

Course title and number: Eng.330 Technical Writing

Credit hours: 3

FALL 2007

Classroom: Evans 154

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Lillie Busby (eng_lrb@shsu.edu)

Office: Evans 111, ext. 4-3590

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday before and after classes. Appointments available for other times.

Text: Markel, Mike. Technical Communication. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford, 2007.

Course Description and structure:

English 330 prepares the student for workplace correspondence and overall technical communications in the professions. This syllabus is your first example of technical writing in this course. Note the tone here is professional, without apology or humor.

Technical writing is not limited to a discussion of a technical subject, as in an instructional manual for building a computer from the ground up. Rather, it is a discussion of any subject from a technical point of view. Technical writing is often rhetorically challenging since most technical reports are read by an audience whose technical expertise is less than the writer's. Consequently, the writer must assess the audience carefully. The report must connect with the audience's level of understanding. Details must be ample, yet concise. The content must not be buried under needless tedious detail.

Analytical reports, proposals, completion reports, memos, and other forms of technical writing are all written with one purpose in mind: they are intended to be used. These documents must be reader oriented, efficient, and they must present valuable information to the targeted organization.

Your technical report must meet all the above criteria, it must be persuasive, and it must present a thorough analysis of your subject. As you search for topics consider your major or your desired career field. Consider interviewing professors or employers whose work is clearly related to your career or major. Your research must be original (primary), but some knowledge of current literature in the field may be desired. Please choose a subject that you find interesting. You and your subject will be together throughout the semester.

Objectives:

- **To learn to apply course material to workplace situations**
 - **To develop oral and written skills in workplace communications**
 - **To master basic forms of workplace communications (memos, reports, proposals, letters, email)**
 - **To create collaborative skills essential in workplace communications**
 - **To enhance analytical problem solving skills.**
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Attendance:

Assignments are due for almost every class session. Many classes follow a workshop format in which we edit and discuss the projects completed by you and your peers. Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion are, therefore, essential and mandatory. Students who are habitually tardy (more than 3) or who leave class early will be counted absent. **For each unexcused or excused absence beyond three, two points may be subtracted from your semester grade total.**

Academic Policy Statement 800401: "1.04 A student shall not be penalized for three or fewer hours of absences when examinations or other assigned class work have not been missed; however, a student may be penalized for more than three hours of absences at the discretion of the instructor."

Deadlines: Readings, exercises, and assignments must be completed on the due date so they can be edited and discussed in workshops. Rewrites are due the following class session. No late submissions will be accepted.

**** Because you have the entire semester to work on your final reports, a course grade of incomplete will not be given on grounds that the report could not be completed by deadline. Also, reports submitted after the deadline will not be graded without substantial documentation.

Report Specifications:

Your technical report must contain fifteen (15) pages of textual work, excluding statistics, graphics, and ancillary materials. The final report must be presented bound (60# card stock cover), on rag-bond, white paper, and camera ready. Please Note: All reports are individual efforts. The report must contain the following sections in this order:

- a. Cover page: Your report cover (do not include a title page).

- b. Letter of transmittal: DUE A WEEK BEFORE THE REPORT IS IN, AND ONE COPY WITH THE REPORT.
- c. General Abstract
- d. Table of contents: PART OF THE REPORT.
- e. Executive (informative) Summary: (submitted to me and not required in the bound report). DUE: One week before the report is in.
- f. List of Tables and Figures (if necessary): DUE WITH REPORT.
- g. Introduction:(includes "Expanded Definition" and "Statement of the Problem"). PART OF THE REPORT.
- h. Detailed Discussion: (any detailed information necessary). PART OF THE REPORT.
- i. Methods (methodology): PART OF THE REPORT.
- j. Results: PART OF THE REPORT.
- k. Conclusion (includes "Suggestions" and "Recommended Solutions"): PART OF THE REPORT.
- l. List of References (do not use a "works cited" page):PART OF THE REPORT.
- m. Glossary: PART OF THE REPORT. Bold face all glossary entries each time they appear in the report.
- n. Appendix: PART OF THE REPORT: must contain at least 3 interviews (person to person) and at least 1 (one) survey or questionnaire.

--- We will work extensively on all requirements in class. The textbook also contains elaboration on these items, several of which must be produced in duplicate (a copy for me and one for your report). Clearly, saving your work on media is essential. If you do not have access to a computer and a letter quality printer, I urge you to familiarize yourself with the university computer lab immediately. Also, it is imperative that you choose your report topic as soon as possible since much of your class work can be incorporated into the final project. Basic mastery of composition skills (grammar, mechanics, organization, MLA or CMS format) are a must.

Course Specifications:

Success in this course calls for three essentials: (1) attending and participating actively in the class, (2) following instructions, and (3) meeting deadlines. All assignments must be typed.

General requirements:

1. All assignments must be typed on non-erasable paper. If you use a word processor, print your document on a letter-quality printer.
2. Please note that the mere act of revision (rewrites) does not, in itself, guarantee a higher grade. A grade will improve only when the revised version shows enough improvement to merit a higher evaluation.
3. REWRITES: For grading purposes, rewrites must be stapled to the originals. Place your revision on top, staple in the upper left corner and clearly label your work as a "rewrite." Keep all returned work in a folder, for review and conferences. You may revise assignments once (excluding the final report) after I have marked them.
4. Students must be punctual (no tardies or early cuts from class), and students must exhibit professional conduct in the classroom and in my office.
5. Complete all projects in order to pass the course (no exceptions).
6. Meet the "supplies" list.
7. Establish your own Sam Houston computer account with active email.
8. Documents marred by correction fluid (Liquid Paper) or improper editing will not be accepted without a rewrite.

SUPPLIES:

1. One letter size folder with pockets. Keep all marked assignments in this folder and bring it with you to each conference.
2. Two letter sized manila envelopes, needed to secure completed chapter projects. Secure your work and place it in

the envelope when turning in assignments. And please do not place graded work in the envelope.

3. Access to a computer, word processing software, and letter quality printer, or letter quality typewriter.
4. Rag-bond (non erasable) paper. Only the final analytical report (semester project) requires this high quality paper.
5. Scantrons (10 question) for quizzes. Bring at least one to each class.
6. Stapler, dictionary, dark blue or black ink pens, and pencils.
7. Access to bindery (SHSU Press preferable).
8. A lightweight 3-ring binder will do for the project log.

***The following is an example of the Project Log form.**

Project Log

Date: today's date

Location: where you are while working on the semester report

Project: semester report

Name of Employee: your name

Project Title: the title for your individual semester report

Time allocated for resources in this entry: how much time spent working on this source.

Resource: name the resource (person, index, professional journal, or other) you are researching today. Be sure to include credentials ("Ph.D. chemistry at SHSU" for example) when interviewing a person. Always include the complete web site address and titles of subsections when discussing information found on the internet.

Information: Notes from the source. Use as much space as necessary.

Example: cite the questions and answers during an interview or write your notes on researched material here. List possible leads for the project, and attach photocopied material also. Discuss (do not list web sites) all material found on a WEB site relevant to your semester project.

Poor Example: Resource: <http://www.environment.com>.

This information alone tells me or anyone else, nothing. The information provided in this section must discuss in detail what you found of use at this site. Also, you must provide credentials (author, date of publication, web host)

end of example

NOTE: this form will become part of the Project Log. As you advance into your semester project, more of the log content will consist of work on your semester project. There is no need to copy this form. Just write or type the headings and fill in the appropriate information. If you use more than one resource on the same date, but are still at the same location, just begin the remaining journal entries with the "RESOURCE" line. The "INFORMATION" heading must appear on each journal entry. Credit will not be given if the headings are omitted.

This project log is 10% of your semester grade. It is also my method of grading and verifying your research. Only well documented, thorough research work will garner all ten points for the project log. If you fail to turn in a project log, your report will not be graded.

QUIZZES: quizzes for chapter readings will be given frequently and will be not be announced beforehand. Quizzes cannot be made up under any circumstances. please do not ask for preferential treatment.

GRADING: Open the “Grading” folder in BlackBoard for complete information on grading.

ASSIGNMENTS: Open the “Course Calendar” folder in BlackBoard for a tentative list of course assignments.

EXAMS: Exams are in the form of memos turned in on a weekly basis. Expect to turn in at least one memo a week (refer to the “Grading” folder in BlackBoard).

PARTICIPATION: Part of your grade is derived from your class work. Homework and work done in the classroom (group work, revisions, editing, research exercises, quizzes) cannot be made up. You will lose points in this area when you miss class. If you miss class, be professional and accept the consequences.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS: students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

STUDENT CONDUCT (<http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>):

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to learning while in the classroom or in my office. All students should be respectful of one another and of the instructor at all times. Cell phones and other devices that can disrupt class must be turned off before entering the classroom. Problems of a disciplinary nature will not be tolerated in the classroom.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect

adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.