ENGL 3250 - Professional Communications
3 Credit Hours

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce you to various kinds of technical and professional communication. During the course, you will become familiar with technologies of business communication, receive feedback from and provide feedback to others on writing drafts and revisions, learn about the concept of "genre" and its application to technical and professional communication, and discover the role rhetoric plays in effective technical communication. Because this course is an online course, we will learn and experience ways to communicate effectively using e-mail and the Internet, including evaluating website design, the rhetoric of e-mail, the dynamics of online discussions, and particularly audience awareness and communication through technology. The course will go beyond writing itself to encompass graphics and ways they are used to create appropriate interfaces for communicating in digital environments. Throughout the course, rhetoric will be emphasized as an overarching concept essential for communicating in technological environments, both educational and professional.

Course Outcomes:

- Students will write in a variety of technical and professional writing genres and be able to identify the characteristics of those genres.

- Students will learn the importance of effective oral communication in professional settings (and will practice oral presentation skills).

- Students will have opportunities to work in teams to accomplish writing tasks.

- By the end of the course, students should have increased knowledge of professional communication formats, genres, and techniques.

- Students should improve their ability to write clear and audience-friendly professional and technical documents.

- Students will approach assignments as if they were on-the-job writing tasks. In other words, they will submit work that is professional in appearance and polished, work that would impress an employer or client.

- Students will build on strengths and reduce the weaknesses in their writing by using each new assignment as an opportunity to apply lessons from the previous assignment.

- Students will learn rhetorical principles for communicating effectively using technology.

- Students will explore ethical principles for communicating with others using technology and for researching information.

- Students will gain a greater awareness of the complexities technology brings to communicative environments in the form of e-mail, digital communication, and online discussions.

Prerequisites and Corequisites:

Successful completion of ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1020.

Course Topics:

This course will cover rhetorical principles such as ethos, pathos, and logos and ways they can be used effectively to persuade an audience. We will be covering such topics and communication types as oral presentations, website analyses, visual aids, procedural writing, technical document analyses, and document design revisions, as well as social media responses. Some peer feedback will be involved in drafting and revising writing.

Specific Course Requirements:

Students should be independent learners, capable of setting realistic goals and managing time wisely. Knowledge of word processing software is required, as well as ability to navigate the Internet. D2L is an Internet-based interface, so students should have the basic skills (such as being able to operate a mouse, open and receive attachments, etc.) that are required for successful completion of a course conducted solely via the Internet. Students should be able to work through problems on their own, while making lists of ones they cannot solve and need help with which can later be addressed with the instructor or a helpdesk consultant. Students will be required to complete all assignments successfully to pass the course.

Required Textbooks:

Please visit the Virtual Bookstore to obtain textbook information for this course. Move your cursor over the "Books" link in the navigation bar and select "Textbooks & Course Materials." Select your Program, Term, Department, and Course; then select "Submit."

Supplementary Materials:

Students will be required to have access to some type of recording device, such as a hand-held video camera, digital camera, phone, or webcam for oral presentations. The presentations will be recorded and then posted, emailed, or sent to the instructor for feedback. Students will submit their presentations in digital format (on a flash drive, DVD, or as an mp4 file) or through a link to an online submission site, such as YouTube or Vimeo. The instructor will need to approve the image quality before submission, however, if there is any question about audio or video quality.

Hardware and Software Requirements:

Minimum hardware requirements can be found [here](#).

Minimum software requirements can be found [here](#).

Common applications you might need:
To read a PDF file download the latest version of [Adobe Reader here](#)
Don't have Microsoft Word? Explore an alternative [OpenOffice here](#)
Accessing a PowerPoint file? Download the [PowerPoint Viewer here](#)

Web Resources:

Purdue [OWL Online Writing Lab](#) (for APA, MLA, or Chicago style)

The Writing Center [Online Writer's Handbook](#)

Student Resources:

- Technical support information can be found on the [TN eCampus Help Desk](#) page.
- Smarthinking virtual tutoring is available **FREE** of charge. to access Smarthinking, visit the course homepage and select Smarthinking under Course Resources. You also view [sample sessions](#) to see what Smarthinking offers and how it works.
- Information on other student issues or concerns can be located on the [TN eCampus Student Resources](#) page.

Instructor Information:

Please see "Instructor Information" in the Getting Started Module for instructor contact information, virtual office hours, and other communication information. You can expect to receive a response from the instructor within 24-48 hours unless notified of extenuating circumstances.

Testing Procedures:

Students will take periodic readiness tests that cover the reading assignments. Readiness test questions will be in true/false form. Readiness tests will be taken online and will be graded automatically via the "assessments" link. The following are some basic guidelines I will follow in evaluating your work and that will determine your success in the course:

- I will consider how well the documents reflect the guidelines for the assignments as discussed in the text and in our online discussions.
- The writing should follow the principles of effective communication discussed in the text and in class, such as diplomatic tone, conciseness, and readability.
- I will evaluate your writing based on how completely and clearly the documents are developed.
- The documents should be neatly and professionally presented.

Grading Procedures:

Assignment	Percentage
Technical Analysis	10%
Visual Aid	10%
Website Analysis	10%
Oral Presentation	10%
Procedural Writing	10%
Final Project	20%
Memo of Transmittal or Reflection	10%
Readiness Tests and Daily Grades Readiness Tests include ten reading quizzes Daily Grades include a Document Assessment or Prewriting, a Text and Graphics Essay, and an Oral Presentation Evaluation	10%
Discussion Postings (one original post per module plus at least one reply to a peer's post per module)	10%

Grading Scale:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and Below	F

Analysis of Technical Documents in the Field

After finding a technical document in your field (or one in which you are interested), you will analyze it for audience concerns, such as organization, types of words used, use of graphics, format, and document design. The purpose of this assignment is to increase your awareness of various technical writing genres and their characteristics.

Visual Aid Assignment

For this assignment, you will create a visual aid, based on some data that I will provide you. You will determine the best graphical format to present the data accurately, including the text that appears with the graphics.

Website Analysis

The Internet is becoming a more popular and essential means of communication, so we will analyze ways to effectively communicate via the Internet and some pitfalls to avoid when using this communication medium. We will learn several online design principles that might serve as a basis for your analysis of two websites. This assignment is based on comparison and contrast in a non-essay format.

Oral Presentation

The oral presentation assignment will require you to report technical information to a general audience. The subject matter can be related to a particular field in which you are an expert, or you may need to do some research to familiarize yourself with a technical subject. The presentations will be about eight minutes long and will be submitted in digital format to the instructor. Activities and information discussed online before the presentations will prepare you to give your presentation.

Procedural Writing

We will discuss the characteristics of procedural writing and how important it is to ensure that this particular genre meets its audiences' needs. Background knowledge is one area we will

focus on. You will write a set of instructions based on a specific assignment. The subject should be technical in nature.

Document Design Revision/Final Project Option 1

This final project assignment will ask you to find a document you feel needs improvement, based on principles we learn throughout the semester. You will revise the document, making significant improvements. Then, at the end of the semester, you will turn in your revised version along with the original. The revision should include textual as well as graphical revisions.

Social Media Response/Final Project Option 2

A disgruntled hotel customer uses various forms of social media to vent about a recent unpleasant experience. As the hotel's manager, you are assigned to write an email response to Mr. Ward, addressing his concerns. This final project also includes a reflection that justifies the response you've made and your strategy for writing it..

Memo of Transmittal or Reflection

The memo of transmittal accompanies the document design revision and previews the changes made to the revision and reasons why. If you chose Final Project Option 2, you will write a reflection that justifies the response you've made to Mr. Ward and your strategy for writing it.

If you choose, this reflection can be in memo format, such as you would write if you were communicating about what happened to internal staff.

Readiness Tests

This course does require reading from the textbook, and you will be given periodic "readiness tests" to help you demonstrate your knowledge of the reading. These tests are â€œopen book.â€• You will be taking the tests individually, but you may discuss your answers online with others. After receiving your test grade, you may appeal test results that you feel occurred because of unclear questions, unclear text, or wrong text.

Appeals

To appeal the results of a readiness test, you must argue convincingly (in writing) that your answer is correct. E-mail me a message in which you write the test question, your answer, and why you responded the way you did. If I agree with your answer, I will give you points back for your answer. If I don't agree, you will not receive extra points, but don't let that discourage you from trying to appeal on another test.

Class Participation:

Because this is an online class, there will be no lectures or live class discussions as such. However, we will be discussing issues from the textbook in an online discussion format. You are required to participate by answering one or two discussion questions from each module each week. Your responses should be well-developed and detailed enough to indicate that you have been doing the reading, following along with the class, and engaging with the issues. Throughout the semester and at the end, I will be evaluating your responses to determine the holistic grade you will receive. At any time, you can ask me how you are progressing towards meeting this requirement.

In addition, you should participate in communicating with other students and the instructor as learning resources. You should also check discussion postings regularly for course announcements and possible changes.

Late Policy:

Please make sure to complete all assignments by the due dates, as I cannot accept late work unless prior arrangements are made. If you request an extension in advance (any time before an assignment's due date), I will grant a one week extension on that assignment. Please note that I do not give I grades unless just the final project remains to be completed. Unless there are extenuating circumstances that necessitate an I€• grade, I do not give extensions on the final projects.

Course Ground Rules:

The following two statements (1., 2.) were derived from the TBR System-wide Student Rules document, released January 2012:

RULES OF THE TENNESSEE BOARD OF REGENTS STATE UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM OF TENNESSEE SYSTEMWIDE STUDENT RULES CHAPTER 0240-02-03 STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

[Read the document in its entirety here.](#)

1. Standards of Conduct:

- Students are required to adhere to the same professional, legal and ethical standards of conduct online as on campus. In addition, students should conform to generally accepted standards of "netiquette" while sending e-mail, posting comments to the discussion board, and while participating in other means of communicating online. Specifically, students should refrain from inappropriate and/or offensive language, comments and actions.

2. [Review the TN eCampus Academic Integrity/Academic Honesty Policy](#)**:**

- In their academic activities, students are expected to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is prohibited.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- an attempt by one or more students to use unauthorized information in the taking of an exam
- to submit as one's own work, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, computer programs, or other products prepared by another person,
- or to knowingly assist another student in obtaining or using unauthorized materials.

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited.

Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are subject to disciplinary action through the regular procedures of the student's home institution. Refer to the student handbook provided by your home institution to review the student conduct policy.

In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed, the instructor has the authority to assign an "F" or zero for an activity or to assign an "F" for the course.

Other Course Rules:

Students are expected to:

- Participate in all aspects of the course
- Communicate with other students
- Learn how to navigate in Brightspace
- Keep abreast of course announcements
- Use the assigned course management (Brightspace) email address rather than a personal email address
- Address technical problems immediately:
    - [Contact Technical Support](#)
    - [View Term Calendar here](#)
- Observe course netiquette at all times.

Guidelines for Communications:

Email:

- Always include a subject line.
- Remember without facial expressions some comments may be taken the wrong way. Be careful in wording your emails. Use of emoticons might be helpful in some cases.
- Use standard fonts.
- Do not send large attachments without permission.
- Special formatting such as centering, audio messages, tables, html, etc. should be avoided unless necessary to complete an assignment or other communication.
- Respect the privacy of other class members

Discussions:

- Review the discussion threads thoroughly before entering the discussion. Be a lurker then a discussant.
- Try to maintain threads by using the "Reply" button rather starting a new topic.
- Do not make insulting or inflammatory statements to other members of the discussion group. Be respectful of other's ideas.
- Be patient and read the comments of other group members thoroughly before entering your remarks.
- Be cooperative with group leaders in completing assigned tasks.
- Be positive and constructive in group discussions.
- Respond in a thoughtful and timely manner.

Library:

The [Tennessee Virtual Library](#) is available to all students enrolled in TN eCampus programs and courses. Links to library materials (such as electronic journals, databases, interlibrary loans, digital reserves, dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, and librarian support) and Internet resources needed by learners to complete online assignments and as background reading will be included within the course modules. To access the Virtual Library, go to the course homepage and select the **Virtual Library** link under Course Resources.

Students with Disabilities:

Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable and necessary academic accommodations if determined eligible by the appropriate disability services staff at their home institution. Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student's eligibility for specific accommodations from the disability services staff at the home institution. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with their home institution's disability services staff and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

Syllabus Changes:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. If changes are necessitated during the term of the course, the instructor will immediately notify students of such changes both by individual email communication and posting both notification and nature of change(s) on the course bulletin board.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this syllabus is for general information purposes only. While we endeavor to keep this information up-to-date and accurate, there may be some discrepancies between this syllabus and the one found in your online course. The syllabus of record is the one found in your online course. Please make sure you read the syllabus in your course at the beginning of the semester. Questions regarding course content should be directed to your instructor.