

Technical Communication for the Health Sciences

ENC 2210 | Summer 2014 | University of South Florida

Instructor: Lauren Cagle

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Course Time: MWF 9:30-11:50pm

Course Location: EDU 213

Office Hours: M 7:30-9:00am/F 12:15-1:45pm

Office Location: CPR 301K

Course Description

In the health sciences, technical communication is a vital component of effective, efficient, and patient-focused health and healthcare systems. Health sciences practitioners must be able to analyze, interpret and create a variety of communications, from patient charts to data visualizations of an aging population's healthcare needs. This course exposes you to a variety of communicative means for expressing technical and semi-technical information. Through smaller assignments and major projects, this course prepares you to pursue and engage with the communicative components of a career in the health sciences.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate ethical insight in issues of health science.
- collaborate effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary writing team
- develop a familiarity with current social cultural contexts for the field of health science.
- design and implement information literacy skills.
- apply and adapt professional/technical writing conventions, including genre, tone, and style for particular writing situations.
- compose professional/technical documents and oral presentations for multiple audiences and specific purposes by using current technologies.
- Employ visual design strategies to produce rhetorically effective documents, visuals, and presentations.

Learning Outcomes

To achieve the course objectives, students will:

- develop professional/technical documents with a clear awareness of ethics.
- recognize and discuss important elements of how culture affects communication in collaborative workplaces.
- describe and generate strategies for effectively planning and working on collaborative projects.
- identify and explain current local and global discussions and trends in the field while relating these to students' professional interests.

- assemble relevant research in order to recommend an evidence-based solution.
- describe the effect of tone, organization, and style in professional/technical communication while employing these principles appropriately in various writing situations.
- identify and differentiate conventions of and genres in various professional/technical documents and professional presentations.
- illustrate and analyze audience while creating various professional/technical documents with a sophisticated awareness of audience as a reader and a writer.
- demonstrate audience and rhetorical awareness in visual design while creating professional/technical documents to visually appeal to appropriate audiences.

Required Texts

Textbooks may be purchased or rented online [typically at a deep discount from Amazon.com or a used book seller (e.g. half.com, alibris.com, abebooks.com)]. No matter where you shop, *pay attention to the edition you purchase*. It matters. You can search sites using ISBNs to make sure you find the exact books we're using.

1. Wolfe, Joanna. *Team Writing: A Guide to Working in Groups*. Bedford/St, Martin's 2010. ISBN-10: 0-312-56582-8
2. Duffy, Jennifer and Carol M. Cram. *Microsoft Word 2013 for Medical Professionals*. Cengage learning 2014. ISBN-10: 1-285-08394-6

Workload

Each week students will be completing a variety of in-class and out-of-class work, both individually and collaboratively. Plan on spending a minimum of 2 hours outside of class doing work for every hour we spend together (this means spending nearly 8 hours per week doing work outside of class). If students find they're having difficulty with the material, the first question is whether they're are putting in these hours.

Our big projects (some individual and some teamwork, exactly like the work common in health sciences) will be divided into stages and supported by smaller assignments to develop the skills needed to complete the work.

Assignment	Final Grade %	Description
Genres & Tools Presentation	5%	<i>Individual</i> . For this presentation, students will thoroughly research a genre or tool associated with a specific health communication context and need. The research will be shared in a 5-7 minute presentation and an accompanying hand-out.
Participation	10%	<i>Individual</i> . Participation includes preparedness for class (homework), performance on in-class activities (classwork), and engagement with the course. Please see the participation section below

		for more information.
Microsoft Word Labs	15%	<i>Individual.</i> The Microsoft Word Labs are homework assignments taken from <i>Microsoft Word 2013 for Medical Professionals</i> .
Employment Project	20%	<i>Individual.</i> For the Employment Project, students will apply for an actual job. See assignment sheet for more details.
Communication Technologies Project	25%	<i>Group.</i> For the Communication Technologies Project, students will solve a communication problem through researching communication technologies and critical thinking. See assignment sheet for more details.
Case Study Project	25%	<i>Group.</i> For the Case Study Project, students will create multiple deliverables responding to a real-life communication problem. See assignment sheet for more details.

Due dates, available on our calendar, could change. Please see the schedule of assignments for the most up-to-date schedule.

Completing the Work and Submitting Documents

Students receive credit for all of the work done for our class, inside or outside, as long as proper protocol is followed for submission, including punctuality. Most assignments will be submitted via Canvas drop boxes (via Assignments tab on the left navigation bar). These drop boxes are automated and will close at the appointed times. The boxes will not re-open for any reason.

Grading Policy

Note: There will be no rounding up.

A+ (97–100) 4.00	B+ (87–89.9) 3.33	C+ (77–79.9) 2.33	D+ (67–69.9) 1.33
A (94–96.9) 4.00	B (84–86.9) 3.00	C (74–76.9) 2.00	D (64–66.9) 1.00
A– (90–93.9) 3.67	B– (80–83.9) 2.67	C– (70–73.9) 1.67	D– (60–63.9) 0.67

Participation

Students are required to participate in class. Participation means being actively engaged with in-class activities, discussions, and individual and group work. Students who choose to do other work, sleep, use technology in ways not conducive to class work, and other distracting/distracted activities will receive deductions in participation grades which count for 10% of the final grade. Students may also incur possible penalties in attendance for that class period.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory for all meetings. When absent, it is the student's responsibility to check the schedule of assignments and Canvas for any missed work. Only one of the documented absences listed below can be “excused” absences. Otherwise, all students are allotted one absence free of penalty, regardless of the reason for missing class. Students who have incurred more than one absence will have their final grade lowered by 1/3 for each missed class beyond one. If students will miss class for one of the following reasons, please alert the instructor *prior* to the absence:

- Court Imposed Legal Obligations
 - Jury Duty, court subpoena, etc.
- Military Duty
- Religious Holy Days
- Ongoing Medical Conditions.
 - In addition, students facing extenuating circumstances, such as a debilitating illness or injury (physical or mental) that inhibits him/her from attending class or completing assignments, must work with the appropriate on-campus organization, which will then act as a liaison on behalf of the student and help the instructor determine appropriate action. These organizations include the Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention, Students with Disabilities Services, and Students of Concern Assistance Team (SOCAT).
- USF Athletics’ Participation
 - Any student who intends to miss class because he or she is participating in a schedule USF athletics’ event is expected to present a schedule of such participating events to his or her instructor by the third week of the semester if he or she intends to be absent for a class or an announced examination.

Instructors reserve the right to count any student absent who is not engaged with the class (i.e. sleeping, not prepared for class, having unrelated sidebar conversations).

Making Up Work

Due to the limited time frame of a summer course, makeup work will not be permitted, excepting extenuating circumstances with documentation. In these cases, students are required to discuss the potential for makeup work *prior* to the assignment due date or *prior* to the expected date of absence.

E-mail Policy

When sending an e-mail to a professor, the email should be as formal as possible. (Even though this is an electronic form of communication, this does not mean “texting” language/spelling is appropriate.) Include a subject, salutation, and closing (like a letter). Also, please do not respond to any mass e-mails I send to the class; it will probably get lost in the thread. Before asking a question via e-mail, please check Canvas, the syllabus, or ask a peer for the answer first.

University policy states that professors are required to respond to e-mails within 72 hours. On weekdays, I check my e-mail several times per day, so I will usually respond sooner (within 24 hours). However, keep the official policy in mind when sending me an e-mail and think ahead. If an urgent e-mail is sent the night before a project is due, I may not see it until the next day. On weekends, I check my e-mail less often, so expect a longer response time.

Recordings

Students are prohibited from recording class sessions, in whole or part, without explicit permission from the instructor.

Classroom Accessibility

I am committed to making my classroom and course accessible to all students. If there is anything I can work on with you to create a more accessible learning environment, please start a conversation with me. For example, I typically provide feedback in writing, but if there is another format (e.g. video or audio recording) that would make the feedback more useful, I'd love to talk about making that happen.

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the office of Students with Disabilities Services to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation. Students may request accommodations at any point during the semester. As accommodations are not retroactive, any grades earned before a student requests accommodations will stand. Each student must bring a current Memorandum of Accommodations from the Office of Student Disability Services that is prerequisite for receiving accommodations. Accommodated examinations through the Office of Student Disability Services require two weeks' notice. All course documents are available in alternate format if requested in the students' Memorandum of Accommodations (see [faculty responsibilities](#)).

Emergency Policy

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It's the responsibility of the student to monitor Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department Web sites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information.

Academic Dishonesty and Disruption of Academic Process

Some behaviors are unacceptable in and outside the classroom. If any behaviors interfere with instruction, whether in the classroom or online, your instructor will then follow policies regarding your conduct from the USF Handbook.

Read [USF's policies on academic dishonesty and disruption of the academic process](#).

Schedule of Assignments

I often posts in-class handouts and PowerPoints to Canvas for you to refer to after class or for students who miss a class. You can find these files under [Modules](#).

Week 1	In Class	Reading/Writing due before class begins
<p>Mon, June 29</p>	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <p>Personal introductions</p> <p>Syllabus: Course Details</p> <p>Overview of Projects</p> <p>Logging into/navigating Canvas</p>	<p>--</p>
<p>Wed, July 1</p>	<p>Introduction to Technical Communications</p> <p>What is technical communication?</p> <p>What is (the field of) Technical Communication and how have scholars defined it? Who are technical communicators?</p> <p>Why/how is technical communication important to health sciences professions? (Scott)</p> <p>Tech/Comm Memo Example</p> <p>Introduction to Employment Project</p> <p>Search for jobs (or graduate school programs) online.</p> <p>Complete Job Analysis worksheet.</p>	<p>Read “What Are the Boundaries, Artifacts, and Identities of Technical Communication” (Selfe & Selfe)</p> <p>Read “How can Technical Communicators Work in an Ethical and Legal Manner?” (Scott)</p> <p>Read AMWA Code of Ethics</p> <p>Read 101 Email Etiquette Tips & 25 Email Etiquette Tips</p> <p>Sign up for your Genres & Tools Presentation date (For the full assignment description, please see the Genres & Tools Presentation dropbox.)</p> <p>Adjust your Canvas settings to make sure you receive emails when Canvas messages are sent out.</p> <p>Send your instructor an email (either Canvas message or @mail.usf.edu) introducing yourself and expressing what you're interested in learning in this class. Please include your year, major, track, career goals and general academic interests along with one personal hobby or anecdote.</p>

		<p>Construct this email based on the tips in the Email Etiquette readings.</p> <p><i>Helpful Resources:</i></p> <p>Tampa Healthcare Jobs</p>
Fri, July 3	<p>NO CLASS - INDEPENDENCE DAY HOLIDAY</p> <p>Word Lab Unit C: “Formatting Text and Paragraphs” (due Monday before class)</p>	<p>ALL WORK DUE MONDAY BEFORE CLASS</p> <p>Complete Selfe & Selfe discussion question #6 individually. Attach completed text cloud to Canvas.</p> <p>Read Chapter 1: “Planning Your Collaboration” & Chapter 2: “Project Management” (Wolfe 3-26)</p> <p>Complete Wolfe Reading Response</p> <p><i>Helpful Resources:</i></p> <p>Princeton Cover Letter Template</p> <p>Cover Letter Tutorial Video</p> <p>Resume Templates</p> <p>Managing Your Social Media Presence</p>
Week 2		
Mon, July 6	<p>2 presentations</p> <p>Resume genre analysis</p> <p>Cover letter genre analysis</p> <p>Introduction to document design</p> <p>Social media management</p>	<p>Read "Audience Analysis" #1</p> <p>Read "Audience Analysis" #2</p> <p>Read "Visual Design" (Rude and Eaton 266-281)</p>
Wed, July 8	<p>Employment Project peer review</p> <p>Introduction to Communication Technologies Project</p> <p>Select teams and communication problem</p>	<p>Bring 3 hard-copy drafts of Employment Project deliverables (except for Career Community Profile) for Peer Review</p> <p>Read Chapter 3 “Getting Started with the Team Charter” & Chapter 4 “Getting Started with the Task Schedule” (Wolfe 27-</p>

	Google Docs introduction	48)
Fri, July 10	Word Lab Unit E: “Formatting Documents” Communication Technology team meeting	All Employment Project deliverables due Communication Technology Project team charter & task schedule due
Week 3		
Mon, July 13	2 presentations Introduction to Visual Rhetoric Communication Technologies team meeting	Draft of Overview of the Problem & Research Proposal due for instructor review (bring a hard copy to class) Read Ch. 5 “Constructive Conflict” & Ch. 6 “Revising with Others” (Wolfe 49-79)
Wed, July 15	2 presentations Document Design Elevator Pitches Communication Technologies team meeting	Explore Document Design Resources Explore Project 2: Budget Resources
Fri, July 17	3 presentations Word Lab Unit D: “Creating and Formatting Tables”	Read Chapter 7 “Communication Styles and Team Diversity” (Wolfe 80-102)
Week 4		
Mon, July 20	Handout and Elevator Pitch Presentations in Class Introduction to Case Project	Group Communication Technologies Project Deliverables due Individual Communication Technologies Project Deliverable due Elevator Pitch Presentation & Handout due (in-class)
Wed, July 22	2 presentations Case Project -- project planning	Read case materials linked on the assignment sheet Case Project team charter & task schedule due

Fri, July 24	3 presentations Word Lab Unit H: “Working with Styles and Templates”	
Week 5		
Mon, July 27	2 presentations Work on case and discuss readings	Read Chapter 9: “Multicultural and International Medical Writing” (Heifferon 205-222) Planning Memo due (bring a hardcopy to class)
Wed, July 29	2 presentations Work in teams to solve the problem presented in Exercise #5 from the reading (p284). Present the tutorial to the class and analyze the process of writing the tutorial as a team.	Read Chapter 11: “Electronic Medical Writing” (Heifferon 258-281)
Fri, July 31	2 presentations Word Lab Appendix I: “Illustrating Documents with Graphics” Case conferences	Bring a stapled hardcopy of all Case deliverables to class.
Week 6		
Mon, August 3	2 presentations Usability Testing Case Project: Teams work in class	
Wednesday, August 5	2 presentations Case Project: Teams work in class and/or work on Employment Project revisions	Group Case Project Deliverables due @ 11:59pm Individual Case Project Deliverables due @ 11:59pm Revised Employment Project Due @ 11:59pm

**Friday,
August 7**

Word Lab Appendix: “Working in
the Cloud”

& Case Project discussion

Be prepared to discuss and reflect on your
case project