



Technical & Professional Writing

8:45 - 10:00 | Tues Magrath 6 | Th Magrath B50*

We'll work with a variety of professional communication genres over the course of the semester. When we finish, you'll be better able to:

- Meet the expectations of your readers
- Write effective correspondence
- Create persuasive proposals
- Design and research usable reports
- Work collaboratively
- Develop interesting and capable oral presentations

Contact

Email: kenne329@umn.edu (Preferred. With rare exceptions, I respond to all emails within 48 hours.)

AIM: iamkristak

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs, 10:00 - 11:00

Office: COB 137

Texts, Materials, and Meeting Spaces

Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*. Thomson & Wadsworth, 2008. (Yes, really. 2008. Please note that this edition is only available through the UMN Bookstore.)

Other required readings will be distributed via our course site. There will be both links and PDFs. You'll need to make sure you have the most recent version of Adobe Reader so you can view the PDFs. (It's linked on the "Resources" page of our WebVista site.)

Please budget up to \$50 for miscellaneous course expenses.

***Until further notice, our Thursday meetings will be in Magrath Library B50.** COB 17 Front, which shows in the OneStop listing, no longer exists. After the new lab in the VoTech Building is completed, we will begin meeting there.

Major assignments:

Here's how the major assignments and point structure breaks down:

Assignment/Opportunities	Available Points
Long-form email	25
Letter	25

Assignment/Opportunities	Available Points
Instructions (group project)	200
Client Memo	50
Proposal	200
Progress Report	25
Final report	200
Oral Presentation	125
Participation	150

There will also be a number of minor assignments that will factor into the participation grade. Your work will be graded according to the usual criteria:

A	940 – 1000	Represents work that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	900 - 939	
B+	880 – 899	Represents work that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B	840 – 879	
B-	800 - 839	
C+	780 – 799	Represents work that meets the basic course requirements in every aspect.
C	740 – 779	
C-	700 - 739	
D	600 - 699	Represents work that is worthy of credit even though it does not fully meet the basic course requirements.
F	599 and below	Signifies that the work was either completed but at a level that was not worthy of credit or else was not completed at all.

I do not give incompletes. If you are in the D or F range at midterm, you and I will meet to discuss it. This may be a time for you to withdraw from the class or sign a contract with me stating that we've discussed the matter and you intend to continue the class.

Getting Things Done

Attendance and Participation: Because this class includes a lot of in-class discussion, demonstration, and work, you're expected to attend all sessions. I expect you to show up and actively participate not only in our discussions, but also in peer reviews, presentations, and out-of-class meetings with me and your writing partners. This requirement is fair to all students and consistent with what your future employer will expect of you.

Excessive absences will result in grade reduction. The following policies are binding: You have three absences that you may use for any reason, excused or unexcused. (I do not distinguish between the two, so you may want to save up your absences for good reasons.) Two late arrivals or early departures are equivalent to one absence. Excuses are neither necessary nor desired. After you have used up your allotment, I will lower your final grade by one full letter each additional time you are absent. More than four absences may result in a failing grade.

On days that you are absent, you're still expected to turn in any work that is due. (See "Late Work" policy below.) You'll most likely lose credit for any in-class work.

Late Work: Assignments are due in class at the beginning of the scheduled period. Late assignments are penalized 10% per class day late. For example, a document due on Thursday in class would be penalized 10% if you submit it at the end of class (or at 5 pm that day or the next Monday afternoon). There will be additional implications if the assignment is also due for peer review, in which case you'll also lose points for not having a document to get feedback on.

Technology: The work you do for this class will require familiarity with the basic uses of computers to compose documents in Word, PowerPoint, and wikis; to save and backup your work; to send files as email attachments; and to upload and download documents. None of the things we'll be working with require you to do any programming or have any special technical knowledge, but they do require that you be prepared to push yourself and ask questions when you need to. (Please remember that I am a writing teacher, not a technical support specialist. I am always willing to help you as much as I can, but there will be specific quirks for your machine that you may need to address with someone else.)

If you have any concerns about the role of technology in this course, you should contact me within the first week of the semester. You should also plan to take advantage of email and my office hours for questions that come up along the way.

Grade Disputes: If you have a question about your grade, please wait 24 hours before you discuss it with me. Take some time to think about the situation and carefully formulate your argument. When we talk, you should have a specific rationale for why you deserve a higher grade. Then schedule a time to meet with me and we'll discuss it.

Professionalism and Respect: This course models the standards of professional conduct applicable in virtually any context. You are expected to behave professionally in your contributions to discussions, feedback given to your peers, interactions with the instructor, and, of course, in the work you do on class assignments. Discourteous, threatening, or harassing behavior will not be tolerated.

Respect works both ways. I do my best to be courteous and fair in all situations and at all costs. If you ever feel that you've been treated otherwise, come and talk to me about it.

Academic Dishonesty: If you have a question about documentation and/or plagiarism as you complete your work, just ask me. I'll be more than happy to discuss it with you. That said, all students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own will result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Bottom line: Don't even bother. The assignments in this class are unique and difficult to borrow material for. If you do engage in academic dishonesty, you will most likely fail the course.

Special Needs and Accommodations: Students who need special consideration because of any sort of documented disability should make an appointment to see me right away. The information you share with me will remain confidential. You should also contact the Office of Disability Service for information and/or assistance.

Schedule of Events

T, 9/4	Overview and Introduction	
Th, 9/6	What is Technical Communication? What is Rhetoric?	Short-form email due Graham, "How to Do What You Love" (link); Stemwedel, "What's the Point of a College Education?" (link)
T, 9/11	Audience and Situation Analysis	Chapter 3
Th, 9/13	Correspondence	Chapter 20
T, 9/11	Document Design	Chapter 12
Th, 9/20	Creating Instructions; Wikis	Letter due Chapter 23; Barton, "Embrace the Wiki Way" (PDF)
T, 9/25	Work session	Topic Proposal email due
Th, 9/27	Usability Testing	Chapters 4 and 15
T, 10/2	Mitch Berg, EcoLab User-centered Design	Chapter 13; Bernard, "The Perfect Prescription"
Th, 10/4	Work day - Instructor at Conference	
T, 10/9	Proposal Project Overview	Instruction set due
Th, 10/11	Emily Lein, Thomson Managing Client-Centered Projects	Chapter 19
T, 10/16	Persuasion	Chapter 5
Th, 10/18	Julie Kelly, UMN Libraries: Conducting Pragmatic Research	Client Memo due; Reading TBA ***Meet in Magrath 81***
T, 10/23	Style	Chapter 8
Th, 10/25	Working with Multi-Level Documents	Chapters 7 & 11
T, 10/30	Creating Effective Reports	Chapter 21
Th, 11/1	Proposals Workshop	Bring full draft of Proposal to class; Chapter 14
T, 11/6	Speaker TBA Creating Effective Recommendation Reports	Proposal due Chapter 22
Th, 11/8	Ethics	Katz, "The Rhetoric of Expediency" (PDF)
T, 11/13	Presentations: Delivery	Lehr, "Let There Be Stoning" (link), Chapter 17
Th, 11/15	Presentations: PowerPoint	Reynolds, "The Lessig Method" (link)
T, 11/20	Reports workshop	Bring 2 copies of full draft to class
Th, 11/22	No class - Thanksgiving Break	
T, 11/27	Presentations	
Th, 11/29	Presentations	
T, 12/4	Presentations	
Th, 12/6	Presentations	
T, 12/11	Presentations	Final proposal package due