

ENGL 421-DIST

TECHNICAL WRITING

Summer 2020, Mods 2 & 3 | Section Y03 | CRN 20842 | Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 421 helps students become better technical writers, across multiple 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, effectively achieve implicit and explicit rhetorical purposes, and work to effectively address workplace, social, or global problems.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of ENGL 421, students will be able to...

1. **Problem-Solving:** Use technical writing theories and approaches to analyze and solve problems individually and in teams.
2. **Technical Communication:** Communicate complex technical information, processes, and procedures via a variety of media, genres, technologies, and presentations to a range of audiences and stakeholders.
3. **Audience & Genre:** Adapt written genre conventions and expectations to both technical and non-technical audiences with changing organizational needs.
4. **Research:** Apply primary and secondary research methods and strategies to produce technical documents.
5. **User-Centered Design:** Demonstrate awareness of both the technical and human needs of users, paying special attention to accessibility, cultural diversity, and global sensitivity.
6. **Data Storytelling:** Interpret, contextualize, explain, and visualize data sets in specific rhetorical contexts or problems.

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 Brightspace (along with instructions for setting up your REVEL account).

All other materials will be made available on Brightspace 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 Brightspace. See the course calendar for due dates.

- Unit 1: Correspondence** (15% of final grade)
Responding to a provided scenario, you will practice professional message genre conventions such as letters, emails, and memos.
- Unit 2: Group Proposal and Statement of Work** (20% of final grade)
With a team, you will collaborate to pitch an idea or bid to an audience in a way that outlines planned work and highlights your group’s qualifications. *Group work is a basic, non-negotiable requirement of this class.*
- Unit 3: Documentation** (20% of final grade)
After identifying a problem that requires specific steps to solve, you will conduct research to understand your target users before creating a set of instructions (both textual and visual) that teach, guide, or support the work of others.
- Unit 4: Technical Description** (15% of final grade)
To create a specification, fact sheet, or infographic, you will synthesize research on a technical or

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	

complex concept from your area of study to define and explain it to a non-expert.

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

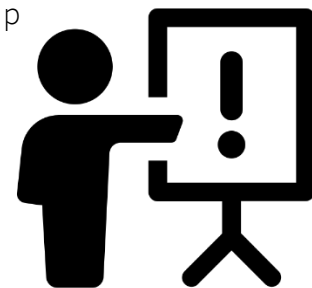
Grading Policy: I do not curve/round up grades or offer extra credit.

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 1–4 must be uploaded to their Brightspace dropboxes by 11:59pm on the assignment due date, unless otherwise specified on the course calendar.

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 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, 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 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 to pass!



Not only is this section of ENGL 421 online, but it is also condensed into eight weeks. **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.

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 Brightspace.
- 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 or Google Docs (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 visit 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 [its website](#), 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.



NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue's nondiscrimination policy can be found [here](#).

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.



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