Spring 2019

ENG 352-004: Technical Writing

Ben Apatoff

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English 352:  
Technical Writing

Professor: Mr. Ben Apatoff  
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Email: Apatoff@njit.edu

Term: Spring 2019  
Office: Cullimore 431  
Office Hours: Scheduled by appointment

Course Format and Objectives

ENG 352-004 Technical Writing  
Tuesday 4:00 pm - 5:20pm  
Student Mall PC39

Catalog Description: An advanced writing course combining theory with practice to prepare students as technical writers. Analyze complex communication situations and design appropriate responses through tasks that involve problem solving, rhetorical theory, document design, oral presentations, writing teams, audience awareness, ethical considerations and gender equity issues.

Course Description: In this section of English 352, you will learn to create, adapt and revise technical documents for both expert and non-expert audiences. Since many of you have different professional goals and interests, this course will focus on rhetorical awareness rather than addressing every convention and genre that you might encounter in your professional lives. This means that we will spend much of our time investigating the social context surrounding pieces of writing, and consider how authors use deliberate rhetorical strategies to communicate meaning within these texts. The course will also focus on the writing process, asking you to brainstorm topics, write drafts, and revise based on instructor or peer feedback. Keep this in mind, because we don’t have a lot of time to cover this material.

Course Goals: Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
• Recognize and analyze the rhetorical dimensions in written documents by producing written and critical responses to course readings.
• Use writing as a tool for critical thinking, reflection and communication.
• Understand writing choices and how to make ethical writing decisions.
• Practice the writing process by using brainstorming, invention, and revision strategies.
• Construct clear, grammatical sentences and produce well-organized texts that exhibit an attention to audience, genre, and purpose.
• Learn how to apply basic principles of document design to clarify writing.
• Find, select, assess, and analyze information sources, both print and electronic, and to credit, integrate and synthesize these sources in your own work.

Required Texts: Articles and links will be available on Moodle. These materials will generally be posted at the beginning of the week (Monday). If you have any questions about these materials, feel free to reach out to me.
**Participation:** Your participation grade reflects your overall performance in the course. Students with strong participation might 1) engage with all the readings; 2) ask useful questions in class; 3) arrive on time for class, prepared to work; 4) submit assignments on time; 5) schedule conferences with me for guidance long before an assignment is due; 6) contribute in discussions and classwork.

Students with low participation might 1) ignore the readings; 2) do other work during our class; 3) text or surf the web during class; 4) miss deadlines; 5) get off track during class activities; 6) miss classes and expect me to reteach what you missed.

Your classwork and homework assignments are designed to prepare you for the course’s major assignments. Remember that informal classwork, homework, and class participation combine for 15% of your final grade, so do not ignore the importance of this work. Each assignment will be graded according to the following scale:

*Satisfactory:* This work is thoughtful, reasonably complete given time allowed, and it was turned in on time (full credit, usually 5/5 points).

*Marginal:* This work was turned in on time, but it is completed in a careless manner or is substantially incomplete given time allowed (half credit, usually 2.5/5 points).

*Unacceptable:* This work ignores written/verbal instructions and/or missed its deadline (no credit, usually 0/5 points).

Please be aware that these assignments and your participation on discussion forums will combine to make up 25% of your final grade.

**Formal Projects:** You will have three formal projects. These assignments will be evaluated according to project rubrics, which will also be posted on Moodle, and will be given a letter grade. Full details on these projects will be uploaded to Moodle within the next two weeks.

**Grade Breakdown:** Each assignment will be evaluated on criteria that are specific to the genre you are producing. You will find these criteria with the appropriate assignment sheet.

*A/A- Superior:* Your deliverable is professional and exceeds expectations. It meets (and exceeds) all of the grading criteria for the assignment. You demonstrate excellence in audience awareness, organization, and document design. I would use your work as an example for future classes, and I recommend you use it in your professional portfolio.
B+/B/B- Proficient. Your deliverable is professional in writing and design, and it meets all of the grading criteria for the assignment. The difference between an A and a B is your attention to detail and/or the sophistication of your writing or design.

C+/C/C- Average. Your deliverable meets the basic criteria for the assignment but does no more. It may be reasonably organized, have a few grammar or usage errors, but it needs another revision to improve usability and/or audience awareness.

D+/D/D- Deficient. Your deliverable needs significant revision of rhetorical approach, content development, writing, and/or document design/visuals.

F- Unacceptable. Your deliverable fails to accomplish its designated task, adapt to its audience, or develop key ideas.

Writing Assignments (Individual/Group 75%)

You will have three major assignments—Website Analysis, Instruction Set Project and Recommendation Report—which will make up the majority of your grade.

In-Class/Homework Assignments (Individual/Group, 15%) Your in-class and homework assignments prepare you for major assignments. They also develop your writing and critical thinking abilities. You will receive more information about these assignments in class, and you cannot make up any in-class or homework assignment you miss when absent or late to class.

Participation (Individual, 10%) Participation credit includes your active, ongoing participation in class discussions, asking pertinent or clarifying questions, etc. It is very difficult to do well in the rest of the course without participating extensively.

Course Etiquette:

- Come to class in a timely manner. Tardy students need to enter quietly and not interrupt the class. Do not share the reason you are late with the class. Disruptive classmates will have to leave.
- Silence all phones and other electronic devices upon entering the classroom. Should you forget to silence your cell phone and it rings, do not answer your phone in class.
- Laptops should only be open when we are drafting. For discussions and presentations, they should remain closed. You will retain more information in your notes if you hand write them. While snapping a photo with your phone is an easy way to capture what is on the board, studies show that there is a connection between your physically writing and remembering.
- You may not audio or videotape any part of any class without prior written permission from your instructor.
- Come to class prepared to participate.
- Do not bring food into the classroom. If you need to bring in something to eat for health reasons, see me.
Respect your peers. You’re entitled to your opinions, and it’s fine to disagree. Be polite about it. You’re reviewing peers’ writing, not their opinions. Ad hominems, bigotry, etc. are not opinions.

Please Note: I do not give extra credit, particularly for those who have failed to fulfill the participation aspect of this course. Writing courses are designed to be process oriented, which makes regular participation essential to academic growth.

NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity: The New Jersey Institute of Technology is an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge through teaching and research. We expect our graduates to assume positions of leadership within their professions and communities. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity.

The NJIT Code of Academic Integrity embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty that is central to the very nature of the university and represents the highest possible expression of shared values among the members of the university community.

All assignments submitted shall be considered "graded work" and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Code on Academic Integrity. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified. The full text of the NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity can be found at www.njit.edu/education/pdf/academic-integrity-code-pdf.

Special Needs: Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact Student Disability Services at 973-596-3420.

The Writing Center: (Central King Building G17)

Spring 2019 hours: M-Th 10-7, F 11:30-4
The Writing Center is available for free 45-minute individual and group appointments with professional and peer writing consultants both onsite. This resource is intended to help you to improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors can help with planning assignments, improving your writing, refining an essay or multimedia project, or other communication-based needs. For more, check out: http://www5.njit.edu/writingcenter.

Moodle
Access to all assignments, some readings, and class forums will be provided via the course Moodle site, located at http://moodle.njit.edu. Log into Moodle regularly to make sure you stay up to date with our class. If you get locked out of Moodle, contact the Help Desk at 973-596-2900 or try to reset your password at: https://mypassword.njit.edu/cgi-bin/upr/passchange_default.php.

Writing Assignments: Since this is a composition course, you are required to write an annotated bibliography/review of the literature, research proposal, progress report, and researched report/project which each student will present with a poster/visual. Assignments must be handed in on time. Late assignments will drop 1 letter grade for each DAY.
(NOT CLASS) they are late. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted.
You must revise papers in this course, so hand in completed drafts on time and revise them later. If you are absent, contact me and arrange to have someone hand in your work on time and post your work on Moodle.

FORMAT: All assignments must be typed/word processed, double-spaced, no “weird” margins/fonts (1 inch margins; 12 point Times New Roman). Yes, I went to grade school too and I know the “14 point” trick. Assignments must be handed in printed on paper (not emailed) and in Moodle. Number papers and staple pages together. In the upper left-hand corner, put your name, course name, section, professor’s name, and date. All papers must have a creative title that gives your audience an idea about your subject matter. Spell check and proofread your work. Check for grammatical mistakes.

Keep all drafts to hand in at the end of the term so you and I can monitor your progress. Do NOT discard ANY work from this course. Keep you drafts in a safe place. Never hand in the only copy of an assignment. Always keep a copy for your files in case something happens and an assignment is misplaced.

Out of class assignments must be word processed. Make sure you save your work on at least 2 places (hard drive/cloud/flash drive) so you always have a copy. Make a print out of your paper before you turn off your system so if something goes wrong you only have to retype what you’ve written rather than going through the entire writing process again. Email a copy of your paper to yourself so you can access it from the writing center and other computer labs. Update your computer virus protection weekly and do weekly virus scans of your computer.
## Course Schedule

Readings and writing assignments will be posted to Moodle.

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<td>1/29</td>
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<td>The Rhetorical Situation</td>
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<td>2/12</td>
<td>How Situation Defines Objectives</td>
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<td>2/19</td>
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<td>Clarity and Style&lt;br&gt;<strong>Recommendation Report Project Introduced</strong></td>
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<td>Document Arrangement&lt;br&gt;<strong>Instruction Set Project Due</strong></td>
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<td>Recommendation Reports</td>
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