | Tuesday and Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentations</li></ul>  |
| Finals Week          | Finish presentations   |