

Fall 2019

# ENG 352-003: Technical Writing

Benjamin Blickle

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## ENG 352: Technical Writing

TR: 4-5:20

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Blickle

Email: [blickle@njit.edu](mailto:blickle@njit.edu)

Office: Cullimore 312 or The Writing Center

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, 3:30-4:00 5:30-6:00 and by appointment

### Required Readings

\*Textbook: *Technical Communication*, 12<sup>th</sup> edition, by Mike Markel

\*Additional readings will be distributed in class, via email, or posted online

\*You are required to bring print or electronic copies of the assigned reading to class each day.

### Welcome to ENG 352

ENG 352 develops your knowledge and proficiency of writing for scientific and technical professions. In this course, you will learn to create, adapt, and revise technical documents for non-expert and expert audiences.

In particular, you will develop an awareness of multiple audiences for your work. Thus, your primary goal will be rhetorical awareness rather than a mastery of every convention and genre that you might possibly be required to write in during your future careers. Please keep this goal in mind as we move through the course.

In this syllabus, you'll find information about class policies, assignments and grading. If you have questions about anything related to the class, check this syllabus and the Canvas site first; if it is not covered on the syllabus or online, email me at [blickle@njit.edu](mailto:blickle@njit.edu)

### Course Description

Since many of you have different professional goals and interests, this course will focus on transferable analytical and writing skills 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.

### Support Services

#### Accessibility & Accommodation

This course will be committed to the principle of universal learning. Our classroom, our virtual spaces, our practices, and our interactions will be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen and observe others carefully are crucial to universal learning. If you need instructional accommodations please give me an official authorization letter from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD) as soon as possible.

### The Writing Center

The Writing Center is available for one-hour individual and group appointment with professional writing tutors both onsite and online. This resource is indented to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors can also help with planning assignments, improving your writing, refining an essay or multimedia project, or other communication-based needs. For more information, please visit <http://humanities.njit.edu/writingcenter>

### **Course Goals**

In this course, you will learn to:

1. Understand the interaction of purpose, audience, format (including style and grammar), and situation in technical writing.
2. Make effective and ethical choices in technical writing.
3. Identify and address the specific rhetorical challenges and opportunities of collaboration in writing projects.
4. Learn how to apply basic principles of document design to enhance and clarify your writing documents.
5. Construct clear, grammatical sentences and produce well-organized texts that exhibit an attention to audience, genre, and purpose that follow the conventions of logical argumentation.
6. Demonstrate the ability to find, select, assess, and analyze information sources, both print and electronic, and to credit, integrate, and synthesize those sources in your own work.

### **Attendance**

You are expected to be in class on time and prepared, just as you would in the workplace. If you cannot meet these requirements, enroll in a section that meets your scheduling needs.

\*If you miss more than 4 classes (or two weeks of classes), you will earn a zero for your participation grade, no matter how strong your participation is otherwise.

\*If you come to class unprepared, you will be asked to leave and counted absent for the day.

### **Technology Requirements**

#### Canvas

You must access our class Canvas site regularly. On this site, you'll find information about assignments, an updated course calendar, and additional resources chosen to help you succeed.

#### Email

I often send out announcements via NJIT email. Because of this, you must check this account at least every other day. When sending email to your instructor or classmates, include specific information in the subject line. Also, sign your full name in the email, as the NJIT email naming system can make identifying a sender difficult.

### **Participation**

Your participation grade reflects your overall performance in the course.

Students with strong participation will 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.

### **Professionalism and Collegiality**

I expect professional, respectful behavior from you during all class sessions.

\*Cell phones should be set to silent (not vibrate), and you should not be surfing the web or doing anything else that is not part of our class's activity. If you have a family emergency that requires you to turn on the phone, let me know before class.

\*Don't carry on side conversations. If you have a question about an assignment or topic we're discussing, ask me. Otherwise, it can wait until class is over.

\*Treat your classmates with the same respect you would give to your future coworkers (or would like to have given to you). If you behave in a disruptive or disrespectful manner, including ways that are not explicitly described here, I will ask you to leave, and you'll receive no credit for any class activity that day.

### **Participation and Weekly Writing Assignments**

Part of your participation will be evaluated based on your active involvement in online discussions and your submission of low-stakes writing assignments. Students will be asked to write responses to readings, videos, and participate in discussion forums. All of these materials will be available on Canvas.

#### Weekly writing assignments

These documents will not receive a formal letter grade. Instead, they will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

\**Satisfactory* work demonstrates a thoughtful response to writing prompts and is turned in on time. You will receive full credit for satisfactory work.

\**Marginal* work is submitted on time, but is either seriously underdeveloped or only responds to part of the prompts. You will receive half credit for marginal work.

\**Unacceptable* work ignores instruction or is submitted well after the due date of the assignment. Please be aware that these low-stakes assignments and your participation on discussion forums will combine to make up 25% of your final grade. They will represent the usual types of work given in face-to-face classes, such as group discussions, peer reviews and in-class writing assignments. It is therefore imperative that you demonstrate consistency in these assignments and submit them on time.

#### Late assignments

Rare extensions might be granted prior to assignment deadlines, not after. Late work will be assessed as follows:

\*Work submitted within one week of the due date will be evaluated for partial credit.

\*Work submitted over a week late will receive no credit. As a general rule of thumb, I will post readings and guidelines for low-stakes assignments at the beginning of the week or session.

\*Along with these materials, I will post instructions on how to complete assignments. Please let me know if my instructions for the course materials require further clarification. I will do my best to respond to your questions promptly.

### **Formal Projects**

You will have three formal projects. These assignments will be evaluated according to project rubrics, which will also be posted on Canvas, and will be given a letter grade. Full details on these projects will be uploaded to Canvas or distributed in class.

#### Grade Breakdown:

The three formal projects will combine to make up 75% of your grade. Each one of these projects will focus on an aspect of technical writing that we will discuss in the course. The grade breakdown is as follows:

\*Project 1 — Website Analysis 20%

\*Project 2 — Instruction Set 15%

\*Project 3 — Technical Report 40%

\*Weekly Assignments and Discussion Forum Participation — 25%

### **Grading Rubric for Formal Projects**

**A/A-** The project responds to all parts of the assignment with depth and demonstrates a nuanced understanding of audience awareness and organization. At the sentence level, the project demonstrates strong facility with language, uses effective vocabulary, and demonstrates a strong control of the mechanics of Standard English. Finally, the project is well developed, and incorporates outside sources (if needed) in an effective manner.

#### **B+/B/B-**

The project addresses all parts of the assignment, and demonstrates a solid understanding of audience awareness. While organized, the assignment shows less development and insight than an A paper, particularly in its attention to detail. The project shows good control of the mechanics of standard English, and incorporates outside sources (if needed) with success, and demonstrates good sentence variety and sentence clarity.

#### **C+/C/C-**

The project responds to most of the assignment adequately, but may be somewhat limited. The project shows a competent understanding of audience awareness and organization; however, it may be somewhat superficial. The project is thinly developed and inconsistent. While the project shows satisfactory facility with language, it may demonstrate limited control of grammar, syntax and sentence variety.

#### **D+/D/D-**

The project does not respond to all parts of the assignment and is underdeveloped. The project

lacks an understanding of audience awareness and is disorganized at the paragraph level. The project demonstrates weak facility with language, and is unclear at the sentence level to the point where it interferes with meaning and sentence sense.

## **F**

The project fails to accomplish its designated task, adapt to its audience, or develop key ideas. The project is unfinished, and missing several parts of the assignment.

**Please Note:** I do not give extra credit, including as a compensation for failure to meet the goals of our weekly work or consistent participation. 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](http://www.njit.edu/education/pdf/academic-integrity-code-pdf).

## **Reading and Assignment Schedule**

\*This schedule is subject to change.

\*Readings are to be completed by the dates listed below.

\*Chapter numbers are based on the 12<sup>th</sup> edition.

### Thursday 9/5

“Sh\*tty First Drafts”

“How to Read Like a Writer”

### Tuesday 9/10

Introduce Website Analysis Project

Chapter 1

### Thursday 9/12

Chapter 2

### Tuesday 9/17

Chapter 3

Thursday 9/19

Chapter 4

Tuesday 9/24

Chapter 5

Thursday 9/26

Website Analysis Project Due

“Supplemental Materials #1” online

Tuesday 10/1

Introduce Instruction Set Project

Chapter 6

Thursday 10/3

Chapter 7

Tuesday 10/8

Chapter 8

Thursday 10/10

Chapter 9

Tuesday 10/15

Chapter 20

Thursday 10/17

Chapter 10

Tuesday 10/22

Chapter 11

Thursday 10/24

Instruction Set Project Due

“Supplemental Materials #2” online

Tuesday 10/29

Introduce Recommendation Project

Chapter 12

Thursday 10/31

Chapter 13

Tuesday 11/5

Chapter 18

Thursday 11/7

Chapter 14

Tuesday 11/12

Chapter 15

Thursday 11/14

Recommendation Project Description Due

“Supplemental Materials #3” online

Tuesday 11/19

Chapter 16

Thursday 11/21

Chapter 17

Tuesday 11/26

Recommendation Report Discourse Analysis Due

“Supplemental Materials #4” online

Thursday 11/28

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Tuesday 12/3

Chapter 19

Thursday 12/5

Chapter 21

Oral Presentation of Final Projects

Tuesday 12/10

Questions and Conferences

Thursday 12/12

Final Projects

Final Recommendation Project Report Due 12/14