ENGL 421Y
TECHNICAL WRITING

Summer 2019, Mods 2 & 3 | Section Y02 | CRN 11832 | Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 421 helps students become better technical writers—across global audiences, for multiple purposes, and in a variety of media. The work of the course is centered on presenting technical material in written and visual formats that demonstrate an awareness of audience needs and contexts, achieve implicit and explicit rhetorical purposes, and work to effectively address workplace, social, or global problems.

Working individually and in groups, students learn effective strategies for communicating about and with technology, particularly in networked workplaces and through usability testing. To achieve success in this course, students must display the ability to succeed in their future workplaces by developing a variety of informative and visually effective print and electronic documents.

> **TL;DR—this semester we'll learn how to translate technical information into forms that different audiences can understand and use. We'll do this by playing with different writing tasks, genres, and technologies.**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Use technical writing theories and approaches to analyze and solve problems individually and in teams
- Communicate complex technical information, processes, and procedures via a variety of media, genres, and technologies to a range of audiences and stakeholders
- Adapt written genre conventions and expectations to both technical and non-technical audiences with changing organizational needs

- Apply primary and secondary research methods and strategies to produce technical documents
- Demonstrate awareness of both the technical and human needs of users, paying special attention to cultural diversity and global sensitivity
- Interpret, contextualize, explain, and visualize data sets given specific rhetorical contexts or problems
- Successfully function in different capacities in various team-based settings

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Johnson-Sheehan, Richard (2018). *Technical Communication Today* (6th edition). Pearson. ISBN 0134438663. REVEL Access. $48–$53.

You will not purchase/receive a print textbook. You must purchase the digital edition of this textbook with the REVEL access card. REVEL is the textbook publisher's (Pearson's) fully digital delivery system. You will need REVEL to complete textbook quizzes and other activities that are required for your participation in this course. In addition to the REVEL access card, you will need a course invite link, which you can access on Blackboard (along with instructions for setting up your REVEL account).

All other materials will be made available on Blackboard or through the Purdue Libraries at lib.purdue.edu. **All course readings and videos are required, unless otherwise noted.**

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Note that these are just brief descriptions. Each project has multiple required components, and full assignments will be provided on Blackboard. See the course calendar for due dates.

- **Project 1: Job Documents** (20% of final grade)
  After completing a skills inventory and a job ad analysis that will help you consider your professional competencies and career goals, you'll turn in a résumé and cover letter targeted toward a job posting of your choice.

- **Project 2: Group Documentation** (25% of final grade)
  With a team, you will conduct research to understand your target users before creating a set of instructions (both visual and textual) that teach, guide, or support the work of others. *Group work is a basic, non-negotiable requirement of this class.*

Percentage	Letter Grade
100–97 = A+	4.0 = A
96–94 = A	3.7 = A-
93–90 = A-	3.3 = B+
89–87 = B+	3.0 = B
86–84 = B	2.7 = B-
83–80 = B-	2.3 = C+
79–77 = C+	2.0 = C
76–74 = C	1.7 = C-
73–70 = C-	1.3 = D+
69–67 = D+	1.0 = D
66–64 = D	0.7 = D-
63–60 = D-	0.0 = F
59% or below = F	

- **Project 3: Technical Report** (25% of final grade)
  Selecting a topic that interests you and/or relates to your field of study, you will individually research, write, and design a report targeted to a specific audience. You will determine the needs of your readers and thus the genre of your report, which may take the form of an informational report, field report, lab report, literature review, market analysis, or recommendation report.

- **REVEL Reading Quizzes** (15% of final grade)
  As you work through our digital textbook, you are required to complete reading quizzes on assigned material. See the REVEL guide on our course Blackboard page for instructions.

- **Short Assignments, Homework, and Course Participation** (15% of final grade)
  Participation in Blackboard discussion boards, 1–2 page responses to course readings, peer review, and other activities will be averaged to form your short writing grade.

Grading Policy: I do not curve/round up grades or offer extra credit at the end of the semester.

Late Work: I do not accept late work unless arrangements have been made at least 48 hours prior to the due date. Final drafts of Projects 1–3 must be uploaded to their Blackboard dropboxes by 11:59pm on the assignment due date, unless otherwise specified on the syllabus.

I'm here to help you out if you're stuck! If you're struggling with course content, projects, or deadlines, please talk with me sooner rather than later! You can always send me an email or schedule a video chat appointment with me by using my scheduling link.

ONLINE COURSE EXPECTATIONS

A virtual course is probably pretty different from other classes you've taken at Purdue. In an online class, your only contact with your instructor and classmates is through email, discussion boards, chat rooms, and web conferencing. This course also has a required group project, which means that you'll need to work with a team without ever meeting them in person. **This requires that you check your email regularly, maintain open channels of communication, and ask questions when necessary.** You can't fade into the background in this course—you have to participate in all discussion boards and activities in order to pass!

Not only is this section of ENGL 421 entirely online, but it is also condensed into the second eight weeks of the summer. **This course will be intensive and fast-paced**. It will require time management skills, as well as a commitment to several hours of work per week for reading, researching, writing, revising, designing, and engaging in collaborative activities. Do not let yourself fall behind on course material, as it will become difficult to catch up very quickly. I recommend that you keep a calendar and to-do list for the class, and schedule time each week to complete assignments and projects.

TECHNOLOGIES

To participate in course activities, the following technologies are required:

- A high-speed internet connection, which you will access daily for course messages through email, as well as to use Blackboard
- A laptop or desktop computer with Windows 7 or higher, or Mac OS 10.6 Snow Leopard or higher
- A microphone and/or webcam, for video conferencing
- A program that can open PDFs (such as Acrobat or Preview)
- Microsoft Office (please save documents in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats—no PAGES files, please!)
    - *You can use Apple's Office suite or open source equivalents to compose text, but you will learn advanced Microsoft Word features for designing documents in this course, so you need to have Word available on your computer.*
    - *If you do not have the Office suite, you can download it for free using your Purdue account. Instructions are available here.*

ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATION

Disabilities: Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know so that we can discuss options. It is best to schedule an appointment or stop by my office hours early in the semester. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at drc@purdue.edu or by phone (765-494-1247).

Basic Needs Statement: Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in this course is encouraged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) for support. Furthermore, please notify your instructor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

MENTAL HEALTH NOTE

Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765) 494-6995 and http://www.purdue.edu/caps, or through its counselors located in the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

PURDUE HONOR PLEDGE & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a Boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together—we are Purdue. For more information, see the Office of the Provost.

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information that is submitted provides the greatest opportunity for the university to investigate the concern.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE
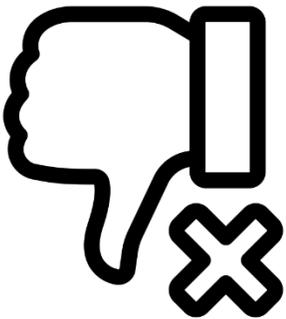
Online courses provide an excellent opportunity for students to freely share ideas with each other—in fact, many students who are uncomfortable speaking up in a traditional face-to-face classroom find that they prefer the online experience, because they can ask questions without feeling intimidated! However, sometimes this sense of freedom can be abused, and lead to rudeness or disrespect in digital spaces. Online courses do afford us some sense of anonymity, which sometimes emboldens us to write things that we wouldn't say to someone in person.

I expect that you all will respect your classmates and their opinions. Flaming and/or trolling will not be tolerated in this course. *If you engage in a disrespectful way towards your classmates or instructor, it will negatively affect your grade*. It is important to be concise, informative, and polite when communicating with your colleagues in this course, as well as your instructor.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

To report an emergency, call 911. To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, sign up for Purdue Alert text messages here.

There are nearly 300 emergency telephones that connect directly to the PUPD, both outdoors across campus and in parking garages. If you feel threatened or need help, push the button and you will be connected immediately.

Please review the Purdue Emergency Preparedness website for additional information.