Technical and Business Writing

Instructor: Hannah Johnson

Course: ENGL 2311

Term: Spring 2025

Office Hours: MWF, 4:00-5:00 pm

Dates/Times: Asynchronous

Email: hannahjohnson@uttyler.edu

Location: Canvas

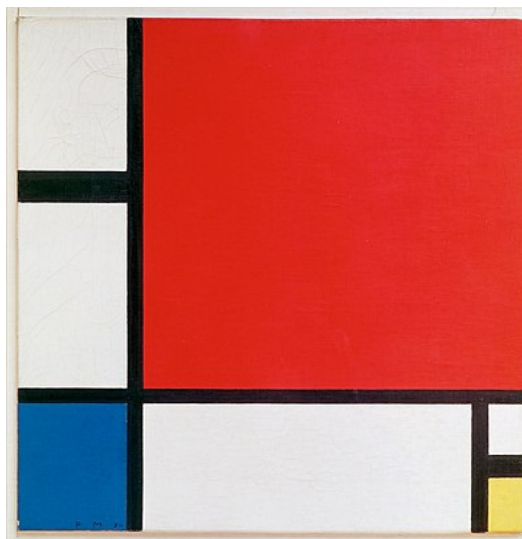Image: Piet Mondrian's "Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow"

Course Overview:

The course description and learning outcomes are per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* Spring 2021.

Course Description:

Welcome! This course is an intensive study of and practice in professional settings. This semester, we will focus on 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. Additionally, we will practice individual and collaborative processes involved in the creation of ethical and efficient documents.

Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize, analyze, and accommodate diverse audiences
- Produce documents appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre
- Analyze the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication
- Locate, evaluate, and incorporate pertinent information
- Develop verbal, visual, and multimedia materials as necessary, in individual and/or collaborative projects, as appropriate
- Edit for appropriate style, including attention to word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling

- Design and test documents for easy reading and navigation

Course Structure and Rhythm:

As this is a full-distance, asynchronous course, instruction will take place fully online. You must check Canvas regularly, every single week, to stay up to date on assignments, activities, announcements, instruction, and potential changes to the course calendar. Every week I will post an Announcement on Canvas alerting you to the expectations for that week, including any readings, videos, or assignments that are due. You are more than welcome and encouraged to submit assignments earlier than their due date to accommodate your schedule. Once I have graded all submissions of a given assignment, I will post a video reviewing successful submissions and discuss patterns of strengths and weaknesses I notice across the class. Each week I will upload any additional materials that you are expected to read or watch to that week's Canvas Module.

Required Texts:

Open Access Educational Resources are used in this class. There is no textbook to buy.

Assignments and Grade Percentages:

Beginning of Semester Reflection: 10%
Emails: 15%
Employment Genres: 20%
Informative Memo Report: 30%
End of Semester Reflection: 10%
Engagement: 15%

There is no extra credit work for this course.

Grading Scale:

➔ A - (90% or higher)
➔ B - (80 - 89%)
➔ C - (70 - 79%)
➔ D - (60 - 69%)
➔ F - (Below 60%)

Description of Assessments and Assignments:

Beginning of Semester Reflection: The focus of the class is writing for professional audiences. While writing for professional audiences may be new to you, it is likely that you have prior writing experiences that you can draw on to understand and apply concepts from the class. In the reflection, you will explore connecting prior writing experiences to learning to write for professional audiences.

Emails: Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write emails over specific topics for a grade. You WILL NOT send me your emails via email. Email is the genre. You will submit your emails in Canvas as a Word document. The purpose of the project is to get practice writing to a professional audience. Emails cannot be revised for a potential higher grade. For each email I will tell you what to cover and the due date. Expect that some emails will have a short turnaround so that you get practice writing emails on short notice.

Employment Genres Project: The Employment Genres Project introduces you to various document genres you will be expected to create when seeking employment. These genres include a resume and a cover letter. These will be crafted in response to a real job advertisement that you will locate. You will also include an analysis of what you did in your resumes and cover letter to meet genre conventions and professional writing expectations.

Informative Memo Report: An informative memo report (IMR) provides readers with useful information on a topic with minimal overt attempts to argue or persuade. For this assignment, you will summarize and synthesize useful information from sources and provide useful insights and comments on that information.

End of Semester Reflection: In the final reflection, you will consider your initial reflection assignment and track changes in how your perception of technical and business writing has changed. Additionally, you will reflect on the assignments you completed as well as your time in this class, and the skills or questions that you now have as a result.

Engagement: Your engagement grade reflects how much and to what degree you engage with the assignments, materials, and activities in this course. This means submitting assignments on time, revising according to feedback that I provide, reading announcements, and watching videos posted to Canvas.

Course Schedule*:

Introductions

  Week 1: Introductions, syllabus review

Employment Genres Project

>Week 2: Email with job/internship ad

>Week 3: Draft of resumes

>Week 4: Revised draft of resume

>Week 5: Draft of cover letter

>Week 6: Final drafts of all components

Informative Memo Report

>Week 7: Email on topic

>Week 8: Draft of IMR

>Week 9: Email on what the student is doing to verify the info in the AI-generated report

>Week 10: SPRING BREAK

>Week 11: Email on what the student is doing to verify the info in the AI-generated report

>Week 12: Editing IMR

>Week 13: Final IMR draft

End of Semester Reflection

>Week 14: Catch up week

>Week 15: End of Semester Reflection

Key Dates:

- January 27 Census Date
- March 17-21 Spring Break
- March 31 Last Day to Drop

*Per the UTT Syllabus Policy: "The information contained in the syllabus, other than the grading criteria and absence and make-up policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice as long as the change is without prejudice to the students." Any alterations to this schedule will be announced via Canvas in Announcements.

Course Policies:

Attendance and Participation:

Due to the online nature of this course, attendance is not graded nor required in the traditional sense. Instead, it is up to you to regularly log onto Canvas, read weekly announcements, watch that week's videos, complete the readings, and submit assignments on time. This is active participation and is vital to your success in this course.

Grading and Assessment:

Grading criteria for each assignment and the grading scale will be clearly outlined in assignment instructions. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cases will be reported according to the institution's academic integrity policy. Assignments, including essays, must be submitted by the specified deadlines.

Missed Work

If you see that you will miss, or you do miss, a week or more of class work due to an illness or a significant life event, contact me ASAP. I will discuss the situation with you to determine if you can keep up with the class. Documentation may be required.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted. There will be an opportunity to submit drafts before the final deadline of each assignment, and feedback will be provided. A Zoom conference may be required to discuss revisions.

Revision Policy

The employment genres and informative memo report may be revised once for a potential higher grade. Due dates for revised assignments will be announced. Emails and reflections may not be revised for a potential higher grade.

Paper Submission

To be counted for a grade, assignments have to be submitted as a Word document and have to be submitted to the correct drop box in Canvas. Do not zip your files or submit a PDF. Assignments that I cannot open will be graded a 0.

Public Writing

All writing in the class is public writing. Student work will be used to discuss what is working well and areas for improvement.

Engagement Work

Engagement work is primarily submitting drafts of assignments and reflections. There may be required discussion board posts which will be part of the engagement grade. Engagement work is graded as complete or incomplete which is how Canvas handles pass/fail grading:

• Complete: Meets expectations and is submitted on time
• Incomplete: Does not meet expectations and/or is not submitted on time

In most cases, engagement work cannot be revised or submitted after the due date. There may be situations which warrant an exception to this policy. If you cannot submit

engagement work due to an illness or emergency, notify me as soon as possible. I will determine if an exception is appropriate. Documentation may be required. Recurring engagement work that is graded as incomplete precludes exceptions.

Office Hours and Communication:

I am reachable by Canvas Messenger and email. I am also happy to schedule a Zoom meeting with you, should you prefer to have a more in-depth discussion. In accordance with the UTT Email Policy, emails sent from non-UTT accounts will not be answered. When corresponding via email or Canvas Messenger, please remember that speaking to an instructor is different from speaking/texting with a friend, family member, or other familiar relation. In a professional, intellectual context like the University, it is conventional to refer to faculty, administrators, staff, and others by their titles (Doctor, Professor, Instructor, Coach) unless explicitly instructed otherwise. You should also get into the habit of including greetings, salutations, and language appropriate to such contexts (not, for example, "Hey,"). I will respectfully refer to you according to your stated preferences and expect that you'll reciprocate in kind. Announcements in Canvas will be used to communicate essential information. It is your responsibility to read and utilize the information in announcements.

Respect and Inclusivity:

Respect for classmates and the instructor is paramount. Disruptive behavior, hate speech, or discrimination will not be tolerated. The classroom is an inclusive space. Diverse perspectives and backgrounds are welcomed and valued.

Accommodations for Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to request accommodations through the appropriate university office. The instructor will work to provide necessary support.

Academic Integrity and Disruptive Behavior:

This class has a Zero Tolerance Policy for academic dishonesty. Any act of academic dishonesty will result in immediate failure of the entire course and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Intervention. For the UTT definition of "academic dishonesty," see "University Policies and Information" in the UT Tyler Syllabus Module. See "Academic Integrity Expectations" (in Canvas) for additional information on academic dishonesty.

Required UT Tyler AI Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool.

Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

AI Policy

The overall goals of the class are to develop your ability to:
- Think critically about writing
- Understand and use genre and professional writing conventions to write effectively for professional audiences
- Use AI ethically and productively for academic and professional writing projects

To achieve these goals, you can (and should) use AI (ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) for some assignments. For other assignments, using AI will be prohibited. I will specify when using AI is allowed and when it is not. You will be expected to adhere to appropriate use of AI for each assignment. You will also be expected to edit AI-generated content to meet grading criteria. Using AI tools outside of established parameters violates UT Tyler's Honor Code, constitutes plagiarism, and will be treated as such. Further, any use of AI tools must be appropriately acknowledged and cited following APA guidelines, including the specific version of the tool used. The submitted work should include the exact prompt that you used to generate the content and the AI tool's complete response as an appendix. Because AI-generated content is not necessarily accurate or appropriate, you must assess the validity and applicability of any submitted AI output. You will not earn full credit and may fail an assignment if inaccurate, invalid, or inappropriate information is found in your work.

Using Work from Other Classes

From the UTT Manual of Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs Chapter 8. Student Conduct and Discipline:

Sec. 8-802. Academic Dishonesty

b. "Academic Dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable, in whole or in part, to another person without giving sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to: submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act.

Before you draw on research, written work, or any other work from another class for any assignment in ENGL 2311, consult with me.

Class Schedule and Changes:

The course schedule, including readings, assignments, and due dates, will be available. Any changes will be communicated well in advance.

Incompletes and Withdrawals:

Incompletes are granted only in exceptional circumstances and must be requested well before the end of the semester. Withdrawal deadlines must be observed.

University Policies and Student Resources

See "University Policies and Information" in the UT Tyler Syllabus Module.