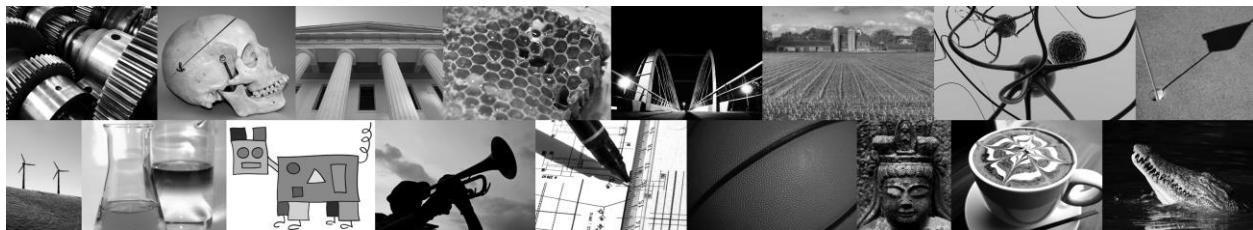


# ENGL 305: TECHNICAL WRITING



SPRING 2015: T/R 1-2:15 PM—GO6 COLSON HALL

INSTRUCTOR: Jill Woods  
OFFICE: 209 Colson Hall

EMAIL: Jill.Woods@mail.wvu.edu

OFFICE HOURS: (T/R) 8:30- 9:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

*Or by appointment*

NOTE: Please follow these instructions when writing emails to me:

- (1) Begin the subject line with "ENGL 305-W04"; and
- (2) Continue the subject line with a descriptive yet concise phrase clarifying your question or concern.

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## REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS

- Paul V. Anderson's *Technical Communication: A reader-centered approach*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. ISBN-13: 978-1-285-06470-3
- A MIX email address and regular access to our WVU eCampus course site

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces you to strategies for translating between discipline-specific knowledge and interested outsiders. While this may include topics traditionally understood as "technical," such as those in engineering, architecture and computer science, technical writing encompasses any topic that must be explained to an involved, but not expert, audience.

You will explore the forms of technical writing that are common in the professions, including memos, technical descriptions, instructions, reports and presentations. Drawing on the expertise developed in your major, you will explore technical writing through topics and issues important to the work you plan to do. Because a primary assumption of this course is that all writing emerges from and responds to a particular problem, audience, and purpose, the course focuses on helping you develop multiple strategies for accomplishing your communication goals.

## PRIMARY COURSE OBJECTIVES\*

- That you master the practices and principles of technical communication with particular emphasis on planning, audience analysis, persuasion, clear and effective writing style, organization, graphics and information design.
- That you refine a writing process that will enable you to communicate well, meet deadlines, and work as part of a team.
- That you participate in online classroom discussions.
- That you design and execute several forms of technical communication including correspondence, a technical/process description, instructions, reports, and a presentation.
- That your writing process culminates in polished portfolio documents that have been revised and refined for clarity and effectiveness.
- That you demonstrate the ability to speak persuasively in a professional setting, including the ability to select and design effective presentation graphics.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

You will be evaluated on written documents, an oral presentation, class participation, and your final writing portfolio. You will receive a detailed assignment sheet for each task. Assignments that will be graded on content, technique and style will pass through a drafting stage before you turn in your “final” version.

ASSIGNMENT	%	POINTS
Quizzes	10%	50 (variable [5-8])
Writing Exercises (WEs)	22%	110 (5 or 10 each x 12)
Writing Portfolio ( <i>including drafts</i> )	58%	290 (drafts=80, final portfolio=210)
<i>Employment Documents</i>		
<i>Unsolicited Correspondence</i>		
<i>Tech. Description/Process Analysis</i>		
<i>Instructions (Print)</i>		
<i>Instructions (Video)</i>		
<i>Usability Report</i>		
<i>Report/Presentation</i>		
Class Participation	10%	50
	100%	500

### QUIZZES

These unannounced quizzes ensure that you are reading the required material, help you remember what you read, and help you prepare for class activities and writing assignments. Read carefully – take notes and ask questions in class. There will be ***between 5-8 quizzes*** in all.

### WRITING EXERCISES

These 12 writing exercises (WEs) include assignments that help you prepare for (or even begin drafting) your major writing portfolio documents. You will submit all of these assignments to our eCampus course site unless otherwise directed by me. **All writing exercises are due by the start of class on the due date specified in the course schedule. Upload them BEFORE coming to class.** Many of these writing assignments will be used as the base for in-class discussions and activities. While some of these are less formal assignments, note that they ARE graded on quality – not on polish but on content.

### WRITING PORTFOLIO

Over the course of the term, you will draft 7 “major” writing assignments, 5 of which you will revise for a final writing portfolio. First drafts of these documents will NOT be assessed on quality. Rather, you will receive full, partial, or no credit, based on how well your draft meets the minimum assignment requirements. I will provide you with substantive feedback on each draft, and only after you have had the opportunity to revise those drafts and submit “final” versions in your writing portfolio will they be assessed on how professional and successful they are. (See the grades section below for general criteria.)

You will receive more detailed instructions for the writing portfolio in the second half of the term, but please note that you must have an initial draft of a document to include it in your portfolio. Since you know now that you will have multiple versions of one document, start practicing consistent naming conventions. For instance, I might name my drafts like so (note my initials):

**First draft – BadNewsLetterJH1.docx**

**Second draft – BadNewsLetterJH2.docx**

**Peer-reviewed draft – BadNewsLetterJH2mlreview.docx**

**Final draft – BadNewsLetterJH.docx**

Also, back up your files in at least two locations (a USB drive, Google Drive, Dropbox, your home computer, an external hard drive, etc.) regularly. USB drives have been known to get lost or corrupted and cloud files have been known to be temporarily inaccessible!

## GRADES

**WRITING:** When grading your “final” draft assignments, I will ask one overriding question: “Does this document do its job successfully?” The “job,” or purpose, of each document will be explained in assignment instructions and in class and will be assessed on this scale:

**A – Superior:** The work is of near professional quality. The document meets or exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The content is mature, thorough, and well suited for the audience; the style is clear and accurate ; the information is well-organized and designed so that it is accessible and attractive; the mechanics and grammar are correct. It is assured of success and of winning praise.

**B – Good:** The document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in style, or it contains easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content, or its content is superficial. It is likely to succeed.

**C – Competent:** The document needs significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. It may be formally correct but superficial in content. It stands a chance of succeeding.

**D – Marginally Acceptable:** The document meets some of the objectives but ignores others; the content is inadequately developed; or it contains numerous or major errors. It is not likely to succeed without major revision.

**F – Unacceptable:** The document does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or it contains major errors or excessive errors. It fails to do its “job.”

## PARTICIPATION

Your participation will be evaluated according to your consistency with regard to attendance, level of preparedness for, and conduct in all course-related work. This includes your attendance at and preparedness for all course-related meetings, your conduct in all course-related activities, how consistently and effectively you engage with the demands of the course, and the overall quality and thoughtfulness of all aspects of your interaction with the course, your instructor, and your classmates. Participation is worth 10% of your final grade. **NOTE: Any student missing more than three classes for any reason will receive 0% for participation.**

## COURSE POLICIES

**PROFESSIONALISM:** In this course, I will hold you to the professional standards that prevail both throughout the university and within the field of professional writing and editing. You are expected to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading and writing assignments on time; to help your classmates learn by your participation in class discussions and group activities; to spend at least six hours per week out of class for research, writing, and class preparation; and to be courteous and considerate.

**PROMPTNESS.** As in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All WE writing assignments must be uploaded to eCampus by the beginning of class on their respective due dates. Major assignments are due by the beginning of class on their respective due dates. Late assignments will not be accepted unless you have made arrangements with me in advance, and even then, grades for those assignments will be lowered by one full letter grade (e.g., A becomes a B, B becomes a C, and so on) for each day the assignment is late.

**EMAIL AND ECAMPUS SUBMISSION:** In most cases, assignments require eCampus submission posted to the Discussion Board or as attached document (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) files through the eCampus “Assignments” tool. Students must meet deadlines. If I cannot open the document, it will be considered late. Assignments are not accepted via WVU or MIX email unless the assignment calls for it, eCampus is down, or if you make *prior arrangements with me*.

**PLAGIARISM/CHEATING:** Academic dishonesty is wholly unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly. Students are expected to be familiar with the sections on Academic Integrity in the University Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to document sources, or any other question that will help you avoid unintentional plagiarism, please talk to me. You are expected to submit your own original work. When you recycle your own past work or submit essentially the same paper in more than one class, you are self-plagiarizing. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that will result in failure of the assignment and/or the course. Plagiarism cases will **always** be filed with the university. If you have questions about plagiarism/cheating or source documentation, please visit my office.

You can also get assistance through the **Eberly Writing Studio** located in G02 Colson Hall. *The Writing Studio strives to help all members of the university community learn more about writing and become better writers. Their professional and friendly consultants work with writers one-to-one on all stages of the writing process, from note-taking and pre-writing to revision strategies and proofreading techniques. Because the Writing Studio works to teach students ways to improve their own writing, consultants will not proofread, edit papers, or discuss grades. It is helpful to bring your assignment prompt with you on your visit. To make an appointment, call 304.293.5788 or visit the [Writing Studio website](#).*

**SOCIAL JUSTICE:** I am committed to a classroom that strives to use inclusive language, minimize assumptions, emphasize respect of difference, honor privacy, and employ topics that allow but do not require exploration of gender, sex, sexuality, race, nationality, ability, class and so on. These topics make for productive, thoughtful, but sometimes tough discussions. If for any reason you find yourself feeling uncomfortable or offended (so much so that you cannot critically respond to the work) come and talk to me. I maintain an open door policy regarding such issues. My only request is that we participate in honest inquiry and respectful, informed debate. I will do my best to ensure that this classroom is a space where everyone feels comfortable and respected. Finally, if you have a conflict between a religious holiday and a graded assignment, please contact me in advance so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

**DISABILITY AND ACCOMMODATION:** If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services. We can arrange to accommodate your learning style based on ODS recommendations. Please notify me at the semester’s beginning of your learning needs. Also, Accessibility Services has moved to Suite 250 at 1085 VanVoorhis Rd (beside Applebee’s and across from the Mountaineer Station transportation center). The phone number is 304-293-6700, and email is access2@mail.wvu.edu. Access the website at <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

This course schedule – like all writing – is open to revision. You will be notified of any changes in class and/or via our WVU eCampus course site. Otherwise, note that reading and writing assignments are DUE the day they are listed on the schedule.

**NOTE:** *Technical Communication: A reader-centered approach* is abbreviated as TC; Writing Exercises are abbreviated as WE; Writing Portfolio documents are abbreviated as WP

	<b>READING</b>	<b>WRITING</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b>	COURSE/COLLEAGUE INTRODUCTIONS	
T- 1/13	Syllabus	
T- 1/15	Read TC Ch. 1, 2	WE#1
<b>WEEK 2</b>	EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS (PURPOSE, AUDIENCE & CONTEXT)	
T- 1/20	Read TC Ch. 3	WE#2
R- 1/22	Read TC Ch. 4	
<b>WEEK 3</b>	EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS (CONTENT, SCOPE & ORGANIZATION)	
T- 1/27	Read TC Ch. 5, 23	
R- 1/29		WE#3 (peer review)
<b>WEEK 4</b>	EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS & PERSUASION (CORRESPONDENCE)	
T- 2/3	Review TC Ch. 5, 23	<b>WP#1: Employment Documents</b>
R- 2/5		WE#4 (peer review)
<b>WEEK 5</b>	PERSUASION (PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE)	
T- 2/10	Read TC Ch. 8, 9	<b>WP#2: Unsolicited Recommendation or Complaint Letter</b>
R- 2/12	<b>WVU Career &amp; Internship Fair (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.)</b>	
<b>WEEK 6</b>	TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION/PROCESS ANALYSIS	
T- 2/17	Read TC Ch. 14, 15, 16	WE#5, WE#6
R- 2/19		WE#7 (peer review)
<b>WEEK 7</b>	TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION/PROCESS ANALYSIS & INSTRUCTIONS	
T- 2/24	Read TC Ch. 10, 28	<b>WP#3: Technical Description/Process Analysis</b>
R- 2/26		WE#8
<b>WEEK 8</b>	INSTRUCTIONS	
T- 3/3	Read TC Ch. 11, 12	WE#9 (peer review)
R- 3/5		<b>WP#4: Print Instructions</b>
<b>WEEK 9</b>	INSTRUCTIONS (REPURPOSING/CHANGING MEDIUM)	
T- 3/10		WE#10
R- 3/12	Video Work	
<b>WEEK 10</b>	INSTRUCTIONS (REPURPOSING/CHANGING MEDIUM)	
T- 3/17	Video Work	
R- 3/19		<b>WP#5: Video Instructions</b>
<b>WEEK 11</b>	<b>SPRING RECESS</b>	
T- 3/24	Take a break!	
T- 3/26		

<b>WEEK 12</b> REPORTS (USABILITY & GROUP)		
T – 3/3 1	Read <i>TC</i> Ch. 17, 18	
R – 4/2	Read <i>TC</i> Ch. 19	<b>WP#6: Usability Report</b>
<b>WEEK 13</b> REPORTS (RESEARCH & COLLABORATION)		
T – 4/7	Read <i>TC</i> Ch. 6, 7, 27 Skim <i>TC</i> Ch. 24, 25, and/or 26	
R – 4/9		WE#11
<b>WEEK 14</b> REPORTS (RESEARCH & COLLABORATION)		
T – 4/14	Read <i>TC</i> Ch. 13	
R – 4/16	Read <i>TC</i> Ch. 20	We#12 (peer review)
<b>WEEK 15</b> PRESENTATIONS		
T – 4/21	Workshop	
R – 4/23	Presentations	<b>WP#7: Report &amp; Presentation</b>
<b>WEEK 16</b> PRESENTATIONS & REVISION		
T – 4/28	Presentations	<b>WP#7: Report &amp; Presentation</b>
R – 4/30	Presentations (if needed)	eSEIs <b>Writing ePortfolio</b>

**\*ENGLISH MAJOR PROGRAM GOALS**

Upon completing a B.A. in English, a student should be able to:

1. Interpret texts within diverse literary, cultural, and historical contexts.
2. Demonstrate a general knowledge of the social and structural aspects of the English language.
3. Demonstrate a range of contextually effective writing strategies.

Four aspects of Goal 1 are especially important. A student should be able to:

- Identify genre conventions and analyze their effects.
- Identify and analyze effects of complexity or ambiguity.
- Locate texts in social, economic, political, and literary history.
- Connect a text to other literary or cult.