

Fall 2019

# PTC 601-851: Advanced Professional and Technical Communication

John Starrick

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# PTC-601: Advanced Professional and Technical Communication

Fall 2019

## Instructor Information

### Instructor

John Starrick, MSPTC

### Email

John.j.starrick@njit.edu

### Course Dates & Location

Online, Asynchronous  
09/03/2019-12/20/2019  
Office hours by appointment only

## General Information

### Description

Provides the foundation and direction for all Professional and Technical Communication coursework. This course introduces students to the profession and the academic discipline of technical/professional communication. Modules include usability analysis; visual information; ethics; global diversity, global communication; report writing; information literacy; communicating with new technologies; and technical writing style. Students begin development of the MSPTC ePortfolio.

**Prerequisite:** Admission into either the MSPTC or certificate program, or consent of the program director

### Expectations and Goals

By the end of this course, students should be able to demonstrate the following:

- A thorough understanding of the technical communication discipline
- How to conduct an effective audience analysis
- The ability to identify and employ rhetorical devices and techniques
- How to design reports, presentations and other communications based on context and user expectations / needs
- Understanding the role of SME's, cross-functional teams and other stakeholders when managing projects
- Identify ethical considerations for a globally dispersed workforce and audience
- Understand how new technologies (automation, artificial intelligence, virtual & augmented reality, etc.) affect technical communications and other industries
- Analyze social media's role in information dissemination
- Development and maintenance of an e-Portfolio

Since we operate in an asynchronous online community, students are expected to demonstrate courtesy, etiquette and respect for their fellow students within the discussion forums. A heavy emphasis is placed on the discussion posts and replies as this type of information exchange greatly enhances our mutual learning experiences.

## Course Materials

### Required Materials

There are no required materials to purchase. Links and copies of reading assignments and/or research materials will be posted on the Canvas course site.

## Optional Materials

Johnson-Eilola, Johndan and Stuart Selber. *Solving Problems in Technical Communication*. University of Chicago Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-226-92407-6

## Course Schedule

| Week                  | Topic  | Exercises  |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Week 1: 09/03 - 09/08 | 1. Class Introductions<br>2. Technical Communication Overview                      | 1. Post an introduction about yourself<br>2. Read the posted article and complete discussion posts |
| Week 2: 09/09 - 09/15 | 1. Audience Analysis   | 1. Complete Audience Analysis Exercise<br>2. Discussion post and responses                         |
| Week 3: 09/16 - 09/22 | 1. The Rhetorical Situation<br>a. Purpose<br>b. Audience<br>c. Author              | 1. Discussion post and responses   |
| Week 4: 09/23 - 09/29 | 1. Information Design<br>a. Report Writing<br>b. Writing Style<br>c. Visual Design | 1. Discussion post and responses   |
| Week 5: 09/30 - 10/06 | 1. UX - User Experience<br>a. Usability<br>b. Accessibility                        | 1. Usability analysis<br>2. Discussion post and responses  |
| Week 6: 10/07 - 10/13 | 1. Project Management  | 1. Discussion post and responses   |
| Week 7: 10/14 - 10/20 | 1. Ethics<br>2. Global diversity   | 1. Discussion post and responses   |
| Week 8: 10/21 - 10/27 | 1. New Technologies<br>a. Automation<br>b. Artificial Intelligence                 | 1. Discussion post and responses<br>a. List 3 potential research topics                            |
| Week 9: 10/28 - 11/03 | 1. Social Media<br>a. Facebook<br>b. Twitter<br>c. Instagram<br>d. Oh My!          | 1. Discussion post and responses<br>a. List two potential research topics                          |
| Week 10: 11/04-11/10  | 1. Research Topic<br>2. Introduction to MSPTC Portfolio                            | 1. Select research topics<br>2. Discussion post and responses                                      |
| Week 11: 11/11-11/17  | 1. Annotated Bibliography  | 1. Complete an annotated bibliography for your topic<br>2. No discussion posts this week           |
| Week 12: 11/18-11/24  | 1. Research project draft<br>2. MSPTC ePortfolio Outline                           | 1. Submit rough draft of your research project<br>2. Submit outline of portfolio                   |
| Week 13: 11/25-12/01  | Thanksgiving Recess  | No assignments are due this week!  |

| Week                 | Topic                          | Exercises  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
|                      |                                | Please continue to work on final projects.                                 |
| Week 14: 12/02-12/08 | The research process           | 1. Discussion post and responses   |
| Week 15: 12/09-12/15 | MSPTC ePortfolio               | 1. Submit URL to your MSPTC ePortfolio<br>2. Discussion post and responses |
| Week 16: 12/16-12/20 | Final Reflection & Project Due | 1. Submit course reflection<br>2. Submit final research project            |

## Additional Information and Resources

### Grading Policy

Assignments, discussion activities and other exercises will be graded using a points system. The maximum number of points that can be attained in this class is 1000.

The tables below outline how your grades will be calculated:

| Final Grades | Range    | Significance         |
|--------------|----------|----------------------|
| A            | 900-1000 | Excellent            |
| B+           | 870-899  | Good                 |
| B            | 800-869  | Acceptable           |
| C+           | 750-799  | Marginal Performance |
| C            | 700-749  | Minimum Performance  |
| F            | 0-699    | Failure              |

### Assignments:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Week 1 Introduction                                 | 25 pts      |
| Audience Analysis Exercise                          | 50 pts      |
| Usability Analysis                                  | 50 pts      |
| Annotated Bibliography                              | 50 pts      |
| Research Project Draft                              | 75 pts      |
| Final Research Project                              | 150 pts     |
| MSPTC Portfolio Outline                             | 65 pts      |
| Final MSPTC Portfolio                               | 100 pts     |
| Final Reflection                                    | 30 pts      |
| Weekly Discussion Posts<br>(12 weeks @ 20 pts each) | 240 pts     |
| Discussion Responses<br>(11 weeks @ 15 pts each)    | 165 pts     |
| <b>Total Points</b>                                 | <b>1000</b> |

### Discussion Posts:

For the discussion posts, students are expected to provide valuable insight and demonstrate critical thinking for each week's topic(s). The same applies to the student responses. Please offer a substantive reply to your peers; a simple I agree, or great point, will surely not suffice. Replies should be a minimum 3-5 sentences that complement the author's original post.

All initial discussion posts are due by **Thursday 11:59pm** of the assigned week, and students must reply to at least **two** of their peers by **Sunday, 11:59pm**.

### Assignment Due Dates:

Our course week will run from Monday to Sunday. All assignments are due on **Sundays by 11:59pm**, unless otherwise specified. Please see specific assignment instructions on the Canvas course site.

Should any serious circumstance arise that would prohibit an on-time assignment submission, please reach out to me as soon as possible so alternate arrangements may be made.

Late assignments will have point deductions of **10 pts per day**. After the third day, assignments will not be accepted and will receive a grade of **0** unless previous arrangements have been agreed upon.

### NJIT's statement on academic integrity:

*Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.*

**Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office.** Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at [dos@njit.edu](mailto:dos@njit.edu)".

### Communication:

All course related announcements and other information will be posted in the Canvas site and/or sent via NJIT's official student email system as necessary. Please be sure to check the course announcements forum and your student email regularly. Also, please send any course related correspondence to this instructor via the NJIT email system.

I will be available to all students via phone or skype by appointment only.

***\*Please note: This syllabus, the assignments, due dates and other information may be revised by this instructor at any time during the semester. All changes will be reasonable, made according to class needs and in consultation with the program director.***