

English 2311.001 – Technical Writing

Spring 2019

Dr. Roy Bearden-White / Department of English
TTh 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., Levelland Campus, CM 123

Required Text:

Graves, Heather, and Roger Graves. *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*. 2nd ed. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-55481-107-6 (\$59.95)

Suggested Texts and Supplies:

A grammar and style manual, such as Hacker, Diana, Nancy I. Sommers, and Van Horn, Marcy. Carbajal. *A Writer's Reference*. 7th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2011.

A standard collegiate dictionary, such as *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary*
Access to a computer with a printer, Internet access, and an active email account

Required means of communication: All electronic correspondence for this class will be sent to your southplainscollege.edu address, so it is your responsibility to monitor the account on a regular basis.

Departmental Course Description: This course focuses on the design and preparation of technical writing projects appropriate to the world of work, including resumes, letters, proposals, reports, instruction, brochures, and oral presentations. Students will be encouraged to consider the audience of each of their technical communication assignments, paying particular attention to design, style, and tone as the deliver accurate and thorough results that are thoughtfully prepared for their readers, including audiences in scientific and technical fields.

Scope/Purpose: English 2311 will assist students in developing the writing skills required in professional settings. This course is an introduction to the types of documents necessary to make decisions and take action on the job, such as proposals, reports, instructions, policies and procedures, e-mail messages, letters, and descriptions of products and services.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 1301 and English 1302

Student Learning Objectives: Upon successful completion of the course, the student should be able to (1) recognize, analyze, and accommodate diverse audiences; (2) produce documents appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre; (3) analyze the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication; (4) locate, evaluate, and incorporate pertinent information; (5) develop verbal, visual, and multimedia materials as necessary, in individual and/or collaborative projects, as appropriate; (6) edit for appropriate style, including attention to word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling; and (7) design and test documents for easy reading and navigation.

How to Contact me:

Office: Levelland Campus, CM 103d

Office Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays
Fridays

11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Other times by Appointment

Office Phone: 806-716-4030

Email: rbeardenwhite@gmail.com or rbeardenwhite@southplainscollege.edu

Grading of Course Work

- 50% Five Assignments - Each involves invention, drafting, revising and editing.
Job Application Letter and Resume
Policy change memo
Instruction Manual
Business Proposal
Progress reports (1 & 2)
- 20% In Class Assignments
- 20% Collaborative Project
Powerpoint presentation
Brochure or pamphlet
Group Oral presentation
Self and Class Evaluation
- 10% Final Examination

Format of Assignments: As you will discover, part of the writer's job is to orchestrate how the reader perceives the ideas and opinions presented. To that end, meticulous attention needs to be given to the full presentation of all documents. All applicable assignments need to conform to MLA standards, although other styles such as Chicago or APA will be acceptable with prior confirmation. All assignments should be typed or computer generated papers with all text in Times New Roman, 12 point font. All assignments should have 1" margins on the sides, top, and bottom. Your name, section number, and date should be in the upper left (or right) hand corner of the first sheet, and your last name with the page number should appear on the top right of any remaining pages. Drafts should be clearly labeled as to 1st or final. Assignments with multiple pages must be stapled. Failure to conform to the above guidelines without prior approval from me may result in a reduction of credit for that assignment. Remember also that all submitted assignments may be processed through Turnitin.Com to verify originality.

Late Work: Unless prior approval is received, late submission of assignments will result in a grade deduction of one half-letter grade for each calendar day (not including Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays) that the assignment is late.

Attendance: According to the *South Plains College General Catalog*, "Punctual and regular class attendance is required of all students attending South Plains College. There are no excused absences. Students are responsible for all class work covered during absences. Any student who misses two consecutive weeks will be dropped from the class. Anytime absences become excessive, and, in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met, students may be dropped." Regular attendance is imperative for successful completion of this course. Mere physical presence, however, is not enough to master the learning objectives outlined in this syllabus. You must also be prepared for each class. This includes having read the assignment, being ready to discuss the topic, and having completed any writing assignments that were due.

Absence Policy: Any student who misses more than four class sessions may be dropped with a grade of "X" if the student has a passing grade average at that time. If the student is failing, due to poor work or missing assignments, the student will be given a grade of "F." In special cases because of extenuating circumstances, a student may miss more than four absences and not be dropped, but the student must **immediately** notify me of the attendance difficulty and submit **proof** of those extenuating circumstances, especially if the student already has surpassed the four allowed absences. Students should consult the *South Plains College General Catalog* on pp. 20-22 for the college's detailed policy on class attendance and drops & withdrawals. Students have their own responsibility for dropping a class for too many absences or too much missed work.

- If you are absent, you are still required to complete the assigned work by the indicated due date.
- Students involved in school-sponsored activities need to show me their documentation from the appropriate coach/sponsor before they are absent from class. Students will make arrangements at that time for completing any in-class assignments they may miss.

- I expect you to be on time to class. Tardiness is disrespectful of your classmates and of me. I take attendance at the beginning of class. If you arrive late to class, you may inform me of the fact at the end of class, so I can change your absence to a tardy. If you are 10 or more minutes late to class, you remain marked absent for the day. Three tardies equal one absence.
- If you leave class before you have been dismissed, you will be counted absent.
- Ultimately, your attendance is your responsibility.

Cell Phones, Ipods, Blackberries, Laptops, etc.: I don't know many people who love electronic gizmos more than I do. Not only are they usually incredibly useful, informative, and even educational, they are also typically fun to use. Because of the enormous benefits technology can provide, I do not want to categorically forbid electronic devices from the classroom. With that said, however, electronic gadgets can be quite disruptive in a classroom. In order to negotiate this potential problem, I will need your cooperation in following two simple guidelines:

- The classroom is a communal environment which requires each student to respect the learning experiences of the others. Please consider how your devices may impact, and in some cases simply annoy, others who sit near you.
- You enrolled in, and paid for, this class with a specific purpose in mind, whether it is to improve your writing skills or to fulfill a core requirement. While surfing on Facebook, text-messaging a friend, or playing Pokémon Go might be more fun, realize that such actions will impair your progress in this class (and yes, by progress I do mean your final grade).

Student Code of Conduct Policy: Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on the part of the student and the instructor. Neither instructor nor student should be subject to others' behavior that is rude, disruptive, intimidating, aggressive, or demeaning. Student conduct that disrupts the learning process or is deemed disrespectful or threatening shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are expected to do their own work on all projects, quizzes, assignments, and papers. Failure to comply with this policy will result in an F for the assignment and can result in an F for the course if circumstances warrant it.

Plagiarism violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Turning in a paper that has been purchased, borrowed, or downloaded from another student, an online term paper site, or a mail order term paper mill;
2. Cutting and pasting together information from books, articles, other papers, or online sites without providing proper documentation;
3. Using direct quotations (three or more words) from a source without showing them to be direct quotations and citing them; or
4. Giving an in-text citation only at the end of a paragraph.

Cheating violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Obtaining an examination by stealing or collusion;
2. Discovering the content of an examination before it is given;
3. Using an unauthorized source of information (notes, textbook, text messaging, internet) during an examination, quiz, or homework assignment;
4. Entering an office or building to obtain unfair advantage;
5. Taking an examination for another;
6. Altering grade records; or
7. Copying another's work during an examination or on a homework assignment.

Disability Statement: Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

Discrimination Policy: The instructor will do his or her best not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnic background, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Diversity Policy: In this class, the instructor will endeavor to establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all participants to learn about others, about the larger world, and about themselves.

Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations: If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, Under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact Chris Straface, Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or email cstraface@southplainscollege.edu for assistance.

Campus Concealed Carry: South Plains College permits the lawful carry of concealed handguns in accordance with Texas state law and Texas Senate Bill 11. Individuals possessing a valid License to Carry permit, or the formerly issued Concealed Handgun License, may carry a concealed handgun at all campus locations except for the Natatorium. For a complete list of campus carry exclusions zones by event, please visit <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/campuscarry.php>

Closed Door: Depending on the physical layout of the room assigned to the course, the door to the classroom may be closed and locked shortly after each class session begins. This policy is intended solely as a safety precaution in case of a campus crisis. If you are late, simply knock and I, or another student, will let you in.

Other concerns: I strongly encourage you to visit me during my office hours to discuss any other problems or concerns that may affect your performance in this class.

English 2311 - Class Schedule

Spring 2019

All assignments are to be completed before the day they are listed. For example, not only should you have read pages 29 to 50 of *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication* **before** Thursday, January, 17th, but you should also be prepared to discuss the text in class. Submission of all assignments is the responsibility of the student. Please refer to the course syllabus for the complete class policy of late papers. I also reserve the right to modify this schedule according to class needs.

Week One

Tuesday 1/15

In Class: Introduction to class

Thursday 1/17

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 29-50

Write: Student questionnaire and writing profile

In Class: Intro to letter of application and resume and evaluation of sample resumes

Week Two

Tuesday 1/22

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 51-57

Write: Draft of resume – bring in hard copy to class.

In Class: Evaluation of sample application letters

Thursday 1/24

Read: “Track changes in Word” *Microsoft Office Online*

<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/track-changes-in-word-197ba630-0f5f-4a8e-9a77-3712475e806a>

Write: Draft 1 – Letter of application and resume – bring in hard copies of both documents to class.

Submit: Post electronic copies on Blackboard as two separate Microsoft Word documents (.doc files) prior to the beginning of class.

In Class: Discussion of Peer Review process and electronic word processing.

Week Three

Tuesday 1/29

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 279-300

Write: Peer Reviews – Using the Microsoft review function, peer review your assigned application and resume.

Submit: Prior to the beginning of class, post reviewed documents on Blackboard in the appropriate open forum.

In Class: Discussion of communication during job searches, interviews, and rejection

Thursday 1/31

Write: Final Draft – Letter of application and resume – bring in hard copies of both documents to class.

Submit: Post electronic copies on Blackboard as two separate Microsoft Word Documents (.doc files) prior to the beginning of class.

In Class: Intro to inter-office communication

Week Four

Tuesday 2/5

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 59-72

Tozzi, John. “The Escalator Pitch.” *Business Week* May 16, 2008

<http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2008-05-16/the-escalator-pitchbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice>

Thompson, Clive. “How Twitter Creates a Social Sixth Sense.” *Wired* 6/26/07

issue 15 http://www.wired.com/techbiz/media/magazine/15-07/st_thompson

In Class: Discussion of electronic communication, ethics, and legalities

Thursday 2/7

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 151-164
handout (Murphy, Dan. “Memos.”)

Write: Draft 1 – Policy Change Memo – bring in a hard copy of your document to class.

Submit: Post an electronic copy on Blackboard as a Microsoft Word document (.doc file)
prior to the beginning of class.

In Class: Discussion of external business communications; Exchange email addresses for
Peer Review

Week Five

Tuesday 2/12

Write: 2 Peer Reviews – Using the format for a business letter (see *A Strategic Guide to
Technical Communication*, page 158-159) respond separately to your assigned
Policy Change Memos. Your responses should focus more on the writing efforts
of the authors and less on the policies in question.

Submit: Prior to the beginning of class, email the letters as attachments to the
appropriate authors and include me (rbeardenwhite@gmail.com) on the Bcc: line.

In Class: Discussion of responses to business communication

Thursday 2/14

Write: Final Draft – Policy Change Memo – bring in a hard copy of your document to
class.

Submit: Post an electronic copy on Blackboard as a separate Microsoft Word Documents
(.doc files) prior to the beginning of class.

In Class: Intro to procedural writing.

Week Six

Tuesday 2/19

Read: Handout (“Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions”)

In Class: Discussion of “user-friendly” and liability recognition

Thursday 2/21

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 233-256

Write: Draft 1 – Instruction Manual – bring in a hard copy of your document to
class.

Submit: Post an electronic copy on Blackboard as an Adobe Acrobat document (.pdf
file) prior to the beginning of class.

In Class: Peer Review workshop

Week Seven

Tuesday 2/26

Read: Nielson, Jakob. “How Users Read the Web” *Alertbox: Current Issues in Web
Usability*. (Oct. 1997) <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9710a.html>

Lengler, R. & Eppler, M. “A Periodic Table of Visualization Methods”
http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html#

Write: 1 Peer Review – Using the note function in Adobe Acrobat, respond to your
assigned Instruction Manual. Your responses should focus more on the usability
of the document by the intended audience.

Submit: Prior to the beginning of class, post the peer review in the appropriate forum on
Blackboard.

In Class: Discussion of Graphics and Design

Thursday 2/28

Write: Final Draft – Instruction Manual – bring in a hard copy of your document to
class.

Submit: Post an electronic copy on Blackboard as an Adobe Acrobat document (.pdf

file) prior to the beginning of class.

In Class: Intro to business proposals.

Week Eight

Tuesday 3/5

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 165-192

In class: Discussion of proposal strategies

Thursday 3/7

Read: McMurrey, David A. "Online Technical Writing: Proposals" *Power Tools for Technical Communication*. <http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/props.html>

Strauss, Steve. "Ask an Expert: A good business proposal explains and sells." *USA Today* 7 Nov. 2007.

http://www.usatoday.com/money/smallbusiness/columnist/strauss/2007-11-05-business-proposal_N.htm

In Class: Discussion of proposal topics and possible presentations

Spring Break

Tuesday 3/12

No Class

Spring Break

Thursday 3/14

No Class

Spring Break

Week Nine

Tuesday 3/19

Write: Draft 1 – Business Proposal - bring in a hard copy to class.

Create: Got to <https://drive.google.com/> and create a personal account (if you do not already have one).

Submit: Post an electronic copy on your Google Drive as a Microsoft Word Document (.doc file) prior to the beginning of class. Share the document with me (rbeardenwhite@gmail.com) and with your peer review partner.

In Class: Peer Review

Thursday 3/21

Write: Peer Review – Using the Microsoft review function, peer review your Business Proposal.

Submit: Prior to the beginning of class, post reviewed document on your Google Drive and share the document with me (rbeardenwhite@gmail.com) and with your peer review partner.

In Class: Business Proposal workshop

Week Ten

Tuesday 3/26

Write: Final Draft – Business Proposal – bring in a hard copy to class.

Submit: Post an electronic copy on Blackboard as a Microsoft Word Document (.doc files) prior to the beginning of class.

In Class: Intro to Group Presentations

Thursday 3/28

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 301-314

Gould, David. "Virtual Teams" *Fifth Generation Work - Virtual Organization* (June 05, 2006) <http://www.seanet.com/~daveg/vrteams.htm>

In Class: Discussion of business collaborations

Week Eleven

Tuesday 4/2

Read: Strickland, Jonathan. "How Google Docs Works" *HowStuffWorks.Com*. <http://communication.howstuffworks.com/google-docs.htm>

In Class: Discussion of Google Docs and group work

Thursday 4/4

Read: *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, pages 193-198

In Class: Discussion of progress reports: pipe dreams and reality

Week Twelve

Tuesday 4/9

Write: Progress report #1 – bring in a hard copy to class (progress reports are to be considered private communications and should not be posted online).

In Class: Discussion of group management and survival

Thursday 4/11

Read: “Oral Presentations” <http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/oral.html>
“Presentation 2 – Michelle Brewer”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TxvJQukjtA>

In Class: Discussion of presentations: impressions and illusions

Week Thirteen

Tuesday 4/16

Read: Tufte, Edward. “PowerPoint Is Evil.” September 2003 issue 11.9 *Wired*

<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/ppt2.html>

“What is Good PowerPoint Design?”

http://presentationzen.blogspot.com/presentationzen/2005/09/whats_good_powe.html

In Class: A defense of PowerPoint

Thursday 4/18

Read: “Effective Brochure Design: How To Create Brochures That Get Action”

<http://docplayer.net/21469957-Effective-brochure-design-how-to-create-brochures-that-get-action.html>

Write: Progress report #2– bring in a hard copy to class (progress reports are to be considered private communications and should not be posted online).

In Class: Discussion of presentation reinforcement

Week Fourteen

Tuesday 4/23

In Class: Presentation workshop

Thursday 4/25

In Class: Group Presentations

Week Fifteen

Tuesday 4/30

In Class: Group Presentations

Thursday 5/2

In Class: Group Presentations, Exam Review

Week Sixteen - Finals week

Date and Time: To Be Announced