

ASTE/JCOM 3050
Technical and Professional Communication Principles
Spring 2015

Instructor

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Office Hours

By appointment to provide you with time outside of the classroom for discussion of matters related to the course.

Course Information

Class sessions are held in AGRS 141 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.

Prerequisite

Fulfillment of Communication Literacy CL2 requirement.

Course Description

The course—Technical and Professional Communication Principles—teaches students the technical communication principles and practices used in the workplace. An emphasis is placed on technical writing of reports and correspondence using electronic information retrieval and presentation.

Course Objectives and Assessment Tools

The goals of this course are to develop student proficiency in:

- Developing skill in communicating both orally and in writing.
 - **Assessment Tools:** quizzes, chapter in-class activities, e-mail, memo, job ad analysis, cover letter, resume, proposal for technical instructions, technical instructions, technical description, and mock interview.
- Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, methods, trends) about technical and professional writing.
 - **Assessment Tools:** quizzes and chapter in-class activities.
- Learning to apply course materials to improve problems related to technical and professional writing.
 - **Assessment Tools:** chapter in-class activities, e-mail, memo, cover letter, resume, technical instructions, technical description and mock interview.

Course Technology Requirements

Canvas is the where course content, grades, and communication will reside for this course: <https://usu.instructure.com/>. Your **username** is your **A#**, and your **password** is your global password (the same one you use for Banner or Aggiemail). For **Canvas**, **Passwords**, or any other computer-related technical support, contact the **IT Service Desk** at 435-797-4357 (797-HELP), <http://it.usu.edu>, or servicesdesk@usu.edu.

Textbook

The text for this class will be **Technical Communication in the Twenty-First Century** by Dobrin, Keller, & Weisser, 2010, published by Pearson Prentice Hall. You may purchase this book at the [USU bookstore](#) or online.

Optional Resources and Supplies That Might Be Handy

- **Three-Ring Binder or Pocket Folder:** You will periodically receive class handouts.
- **USB Drive or Storage Device:** You may also want to save your course assignments.
- **Remind:** Remind will be used to communicate important information to students outside of class time. You will be able to receive a text message from this class if you opt in to Remind. To sign up for these messages, text @aste3050 to 81010. Standard messaging rates apply. To receive messages via e-mail, send an e-mail to aste3050@mail.remind.com.
- References for grammar and punctuations issues:
 - Elliott, R. (2006). *Painless grammar*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series.
 - Grammar Girl Quick & Dirty Tips for Better Writing Website: <http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/>
 - Purdue Online Writing Lab Website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/>
 - Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Course Fees

There are no course fees associated with this course.

Assignment Descriptions

Readings

You must read the chapter for the lecture topic before arriving to class. You will be accountable for reading materials and assessed for comprehension through writing assignments, chapter activities, and quizzes.

Diagnostic Test on Grammar & Punctuation (10 points)

You will take a diagnostic test on January 9, which will cover grammar and punctuation rules you are expected to know. The diagnostic exam grade will NOT be counted toward your final grade, but it will be used to identify rules we will review during lectures. You will receive 10 points for completing the diagnostic test.

Quizzes (105 points)

Three quizzes are given during the semester over assigned reading, classroom discussion, and lecture content. Students have the entire lecture period to complete each quiz. Students can review their quizzes during class but do not keep the quizzes. The quizzes are also available for students to review during a scheduled time in my office.

E-mail & Memo Project (65 points)

The goal of this assignment is to apply the Problem Solving Approach in writing an e-mail and memo. The e-mail and memo must be related, writing on behalf of a business or organization. You will be graded on grammar, spelling, punctuation, content and formatting. The instructor will provide more details about the assignment during lecture. You will submit a hard copy of the assignment: (1) e-mail, (2) memo, (3) project assessment memo, and (4) peer review sheets.

Peer Review of E-mail & Memo Project (10 points)

You will bring a hard copy of your e-mail and memo and will participate in an in-class peer review. Your instructor will provide you a copy of the grading rubric to critique a few students' projects during class time. The grading rubric and project will be returned to you at the end of the class period.

Job Ad Analysis (20 points)

Using an Internet search engine or other employment resource, find a job, internship or graduate program you are qualified to apply for now or at the time of graduation. Write a 300-word discussion post on Canvas under the "Discussions" topic "Job Ad Analysis." Attach a copy of the job advertisement or graduate program information to your discussion post. Think of the Job Ad Analysis as a prelude to your cover letter. Write in complete sentences and use paragraphs. You will be graded on grammar, spelling, punctuation, content, and formatting.

Employment Project (100 points)

The Employment Project applies the Problem Solving Approach in preparing documents for finding and obtaining employment or admission to graduate school. You will find a job, internship or graduate program you are qualified to apply for. You will create your résumé and cover letter that will structure, in part, the decision-making process concerning your application. There are factors beyond the control of individual applicants, but the self that you create with your documents (along with the self that the reader constructs for you) goes a long way in securing employment or graduate school admission (or at least an interview). You will write a project assessment of your employment project and the process you used to complete the assignment. You will be graded on grammar, spelling, punctuation, content, and formatting. The instructor will provide more details about the assignment. You will submit a hard copy of these documents: (1) job ad or graduate school application, (2) cover letter, (3) résumé, (4) peer review sheets, and (5) project assessment memo.

Peer Review of Cover Letter & Résumé (10 points)

You will bring a hard copy of your ad for the job, internship or graduate school program with your cover letter and résumé to participate in an in-class peer review. Your instructor will provide you a copy of the grading rubric to critique a few students' projects during class time. Your grading guidelines and project will be returned to you at the end of the class period.

Mock Interview (50 points)

Use your cover letter and resume to prepare for a job applicant interview. You will schedule a 20-minute meeting with your instructor to do the mock interview. You will be asked five questions that relate to your job ad. Be professional in the preparation of your responses. The job applicant interview will be no longer than 10 minutes, so you need to communicate clearly and concisely.

Technical Description & Instructions Proposal (20 points)

In preparation for the Technical Description and Instructions Project, you will write a discussion post on Canvas under the “Discussions” topic “Proposal for Technical Description and Instructions.” You will describe what your instructions will cover. You will be graded on grammar, spelling, punctuation, content and formatting. More detailed instructions will be provided about the format and content.

Technical Description & Instructions Project (100 points)

An important task for technical writers is producing materials that assist both expert and novice users with technology. The first part of this assignment requires you to choose a specific technical object or product you know well and write a technical description. You will include an image with the technical description. Then, you will write instructions that use the object or product to do something. Clear, concise, and helpful instructions are extremely difficult to produce. Your set of instructions will carefully and respectfully consider audience experience, expectations, knowledge, competency, and vocabulary. You will be graded on grammar, spelling, punctuation, content and formatting. The instructor will provide more details about the assignment during lecture. You will submit a hard copy of the assignment: (1) Technical Description, (2) Technical Instructions, (3) Peer Review Sheet, and (4) Project Assessment Memo.

Peer Review of Technical Description & Instructions Project (10 points)

You will bring a hard copy of your assignment and will participate in an in-class peer review. Your instructor will provide you a copy of the grading rubric to critique a few students’ projects during class time. The grading rubric and assignment will be returned to you at the end of the class period.

Final Exam (100 points)

The final exam is comprehensive and covers material from the entire semester.

LinkedIn Extra Credit Opportunity (10 points extra credit)

If you do not have one already, create a LinkedIn profile. You will need to create a user name and password if you have not created a profile (www.linkedin.com). Include all information you think might prove useful to you in landing a job or internship, particularly the photo, summary, background, experience, skills & expertise and education sections. Establish at least two connections with people you know or want to connect with. Bring proof of your LinkedIn profile (a printed copy of your profile page) to class or connect with me by **February 23** to earn 10 points onto your overall grade.

Completion of IDEA Evaluation (10 points extra credit)

If 80% or more of the class completes the IDEA evaluation for ASTE/JCOM 3050, all students receive 10 points toward their overall grade. The IDEA evaluation is optional, but it greatly helps the instructor know how you evaluate the course on the course objectives. The evaluation must be completed by **5 p.m. on April 24**.

Course Grading

Your grade will be calculated using the following scale:

Grade	Percentage Range
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	59% or below

Grading Criteria:

The instructor grades each assignment using a rubric that will be given to you after the course material for the assignment is explained in lecture. The graded guidelines document is returned with each assignment.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attending each class meeting is a crucial element for success in the course. We will have many group discussions about technical and professional communication, and your views and opinions are welcome and encouraged as long as you remain respectful of your classmates. If you must miss class, you are expected to contact the instructor prior to class. If you have an excused absence, you shall be permitted to make up missed assignments in a timely manner agreed upon by the instructor.

Late Assignments

Late assignments are not accepted, and you receive a score of 0 for any assignment not submitted by the stated deadline. If an emergency arises that will require you to turn an assignment in late, or if you will be absent for an excused function, you must call the instructor immediately by telephone (435-797-3289) or Canvas inbox. For absences related to excused functions, you must work with the instructor at least one week in advance to develop a plan to complete any missed work. The due date and time associated with each quiz, discussion, and assignment is stated clearly in Canvas.

Examples of excuses that do not count for turning in a late assignment:

1. I need to go print my assignment.
2. I had to stay at work because there wasn't anyone there to cover the next shift.
3. I had to take my pet to the vet.
4. I forgot.
5. I had a doctor/dentist/eye doctor/other appointment.
6. I'm in a wedding.
7. I have to do an assignment for another course, and this is the only time I can get it done.
8. A family member has a basketball game/state tournament/track meet.
9. My flight from Spring Break doesn't land until...
10. I'm leaving for Spring Break on...

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes:

1. Incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks,
2. A death in the immediate family,
3. Financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment,
4. Change in work schedule as required by an employer,
5. Other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor. (<http://www.usu.edu/policies/pdf/Incomplete-Grade.pdf>)

Communication

All communication will be disseminated from Canvas or during class time. I will use Announcements in Canvas to communicate high priority and timely information. You must set your notification preferences in Canvas to receive Announcements and Conversation Messages to ASAP by and email, cell phone for text messages, or other social networking services of your choice.

- How to set up **notification preferences** in Canvas: <http://guides.instructure.com/m/4144/1/73162>
- How to use the **Inbox** for Conversations in Canvas:
<http://guides.instructure.com/s/2204/searches?utf8=✓&text=conversations&commit=Search>

I will use the Assignments tool in Canvas to communicate deadlines on assignments and grading rubrics. I will provide assignment feedback through comments on your assignment and the grading guidelines.

Student Feedback/Communication

I welcome all feedback on the course. My preferred method of communication with individual students is via Canvas Inbox/Conversations. I will respond to email **within two week days** (Monday – Friday). Over the weekend, expect a slower response time. If you experience a legitimate emergency (according to my standards) that will prevent you from completing required coursework on time, I expect you to communicate with me at the earliest reasonable opportunity. Canvas will track communication between students and teachers providing date and time stamps. Please state the nature of the emergency, and when you expect to turn in the coursework.

Since you are learning about technical and professional communication, your messages must be **PROFESSIONALLY** composed. That means:

- Capitalizing sentences.
- Using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation to the best of your ability.
- Not using “text short hand.”
- Closing the message with your first and last name.
- Proofreading the message before you click “send.”

Course Etiquette

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, or demeaning. The instructor has primary responsibility for and control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity.

Instructor Responsibilities:

- Treat all students with courtesy and respect.
- Be open to constructive input from students in the course.
- Ensure that opportunities to participate are shared equally by all students in the class.

Student Responsibilities:

- Complete reading assignments before lectures.
- Be prepared for class activities.
- When speaking or writing use courteous, respectful language and keep comments and questions relevant to the topic.

In order to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning, students are discouraged from using cellular phones, text messaging, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior will result in, minimally, a request to leave class.

Syllabus Changes

This syllabus is subject to change. I will notify the class regarding all changes. In the event of any discrepancy between this syllabus and content found in Canvas, the information in **CANVAS WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE**.

Grade Dispute

At some point in this course, you may disagree with a grade you receive on an assignment. Here are some guidelines to follow in the case of a grade dispute:

- You are encouraged to take sufficient time, **a minimum of 24 hours before responding**, to think about your grade, review your assignment and respond to me in Canvas inbox. I will only review your grade if you provide me with a written response explaining your perspective and rationale concerning your grade.
- You may send this response to me via Canvas inbox. Your argument should be well-reasoned and based on evidence. It does not have to be long, but there should be a good rationale for why the grade should be changed.

An example of a grade dispute will look something like this:

On Question 26, I marked B as the correct answer. According to my notes, this is correct; however, it is marked wrong. My notes (the book, etc...) indicate B is correct because.... Please re-grade this question.

Your written argument **must be submitted within seven (7) days** of the time the work was returned to you or the grade was posted or received. After seven days, no assignment grades will be considered for change. Schedule a meeting with me to further discuss your grade and bring your graded assignment with you to the meeting.

University Policies

Academic Integrity - “The Honor System”

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.

The **Honor Pledge**: To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: “I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity.” A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The Instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to academic dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code.

Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- 1. Cheating** using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually"; Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- 2. Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- 3. Plagiarism** includes knowingly "representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged used of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling.

All design work must be your own work. You are not allowed to use templates or copyrighted photos/graphics unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Any violation of academic honesty will result in a 0 on the assignment and you will not have the opportunity to make up the points. Violation of copyright laws is considered plagiarism. You may be asked to show where you downloaded your stock photos and graphics. If you are unsure, ask about it FIRST.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the AA/EEO Office at 797-1266.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act states: "Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program. If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (797-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, etc., must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative format, large print, audio, diskette, or Braille."

Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated [in matters other than (i) discipline or (ii) admission, residency, employment, traffic, and parking - which are addressed by procedures separate and independent from the Student Code may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII Grievances.

Course Schedule

	Week 1	Lecture Topic	Assignment to Complete Before Lecture
W	Jan. 7	Overview of Syllabus Introductions	
F	Jan. 9	Ch. 1: Technical and Professional Communication in the Workplace Diagnostic Test on Grammar & Punctuation	Read Chapter 1
	Week 2		
M	Jan. 12	Ch. 2: Rhetoric and Technical Communication	Read Chapter 2

W	Jan. 14	Ch. 4: Ethics and the Workplace Writer	Read Chapter 4
F	Jan. 16	No Class – Complete Online Module for Ch. 5: Technical Communication in a Transnational World	Read Chapter 5 Chapter 5 Activity on Canvas
Week 3			
M	Jan. 19	No Class – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	
W	Jan. 21	Ch. 6: Researching and Evaluating Source Material	Read Chapter 6
F	Jan. 23	Quiz 1	
Week 4			
M	Jan. 26	Ch. 7: Organizing and Drafting Documents	Read Chapter 7
W	Jan. 28	Ch. 13: Letters (Negative Messages)	Read Chapter 13
F	Jan. 30	Ch. 13: Letters (Persuasive Messages)	
Week 5			
M	Feb. 2	Ch. 14: Finding and Obtaining Employment Assign Job Ad Analysis assignment	Read Chapter 14
W	Feb. 4	Ch. 14 continued - Writing a cover letter Assign Employment Project	
F	Feb. 6	Ch. 14 continued - Writing a cover letter	
Week 6			
M	Feb. 9	Ch. 14 continued - Creating a résumé	Submit Job Ad Analysis as Canvas discussion post
W	Feb. 11	Ch. 14 continued - Creating a résumé	
F	Feb. 13	Ch. 14 continued - Using social media in job search Assign LinkedIn Extra Credit Opportunity	
Week 7			
M	Feb. 16	No Class – President's Day	
T	Feb. 17	Attend Monday Schedule - Complete two peer reviews of cover letter & résumé	Bring copy of job ad, cover letter & résumé
W	Feb. 18	Ch. 14 continued - Interviewing Assign Mock Interview	
F	Feb. 20	Ch. 10: Revising, Rewriting, and Editing	Read Chapter 10 Submit printed copy of Employment Project (job ad, cover letter, résumé, project reflection memo, & peer review sheets)
Week 8			
M	Feb. 23	Ch. 10: continued	LinkedIn Extra Credit Opportunity
W	Feb. 25	Attend the Utah State University's Premier Spring Career Fair Complete career fair activity	
F	Feb. 27	Quiz 2	
Week 9			
M	Mar. 2	Ch. 12: E-Mail, E-Messages, and Memos - E-mail messages	Read Chapter 12
W	Mar. 4	Ch. 12 continued - Memos Assign E-mail & Memo Project	
F	Mar. 6	Ch. 12 continued - E-messages	
Mar. 9 – 13 - Spring Break			
Week 10			
M	Mar. 16	Ch. 8: Visual Rhetoric and Technical Communication	Read Chapter 8
W	Mar. 18	Ch. 9: Layout and Design	Read Chapter 9
F	Mar. 20	Complete two peer reviews of E-mail & Memo Project	Bring printed copy of E-mail & Memo Project
Week 11			
M	Mar. 23	Ch. 15: Technical Definitions	Read Chapter 15
W	Mar. 25	Ch. 16: Technical Descriptions and Specifications	Read Chapter 16
F	Mar. 27	Ch. 16 continued	Submit printed copy of E-mail & Memo Project (e-mail, memo, project reflection memo, & peer review sheets)

	Week 12		
M	Mar. 30	Quiz 3	
W	Apr. 1	Ch. 18: Technical Instructions Assign Technical Description & Instructions Project	Read Chapter 18
F	Apr. 3	Ch. 18 continued	Submit Technical Description & Instructions Proposal as Canvas discussion post
	Week 13		
M	Apr. 6	Ch. 18 continued	
W	Apr. 8	Work on Technical Description & Instructions	
F	Apr. 10	Ch. 11: Usability	Read Chapter 11
	Week 14		
M	Apr. 13	Ch. 11 continued	
W	Apr. 15	Complete peer review of Technical Description & Instructions Project	Bring hard copy of Technical Description & Instructions Project
F	Apr. 17	Ch. 19 - Proposal Writing	Read Chapter 19 Submit hard copy of Technical Description & Instructions Project
	Week 15		
M	Apr. 20	Ch. 19 - Proposal Writing	
W	Apr. 22	Ch. 19 - Proposal Writing	
F	Apr. 24	Ch. 19 - Proposal Writing	Complete IDEA Evaluation by 5 p.m. (Extra Credit Opportunity)
	Finals		
W	Apr. 30	Final Exam from 9:30 a.m. - 11:20 a.m. in AGRS 141	

*This schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Students will be notified of any changes.