ENC 3254: TECHNICAL WRITING FOR ENGINEERS

Instructor: Jackie Amorim  
Email: jamorim@ufl.edu  
Office hours: Tigert 302, Tuesdays Period 4

Course Description:

Technical communication is the practice of conveying practical information to multiple audiences who may possess differing skill sets for using and applying said information.

ENC 3254-E is designed to help students master a variety of communication strategies and genres of technical writing relevant to engineering. In this class you will learn how to research, organize, and present technical information, how to write effectively, participate in group collaboration, and use various technologies to support your communication efforts, as well as conduct yourself in a professional manner in preparation for your prospective careers. We will focus primarily on the composition and design of larger documents such as proposals, instructions, and formal reports. We will also compose and design smaller documents such as memos, letters, resumes, and informal reports, as well as construct formal presentations.

The primary objective of this course is to help you learn how to write for the professional engineering community you will join after college. Writing constitutes 50% to 60% of the work you will complete as an engineer; by analyzing and practicing writing in the technical workplace, we will reinforce important writing strategies essential for success.

Required Texts:


Contact:

I encourage you to email me with questions. Email or stop by during my office hours if you have any questions about the course or if you have any other concerns. If my office hours do not work for you, please contact me and we can schedule a better time.

Assignments and Group Projects:

*Introductory Memo (300 words, 50 points): Using a standard memo format, you will send an email to the class listserv introducing yourself, your career goals, your areas of specialization, and your writing experiences. You will also need to include your schedule, with marked times available outside of class for group project work.

*Job Application Packet (1,000 words, 50 points): (Cover letter, Resume, Follow-Up Letter) In this multi-part assignment you will first identify a 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 restating your interest and thanking your fictional employer for your interview.

*Technical Definition (900 words, 100 points): You will first generate a list of technical terms or concepts specific to your area of engineering in a small group, and then subsequently identify an audience and a purpose for the terms using a profile sheet. You will first write a sentence definition of one of your chosen terms, then an expanded paragraph definition for a first-year engineering student. Next, you will write a 600 word 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.

**Progress Report (600 words, 50 points):** During the Formal Proposal process 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.

**Instruction Manual (1,200 words, 150 points):** You will construct an instructions 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.

**Usability Testing & Formal Report (8-page report, 150 points):** Working in a small group, you will do usability testing on one of the Instructions Manuals produced by one of the members of the group. Next, you will produce a formal report explaining the process and the results of your testing. Using both focus groups and protocol analysis, you will design and administer the tests, then, using feedback from the users, revise and update your chosen Instructions Manual. Your formal report will explain your testing process, your test results, and the revisions the group makes to the manual.

**Proposal (10-page report, 200 points):** Your final small group project will be an engineering proposal designed to win an Office of Contracts and Grants award. 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. Proposals will be focused on innovative responses to some of the economic, environmental, or social problems facing America today. The assessment of this final project will be on not only the technical efficacy of the proposed course of action, but on your group’s audience analysis, rhetorical strategy, document design, and the visual quality and effectiveness of the proposal graphics.

**Individual Assignments:**
- Introductory Memo (300 words) 50
- Job Application (1000 words) 50
- Technical Definition (900 words) 100
- Instructions (1200 words) 150
- Progress Report (600 words) 50
- Reading Quizzes (10 x 20 points) 200
- Peer Reviews (5 X 10 points) 50

Individual Assignments Total: 650

**Group Assignments:**
- Formal Report (8 Pages) 150
- Proposal (10 Pages) 200

Group Assignments Total: 350

**TOTAL POINTS** 1,000

**Grading Scale:**
- A: 900-1000
- B+: 875-899
- B: 800-874
- C+: 775-799
- C: 700-774
- D: 600-699
- E: 0-599
Grading Policy:

A Followed the directions as listed. These papers exhibit organized, well-developed, cogent ideas and are free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors (papers with more than one or two errors cannot receive an A).
B You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs revision (papers with more than five errors cannot received a B); however, it is complete in content, it is organized well, and shows special attention to professional style.
C You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
D Work in this range needs significant revision and is typically incomplete. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.
E An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work or don't come to class. However, if your work is shoddy and shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, you will receive a failing grade.

Revision of Assignments: During the course of the semester, you may rewrite any two individual assignments of your choosing (your new grade will replace the previous one). In addition to the revised project, you must also write a one-page memo addressed to me in which you detail what, how, and why you've revised the assignment. Revised work is due two weeks from the original due date - you are responsible for remembering the deadline!

Late Work: You are responsible for getting assignments in on their due dates. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late papers will not be accepted.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

ENC 3254 (passed with a grade of D or better) satisfies the university's General Education Requirement for Composition ©.
ENC 3254 also satisfies 6000 words (E6) of the University Writing Requirement. HOWEVER, you must turn in all assigned papers and you must pass this course with a grade of C or better to receive the E6 credit.

To fulfill the Composition (C) requirement, ENC 3254 offers instruction in methods of writing, conventions of standard written English, reading and comprehension skills, and ways of making expository and argumentative prose accessible to readers in varied situations.

Course Policies and Procedures:

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.

NOTE: **UF students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire UF Student Honor Code. Review the Honor Code very carefully: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php**

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the UF Student Honor Code, and will result in a failing grade for this course. The UF Student Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:
6. 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):

   a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

   b. 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, 15 Aug. 2007  
      <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>)

You commit plagiarism if you use (without crediting the source):

- Any part of another person’s essay, speech, or ideas
- Any part of an article in a magazine, journal, newspaper; any part of a book, encyclopedia, CD-ROM, website, etc.
- Any idea from another person or writer, even if you express that idea in your own words.

NOTE: **CITE YOUR SOURCES!!! Always provide information on the source, even if restating ideas from another source in your own words! The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very, very seriously and WILL severely reprimand students for plagiarized assignments.**

Students with Physical 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.

Readings, Quizzes & In-Class Assignments:

Reading Assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the date on which they are due. You should have completed these readings before coming to class that day. Quizzes on the readings will be given randomly during the semester. They are designed to make sure you do all the readings assigned for that day. Quizzes can not be made up, and the only excused absence is a doctor’s note for the day missed.

Attendance and Participation:

According to the rules of the University Writing Program, you cannot pass the course with more than six absences. If you arrive more than 15 minutes after class starts, you will be counted as absent. Likewise, because participation is a crucial part of the class and your grade, I reserve the right to drop your grade by a letter grade for each absence after the first three.
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