

## ENG 210 Technical Writing Syllabus – Term

Professor: Dr. Kristin LaFollette  
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 Office hours: (or by appointment)

Credits: 3 credit hours  
 Meeting time/location:  
 Pre-requisite: ENG 201

### Course Description

The fundamentals of technical communication with emphasis on clear, precise, and orderly exposition.

### Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to demonstrate the following outcomes:

- Define a document's purpose, format, context of use, and genre
- Develop a research strategy that manages information and builds knowledge from multiple types of sources
- Recognize and adapt communication to specific audiences using conventions of professional and technical writing
- Design documents for print and digital environments that enhance readability by incorporating effective design and visual components
- Demonstrate stylistically appropriate language for technical communication documents

### Program Learning Outcomes

Mission: "Through the study of literature and writing, the Department of English prepares students to communicate effectively, think imaginatively, and live wisely in a diverse world."

### Textbook/Course Materials

- We will use a free, open access textbook in this course called *Open Technical Communication*. The text is available online through Kennesaw State University: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/opentc/>.
- Access to Blackboard

### Assessment

#### Grading Events

Project #1 (Application Packet)	75 points
Project #2 (Instructional Project)	50 points
Project #3 (Textbook/Encyclopedia Entry)	50 points
Project #4 (Collaborative Proposal)	75 points
Attendance/participation	50 points
 Total	 300 points

#### Grading Scale

A	270-300
B+	261-269

B	240-260
C+	231-239
C	210-230
D+	201-209
D	180-200
F	0-179

All assignments will be turned in to the appropriate submission area on Blackboard. Feedback and grades will also be provided via Blackboard.

## **Course Policies**

### *Late Work*

In general, I do not accept late work. If you submit an assignment late, you will not receive credit. If you are not able to complete an assignment on time, you must contact me before the assignment is due to receive an extension. Failure of computer technology is not an acceptable reason for late written work. You should start your written work early and “back up” your drafts and revisions. **YOU MUST SUBMIT EVERY MAJOR PROJECT IN THIS CLASS TO PASS. IF YOU FAIL TO SUBMIT ANY OF THE PROJECTS, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.**

### *Participation*

Students are expected to attend all classes, and it is crucial that all students have done the reading(s) for each class period. Class participation through discussion is required and necessary. We will also be doing peer reviewing, which requires that students be in attendance and participate in class. Your participation/attendance score is worth 50 points at the end of the semester. You will lose 3 points for every class session missed (please see the full attendance policy below). Your participation score will be given holistically at the end of the course and will be based on your interactions in class (contributing to class discussion, asking questions, participating in group work, etc.).

### *Professionalism*

Students should listen, engage, and appreciate an atmosphere of diversity and open discussion. Class discussion must be respectful; whenever students speak, they should be considerate of other students' feelings, use appropriate language, and make their points without being combative or confrontational. Students should not use discriminatory language regarding their fellow students' gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or anything else. Students should listen to one another, ask questions, and explain their disagreements without attacking others.

### *Attendance*

I will take attendance each class session. Students may miss up to 6 class sessions; if a student misses more than 6 class sessions, they will be ineligible to pass the course. According to the University Handbook, “Students who expect to be absent from classes should confer with their instructors prior to the absence. Students who miss classes are not excused from their obligations to instructors” (84). University-sanctioned absences will count toward the total number of excused absences. Students who believe they cannot complete the semester without missing 6 class sessions should either seek another section that poses fewer conflicts with their extracurricular schedules or drop the course and enroll in it during another semester. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor in the case of an absence before class. Since we are all connected to our electronic devices, it is almost always possible to send an email or text message indicating that you will be absent from class.

*Late Arrivals/Early Departures*

Late arrivals/early departures are defined as follows: if you arrive after the first 10 minutes of class or leave with 10 or more minutes left in the class session. Every 3 times you are late or leave early, you will receive 1 absence.

*Technology*

I appreciate technology and think cell phones, tablets, computers, etc. can be great tools for learning and composing. That being said, please be respectful of the instructor and the rest of the class. Cell phones, tablets, and computers are permitted, but please don't allow them to distract you or your classmates from what's going on in class. Laptops are welcomed and encouraged.

*Communication*

Contact me and/or make an appointment to come see me in my office if you have questions or need help with your writing. You should always use your USI email address (be sure to check your USI email frequently) and contact me using my USI email address (which is available at the top of the syllabus). You should also be checking Blackboard regularly to stay on track.

*Names/Pronouns*

I want to refer to you by your preferred name/pronouns. Please let me know if what is listed on my roster is not what you prefer.

*Campus Resources*

- Academic Skills (ED 1111) – tutors, supplemental instruction, writing help ([usi.edu/university-division/academicskills](http://usi.edu/university-division/academicskills))
- The Writer's Room (ED 1102) – one-on-one sessions with a writing consultant (812-461-5359)
- Rice Library – help with research, finding resources, etc. ([usi.edu/library](http://usi.edu/library))
- Information Technology (IT) – help with computers, email, etc. ([usi.edu/it](http://usi.edu/it))

**University Policies***Academic Continuity*

In the event of an announced campus closure or emergency, it may be necessary for the university to suspend normal operations. During this time, the university may opt to continue instruction through online or alternative modes of delivery. Each student is responsible for monitoring the USI homepage at [www.usi.edu](http://www.usi.edu) and USI email for important general information and instructions regarding classes.

*Academic Integrity*

Students have the right and responsibility to pursue their educational goals with academic integrity, which is the hallmark of truth and honesty in an engaged university community. Please view the [Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures](#).

*Accessibility*

If you have a disability for which you may require academic accommodations for this class, please register with [Disability Resources](#) as soon as possible by contacting 812-464-1961, [usi1disres@usi.edu](mailto:usi1disres@usi.edu), or Science Center Room 2206.

*Civility and Inclusion*

The university is dedicated to a culture of civility among students, faculty, and staff. The university embraces and celebrates the many differences that exist among its members and strives to maintain an environment that respects differences and provides a sense of belonging and inclusion for everyone. Please view [Student Rights and Responsibilities: Code of Student Behavior](#) and [Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination policy](#).

*Title IX – Sexual Misconduct*

USI does not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, you may seek help by contacting USI's Title IX Coordinator, Carrie Lynn, at 812-464-1703 or at [cnlynn@usi.edu](mailto:cnlynn@usi.edu). Find more information and resources about [Sexual Assault Prevention and Response](#).

*Student Basic Needs*

Students who have difficulty affording food on a regular basis or lack a safe place to live and believe this may affect their class performance are encouraged to contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) and view a [list of resources](#).

*Syllabus Change Policy*

This syllabus is a guide to the course and is subject to change with reasonable advanced notice as course needs arise.

**Projects***Project #1 – Application Packet*

For this project, you will analyze a job, internship, or graduate program posting and create a hypothetical cover letter or statement of purpose and résumé or CV for that posting. Below is a step-by-step guide for completing this project:

- 1) Locate a posting for a job, internship, or graduate school program.
- 2) If you have chosen a job or internship posting, you should analyze the job description (this component of Project #1 should be 200-250 words in length). Consider the following questions when analyzing your chosen posting:
  - a. Who is the company responsible for the posting? What are the duties and responsibilities? What are the educational and experience requirements?
  - b. Do you (or will you, once you complete your degree) qualify for this position?
  - c. Is the posting clear? Do you notice any “red flags”?
  - d. To give yourself the best chance of getting hired, what keywords and concepts should be highlighted in your cover letter and/or résumé? Which of your experiences and characteristics should you focus on in your materials?
- 3) If you have chosen a posting for a graduate program, you should analyze the application and admission requirements (this component of Project #1 should be 200-250 words in length). Consider the following questions when analyzing the program:
  - a. Where (college or university) is this graduate program located? What is the focus of the program? What do you know about the school? Are there particular professors within this program you'd be interested in working with?
  - b. Do you meet the minimum requirements for admission?
  - c. Does the focus of the program help you meet future career goals?
  - d. To give yourself the best chance of getting accepted, what keywords and concepts should be highlighted in your statement of purpose and/or CV? Which of your experiences and characteristics should you focus on in your materials?
- 4) Create your résumé (for a job or internship application) or CV (for a graduate school application) based on your job/program description. We will examine several examples of both résumés and CVs in class to help with this process.
- 5) Craft your cover letter (for a job or internship application) or statement of purpose (for a graduate school application) based on the job/program description and your résumé or CV. We will also look at several examples of both cover letters and statements of purpose in class.

You will submit the posting, analysis of the posting, cover letter or statement of purpose, and résumé or CV on Blackboard.

*Project #2 – Instructional Project*

For this project, you will create a set of well-written and easy-to-follow instructions for how to do something. The topic is completely up to you, but some examples include how to perform an athletic drill or workout, grow herbs or vegetables, create an origami swan, do a magic trick, open a bank account, or tie a necktie. Your instructions should contain both written and visual elements (you can take your own photos or look up images online, just make sure you cite your sources). There are several free tools you can use to create your instructions, including Word, Publisher, Piktochart, Canva, Venngage, etc. Based on what program you use, you will either submit a .pdf or a link to your project on Blackboard. If you submit a link, make sure your project is marked “public,” otherwise I won't be able to view it. We will look at several samples in class to guide you in the process of creating your own set of instructions.

*Project #3 – Textbook/Encyclopedia Entry*

For this project, you will be composing an entry for a textbook or encyclopedia (physical or digital). Your entry can be about any topic, so choose something that is interesting or intriguing to you or something you'd like to know more about. Follow these steps in completing this project:

- 1) Choose a topic. Think about entries you've seen in textbooks and/or encyclopedias (physical or digital) when deciding on a topic. For example, greyhounds are my favorite dog breed, so if I was working on this project, I might write an encyclopedia entry on greyhounds. You could write about an animal, a person, a musician or band, an author or book series, a body system, a more complex process for a textbook (like how to conduct an experiment or write an introductory paragraph), etc.
- 2) Once you've decided on the subject for your entry, do some research on your topic so that you can write a detailed and in-depth contribution. You should have at least three sources and two of them should be scholarly (use the Rice Library or Google Scholar to find scholarly sources). If you use a website as your third source, double-check the organization/information for accuracy. Be sure to keep track of your sources so you can cite them properly at the end of your entry. APA formatting should be used for in-text citations and references.
- 3) Compose the written portion of your entry. This should be at least 1000 words in length.
- 4) Bring in visual elements.
  - a. Can you create any figures (like charts or graphs) to help make data, statistics, or information more concise and readable? Can you add images to illustrate points you are making or information you are discussing? Be sure to cross-reference.
  - b. Figures and images should be captioned (when necessary) and should contain proper citations (unless you create the figure or image yourself). Try to include at least two figures or images.
- 5) Think about document design and the best way to arrange your entry. Integrate the written component with your visual components using a program of your choosing (like Word, Publisher, Piktochart, Canva, or Venngage or a blog interface like Wordpress, Weebly, or Blogger). Based on what program/interface you use, you will either submit a .pdf version or a link to your entry on Blackboard. If you submit a link to a project on a program like Piktochart or Canva, make sure your project is marked "public," otherwise I won't be able to view it. We will look at several entries in class to guide you in the process of creating your own entry.

*Project #4 – Collaborative Proposal*

You will form groups of three to complete this project and your group should complete the following steps:

- 1) Imagine you work for a business, agency, nonprofit, or corporation and are creating a proposal. Consider the following when deciding on the topic for your group's proposal:
  - a. Do you want an individual, group, or organization to hire you?
  - b. Do you want your boss or supervisor to let you take on a project at work?
  - c. Do you want your company to upgrade the technology in your office?
  - d. Do you want to give a seminar to a group or organization?
  - e. Do you need grant money for your organization?
  - f. Do you want your city to let you build a park or playground?The options are endless! Decide what is important to your business, agency, nonprofit, or corporation and go from there.
- 2) After deciding on what you will propose, you should think about your audience. Who are you writing this proposal for, and how can you adjust your proposal to meet the needs of

- that audience? Decide on design choices and how you will put the final version of the project together (using Word, an infographic template, etc.).
- 3) After deciding on your proposal and considering your audience, you should think about dividing up the work amongst your group members. As our in-class readings communicate, most proposals will contain the following sections (but not all will contain all of these – consider your group’s project and your audience when creating sections for your proposal):
    - a. Front matter
      - i. Cover letter
      - ii. Title page
      - iii. Abstract
      - iv. Table of contents/figures
    - b. Main body
      - i. Introduction
      - ii. Background on the problem, opportunity, or situation
      - iii. Benefits and feasibility of the proposed project
      - iv. Method, procedure, and theory (how you’ll go about doing the proposed work)
      - v. Schedule (milestones and completion date)
      - vi. Costs and resources
      - vii. Qualifications
      - viii. Conclusion
    - c. Back matter (optional)
      - i. Appendices
      - ii. Glossary or index
      - iii. Citations or additional resources
  - 4) Write your collaborative proposal.
  - 5) Submit group member evaluations on Blackboard.
  - 6) During our final exam period, each group will give a brief, low-stakes presentation (about five minutes in length) to the class. Each group member should participate in providing an overview of the proposal/project.

**Course Schedule**

BB – Blackboard

OTC – *Open Technical Communication* (free online textbook)

<b>Day</b>	<b>Class/Due Dates</b>	<b>Readings/Homework</b>
<b>Week #1</b>		
Monday, 8/24	Introduction to course, review syllabus and course schedule, Blackboard overview	
Wednesday, 8/26	Introduction to technical writing, email etiquette, memos	Send introductory email (instructions provided on Blackboard), read “Why Rhetoric?” by Losh and Alexander (BB, pp. 37-56)
Friday, 8/28	Discuss reading, rhetoric, rhetorical awareness and appeals, audience awareness	Read “Business Correspondence and Résumés” (OTC, pp. 6-12)
<b>Week #2</b>		
Monday, 8/31	Introduce Project #1 assignment, discuss reading	
Wednesday, 9/2	Review job/internship posting samples, graduate program admission and application requirement samples	Choose a job, internship, or graduate school posting for Project #1
Friday, 9/4	Practice analyzing job, internship, and/or graduate school postings	
<b>Week #3</b>		
Monday, 9/7	Labor Day, no class	
Wednesday, 9/9	Discuss résumés and CVs, review samples	
Friday, 9/11	Discuss cover letters and statements of purpose, review samples	Work on analysis of job description or admission/application requirements
<b>Week #4</b>		
Monday, 9/14	Group interview activity for résumés and CVs	Work on résumé or CV (to bring to next class)
Wednesday, 9/16	Résumé/CV and cover letter/statement of purpose	Work on cover letter or statement of purpose

Friday, 9/18	workshop Project #1 work day	Work on Project #1 rough draft, read "Strategies for Peer-Reviewing and Team Writing" (OTC, pp 1-2)
<b>Week #5</b>		
Monday, 9/21	<b>Project #1 rough draft due</b> , discuss peer review practices/expectations, peer review	Revise rough draft based on peer review feedback, read "Power-Revision Techniques" (OTC)
Wednesday, 9/23	<b>Project #1 final draft due</b> , discuss reading, revision strategies	Read "Instructions" and "Graphics" (OTC)
Friday, 9/25	Introduce Project #2 assignment, discuss readings	
<b>Week #6</b>		
Monday, 9/28	Writing instructions, discuss graphics in instructional materials	Choose a topic for Project #2
Wednesday, 9/30	Review sample instructional materials, groups analyze and discuss sample instructions	Work on developing or finding graphics for Project #2
Friday, 10/2	Discuss programs and tools for creating instructions	Choose a program to use for Project #2
<b>Week #7</b>		
Monday, 10/5	Discuss graphics for Project #2, discuss APA formatting/citations	
Wednesday, 10/7	Work on composing written component of Project #2	
Friday, 10/9	Project #2 work day	Work on Project #2 rough draft
<b>Week #8</b>		
Monday, 10/12	Fall Break, no class	Work on Project #2 rough draft
Wednesday, 10/14	<b>Project #2 rough draft due</b> , peer review	Revise rough draft based on peer review feedback
Friday 10/16	<b>Project #2 final draft due</b> , no class – professor will be out of town at a conference	

<b>Week #9</b>		
Monday, 10/19	Introduce Project #3, review sample entries	Read "Page Design" (OTC)
Wednesday, 10/21	Discuss readings, sign up for conferences, page design	Read "Libraries, Documentation, and Cross-Referencing" (OTC)
Friday, 10/23	Choosing a topic for Project #3, discuss reading, research questions and topics, APA formatting/citations	Choose a topic for Project #3 (and come prepared to talk about your topic at your conference)
<b>Week #10</b>		
Monday, 10/26	Conferences, sign up for a time to meet in my office	
Wednesday, 10/28	Conferences, sign up for a time to meet in my office	
Friday, 10/30	Conferences, sign up for a time to meet in my office	Research Project #3 topic
<b>Week #11</b>		
Monday, 11/2	Document design, groups analyze sample documents, developing or finding graphics for your entry	Work on developing or finding graphics for Project #3
Wednesday, 11/4	Groups share Project #3 topics, creating readable and accessible documents, groups analyze sample documents for accessibility	
Friday 11/6	Project #3 work day	Work on Project #3 rough draft
<b>Week #12</b>		
Monday, 11/9	<b>Project #3 rough draft due</b> , peer review	Revise rough draft based on peer review feedback
Wednesday, 11/11	<b>Project #3 final draft due</b> , introduce Project #4, form groups	Read "Proposals" in OTC
Friday, 11/13	Discuss reading, elements of proposals, design approaches, groups discuss topic ideas	Read "Strategies for Peer-Reviewing and Team Writing" (pp. 2-6) and "Collaborative Writing" (OTC)
<b>Week #13</b>		

Monday, 11/16	Discuss readings, choosing a topic, group check-in to choose topic for Project #4	Groups choose a topic for Project #4
Wednesday, 11/18	Review sample proposals	
Friday, 11/20	Groups divide work, discuss design approach for Project #4	
<b>Week #14</b>		
Monday, 11/23	Project #4 work day (optional)	
Wednesday, 11/25	Thanksgiving Break, no class	
Friday, 11/27	Thanksgiving Break, no class	
<b>Week #15</b>		
Monday, 11/30	Project #4 work day	Work on Project #4 rough draft
Wednesday, 12/2	Project #4 work day	
Friday, 12/4	Project #4 work day	
<b>Week #16</b>		
Monday, 12/7	<b>Project #4 rough draft due,</b> studio review	Revise rough draft based on studio review feedback, read "Oral Presentations" (OTC)
Wednesday, 12/9	<b>Project #4 final draft due,</b> discuss reading, groups work on Project #4 presentation	Work on group member evaluations
Friday, 12/11	<b>Submit group member evaluations on Blackboard,</b> groups work on Project #4 presentation	Work on Project #4 presentation
<b>Final Exams</b>		
Monday, 12/14	No final exam, class will meet during assigned final exam time for Project #4 group presentations	
Wednesday, 12/16		
Friday, 12/18	Last day of Fall 2020 semester	