

Spring 2021

## **ENG 352-470: Technical Writing**

Jake Slovis

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**ENG 352 Technical Writing**  
**Section 470**  
**Online Course**  
**Spring 2021**

Instructor: Jake Slovis  
Email: [Slovis@njit.edu](mailto:Slovis@njit.edu)  
Office Hours: Online by appointment

**Prerequisites:** HUM 102 with a grade of C or higher, and one History and Humanities GER 200 level course with a grade of C or higher.

**Catalog Description:** An advanced writing course. Combines current theory with actual 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 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.

This is an **asynchronous online** course, which means that lectures and assignments will be distributed on Canvas, and all coursework will be completed online by the due dates provided. To make sure that the course is interactive, I will include online forums, offer online office hours, and incorporate peer or instructor review sessions on formal writing assignments. The course will also incorporate lecture notes, videos, and PowerPoint to help make it more dynamic.

**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 available on Canvas. These materials will generally be posted at the beginning of the week (Monday), although on some occasions I will post course materials up to a week ahead of time. If you have any questions about these materials, feel free to reach out to me.

**Participation and Low-Stakes Writing Assignments:** Participation will be evaluated based on your active involvement in online discussions and your submission of low-stakes writing assignments. Each week, students will be asked to write responses to readings, videos, and participate in discussion forums. All of these materials will be available on Canvas.

Low-stakes writing assignments 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.
- Work that is *Marginal* 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 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 on Monday evenings. 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.

**Conferences:** On occasion, I will hold a live conference at some point during the week. In these conferences, I will review course materials and answer any of your questions.

These conferences are not required and will largely be fairly informal. With that said, I encourage you all to touch base with me regularly. You will be sent weekly links to join these conferences throughout the semester. Since this is an asynchronous course, these conferences may be rescheduled in order to better accommodate the class.

**Formal Projects:** You will have four 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.

**Grade Breakdown:** The four 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— Discourse Analysis 10%
- Project 4— Analytical Report 30%
- Low-Stakes Assignments and Discussion Forum Participation— 25%

Individual and group work will be evaluated according to the following grading scale:

A = 100-90.00	B+ = 89.99-87.00	B = 86.99-80.00	C+ = 79.99-77.00	C = 76.99-70.00	D = 69.99-60.00	F = 59.99-0
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**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, particularly for those who have failed to fulfill the participation aspect of this course. Writing courses are 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).

**Student Accommodations:** 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** – The Writing Center (Central King Building G17) is available for individual and group appointments with professional writing tutors both onsite and online. This resource is intended to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors 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 Schedule

**Please note:** All readings and low-stakes writing assignments will be posted to Canvas. This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Please rely on Canvas throughout the semester for updates on these materials.

Week	Topic
Week 1 1/19-1/24	Introductions
Week 2 1/25-1/31	The Writing Process <b>Website Analysis Project Introduced</b>

Week 3 2/1-2/7	Writing is Social
Week 4 2/8-2/14	How Rhetorical Situation Defines Objectives
Week 5 2/15-2/21	Communicating Across Different Contexts <b>Website Analysis Project Due 2/21</b>
Week 6 2/22-2/28	Writing Choices and Ethics <b>Instruction Set Project Introduced</b>
Week 7 3/1-3/7	Instruction Sets
Week 8 3/8-3/14	Clarity and Style <b>Recommendation Report Project Introduced</b>
<b>Spring Break!</b>	
Week 9 3/22-3/28	Document Arrangement <b>Instruction Set Project Due 3/28</b>
Week 10 3/29-4/4	Recommendation Reports
Week 11 4/5-4/11	Recommendation Reports <b>Discourse Analysis Due 4/11</b>
Week 12 4/12-4/18	Research Practices/ Discourse Communities
Week 13 4/19-4/25	Questions and Conferences
Week 14 4/26-5/1	The Power of Technical Writing
Week 15	<b>Final Recommendation Report Project Due 5/4</b>