



WRT 307-M260: Professional Writing

12:30 - 1:50 | Tues HBC 213A | Th HBC 227A

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:

- Analyze audiences and situations
- Develop research proposals and reports
- Conduct basic usability testing
- Work collaboratively
- Design document texts and graphics
- Develop effective oral presentations

Contact

Email: kristao1@syr.edu (Preferred. I respond to all emails within 48 workday hours.)

Office Hours: 11 - 12 Tu/Th and by appointment. If you know in advance that you would like to meet during office hours, you might want to make an appointment so you won't have to wait if I'm meeting with someone else. Office hours can get especially busy before deadlines and at the end of the semester.

IM: iamkristak on AIM, drkristakennedy on GoogleTalk

Office: HBC 228

Texts, Materials, and Meeting Spaces

Gurak, Laura J., & Mary E. Hocks. *The Technical Communication Handbook*. Longman, 2008.

Other required readings will be distributed via BlackBoard. 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 BlackBoard site.) Please budget up to \$50 for miscellaneous course expenses.

Major assignments:

There are 1000 points possible in this class. Here's how the major assignments and point structure break down:

Assignment/Opportunities	Points	Type
Email	25	Individual
Letter	50	Individual
Site Sector Proposal	100	Group
Individual Section Development	150	Individual
Usability Testing & Report	125	Group

Assignment/Opportunities	Points	Type
Review & Recommendations	100	Group
Revised Site Sector	200	Group
Oral Presentation	100	Group
Participation	150	Individual

Your work will be graded according to the following criteria.

A A-	940 – 1000 900 - 939	A manager would be very impressed with your work and remember it when a promotion is discussed. In our course, this means your final product has excellent content, clean text, and excellent document design. Additionally, your work is thorough, coherent, well-supported, and organized in a useful fashion. It demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
B+ B B-	880 – 899 840 – 879 800 - 839	A manager would be satisfied, but not particularly impressed. This means that your product meets the basic standards of writing and overall production, as well as demonstrates a step forward in your learning process. It is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and you have demonstrated a solid understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
C+ C C-	780 – 799 740 – 779 700 - 739	A manager would be disappointed, and would require you to revise the document before a client sees it. Your work may have clear but undeveloped ideas, or it may not engage or affect the reader. It likely contains some errors in logic, mechanics, or grammar.
D	600 - 699	A manager would be troubled by the poor quality of your work and likely note it in your annual review. The level of writing skill forces the reader to work too hard to understand your ideas. The text may have incomplete information, lack clear organization and design, and have serious grammar or mechanical issues.
F	599 and below	A manager would start looking into replacing you. In this case, your work does not fit the assignment parameters, is so underdeveloped as to demonstrate incompetence, or is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible. The most likely root cause is a pronounced lack of concern about audience perceptions of the writer as a professional.

I do not give incompletes except in documented medical emergencies. 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 need 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.

However: because of the increased potential for flu pandemics this year, you should absolutely stay home if you suspect that you have the flu. Should you need to miss class because you think you have H1N1 or another flu strain, drop me an email and let me know what your status is. When you return to class, bring a signed doctor's note that confirms your situation.

Having said that: excessive absences not related to flu 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 must be submitted electronically by the beginning of the scheduled period. (I am not accepting paper this year, given the above-mentioned flu concerns.) 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: Our work in this class requires familiarity with the basic uses of computers and the Internet. 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. 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.

Collaboration Disputes: While the course is set up to allow you responsibility for contributing individual texts and work, you will also interact with each other and develop projects together. As in the workplace, this sort of work means that you will have to find ways to get along. However, if you find a particular collaborative situation to be unreasonable or unresolvable, please notify me so that I can help you resolve it. If you find yourself considering taking this step, use this test: in a real job, would this be an issue worth taking to your boss and soliciting managerial intervention? If so, then it's time to let me know. If not, then find ways to work it out yourselves.

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. The work you submit for this class must be original and created specifically for this course. If you're not familiar with SU's academic integrity policy, you can find it here: http://supolicies.syr.edu/ethics/acad_integrity.htm . If you do engage in academic dishonesty, you will most likely fail the assignment and/or 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 in-

formation you share with me will remain confidential. You should also contact the Office of Disability Services for information and/or assistance. Their site is here:

<http://provost.syr.edu/provost/Units/academicprograms/DISABILITYSERVICES/index.aspx>

Schedule of Events (subject to revision)		
T, 9/1	Overview and Introduction	Optional reading: Graham, "How to Do What You Love" (link); Stemwedel, "What's the Point of a College Education?" (link)
Th, 9/3	What is Pro/Tech Communication? What is Rhetoric?	xi-xii, 24-30, 63-67
T, 9/8	Audience, Purpose, Situation	5-11, 33-35 Email due
Th, 9/10	Correspondence	104-115
T, 9/15	Virtual Teamwork and Wikis	47-48, 55-59, Barton, "Embrace the Wiki Way" (PDF) Letter due via GoogleDocs
Th, 9/17	Project Management	30-33, 44-46, 49-50, 345-47
T, 9/22	Proposals	146-155
Th, 9/24	Work session	
T, 9/29	Document Design	291-303, 308-311, 315-318 Preliminary Topic & Analysis via GoogleDocs
Th, 10/1	Work session	
T, 10/6	Basic Information Architecture	
Th, 10/8	Organizing Individual Projects	426-427 Proposal Due via Email
T, 10/13	Conducting Pragmatic Research ***Meet in Bird Library 046***	444-446
Th, 10/15	Basic Web Page Design Using Images: Issues	381-386 331-338, 319-322 Outlines Due via GoogleDocs
T, 10/20	Integrating Images	
Th, 10/22	Style, Two Ways	38-41
T, 10/27	Conducting Review Sessions	Reading TBA
Th, 10/29	Conduct Reviews In Class	Individual Pages due on wiki
T, 11/3	Conducting Usability Testing	438-444 Recommendations due via email
Th, 11/5	Test Design Day	412-414, 418-419, 434-435
T, 11/10	Test Design Day	Individual Text Revisions due on wiki
Th, 11/12	Usability Testing Day	
T, 11/17	Group Conferences/Work Day	

Th, 11/19	Group Conferences/Work Day	
T, 11/24	Deliver Status Reports In Class	
Th, 11/26	No class - Thanksgiving Break	
T, 12/1	Presentations: Delivery	136-139; Lehr, "Let There Be Stoning" (link),
Th, 12/3	Presentations: PowerPoint	Reynolds, excerpt from <i>Presentation Zen</i> (link)
T, 12/8	Presentations	
Th, 12/10	Presentations	
T, 12/15	Evaluations and Closing	Final Versions Due on wiki