

Fall 2024

COM 313-001: Technical Writing

Davida Scharf

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Recommended Citation

Scharf, Davida, "COM 313-001: Technical Writing" (2024). *Humanities Syllabi*. 874.
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COM 313-001 - Technical and Professional Communications - Fall 2024

Instructor:	Dr. Davida Scharf
E-mail:	scharf@njit.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays and Thursdays before and after class. Email me to set up a mtg.
Class Time:	Mondays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:50 pm
Room:	FMH 407
Mode of Instruction:	Face-to-face
Course Website:	canvas.njit.edu
Required eTextbook:	Course Binder (see Canvas for link)
Other Sources:	<p><u>Technical Writing</u> by Allison Gross, et al. Open Oregon via Pressbooks. (free, open etextbook).</p> <p><u>The Essentials of Technical Communication</u> by Elizabeth Tebeaux and Sam Dragga. Any edition. Available for consultation in the NJIT Library.</p> <p><u>Style and ethics of communication in science and engineering</u> by Humphrey, & Holmes, J. W. (2009).. Morgan & Claypool Publishers. Ebook available via the NJIT Online Library.</p> <p><u>Technical Writing Essentials: Introduction to Professional Communications in the Technical Fields</u> by Suzan Last. (free, open etextbook).</p> <p><u>The Elements of Style</u> by Strunk & White. (original edition by Strunk is a free ebook)</p> <p><u>Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills</u> by Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. any edition.. (Vol. 1). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (pdf available in Canvas course 'files.')</p>



Course Overview

Completing COM313 satisfies a 300-level GER and is required for many majors. During your professional career, you will communicate who you are and what you know by writing and speaking. The goal of this course is to give you as much practice as possible in professional modes of communication so that you can present yourself well and feel confident and at ease doing so. 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.

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **WRITE:** Write and revise various types of professional technical communications to produce a set of documents demonstrating your ability to write clearly and accurately in a concise professional style.
2. **EXPLAIN:** Read and interpret material on technology and explain the ideas, issues, and problems involved in writing about technology and in workplace writing.
3. **RESEARCH:** Demonstrate information literacy: the ability to formulate appropriate questions, find, select, assess, and analyze information sources, both print and electronic, from the open web and the NJIT Library, and to credit, integrate, and synthesize those sources in your writing.

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4. COLLABORATE: Develop collaborative work habits, including those necessary for effective cooperation with other students, instructors, and support tools.
5. SELF-CORRECT: Identify your strengths and weaknesses in writing.

[See which assignments are associated with each learning outcome.](#)

About Our Course Technology

We will use Canvas and Zoom (if necessary) for class communications and meetings. We will be using small groups within Canvas to facilitate discussions, using Canvas Discussions, Conferences, and Google Docs within Canvas for collaboration. You are expected to be fluent with the technologies used in this course, Canvas, the Online NJIT Library, or any other technologies we may use. If you are having trouble, first seek help using self-tutorials, classmates or peers, IST helpdesk, the writing center, ask a librarian, etc. Let me know if you cannot answer your question on your own and I will be happy to help you.

Class Rules

Attendance and participation are important for success in all jobs, courses, social situations, and meetings. Writing courses are designed to be process-oriented, which makes regular participation essential to academic growth. **In-class activities will be worth 35% of your final grade.**

In-class Writing will be frequent, both graded and ungraded, to help you develop your skills as a writer.

Always bring a device to class so you can easily write and share your work. Do not use your devices during class for anything other than course-related work. I will be using your official **NJIT email address only**. Please check it frequently. Many assignments and instructions are on **Google Drive**. To access Google Drive you must be signed in to your NJIT Google account.

Late Submission of Work All work must be submitted by the deadline posted on Canvas. All in-class work must be submitted by the end of the class period. If due dates are missing or seem wrong in Canvas, email me.

NJIT Honor Code The [NJIT Honor Code](#) will be strictly upheld. **Students with Disabilities** Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation should contact [The Office of Accessibility Resources and Services](#).

Assignments, Grading, and Weighting (dates subject to change)

All graded assignments will be worth 100 points and be converted to letter grades at the end of the term. The points for each assignment will be posted in Canvas.

Grade	Final Percentage	Significance
A	90.1-100	Superior
B+	86.7-90.0	Excellent
B	80.1-86.6	Very Good
C+	76.7-80.0	Good
C	70.1-76.6	Acceptable
D	60.1-70.0	Minimum

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F	00.0-60.0	Inadequate
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Assignments will be weighted as indicated in the Assignments table below.

Due dates may change--Consult canvas for definitive dates.

	MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS (dates subject to change) Name and Description See also details Learning Outcomes Matrix	% of Grade	Approximate Due Dates D=draft; R=revision
	Class participation and low-stakes assignments. You will be writing during almost every class. You will submit your work in Word (.doc or .docx files or Google docs) via Canvas. In-class writing will generally be graded for completion. You must be on time, physically present, and participate actively. LOs: 1,2,3,4,5	35%	ongoing
#1	Employment Materials LOs: 1,2,4,5	15%	Sep 11 (D); Sept. 25 (F)
#2a	Researched Writing - Summarizing -(LOs: 1,2,3,5)	0%	Oct 2 (D); Oct 9 (F)
#2b	Researched Writing - Synthesizing (LOs: 1,2,3,5)	0%	Oct 9 (D); Oct2 23(F)
#2c	Researched Writing - Lit Review - Communicating (LOs: 1,2,3,5)	15%	Oct 30 (D); Nov 13 (F)
#3	Proposal	15%	Nov 20 (D); Dec 4(F)
#4	Final Progress Report LOs: 1,2,3,4,5 (In lieu of final exam)	20%	Dec 11 (No draft/final only)
	Last date for any revised assignments NO EXCEPTIONS		Dec 13 (Reading Day)

The best method I know to improve writing is through repeated revisions. Assignments must be submitted on time so I can provide timely feedback, and you can edit your work. Turning in any assignments for the first time at the end of the semester fails to demonstrate the progress expected and will result in a lowered grade or failure in the course. You must keep all your assignments, drafts, and other coursework throughout the semester in case there is a technical or another issue and because you will need to refer to your work to write your Final Progress Report. Unless stated otherwise, assignments are due by 11:59 pm on Wednesday nights.

GRADING OF DRAFTS AND REVISIONS: For assignments labeled *Draft* please turn in the best you can do, a serious attempt. This should not be your first draft, but the draft you show me for feedback. Put your first draft aside for a day, then come back to it and edit it before submitting it. This draft will receive comments. that will NOT count. However, if you don't turn in a substantial draft in time, then the grade for the final version may drop by a full letter grade. There isn't time for me to comment on every item that could be improved. So in addition to my feedback, please make all revisions YOU feel will improve your writing. Only making the revisions I suggest may not significantly improve your grade, even if you are already a decent writer. All writing can be improved! Use the grading rubrics to guide your work.

YOU WILL IMPROVE YOUR WRITING AND YOUR GRADE ONLY IF YOU TAKE THE TIME TO UNDERSTAND YOUR WRITING ISSUES, TO CRITICALLY REVIEW YOUR WORK, AND MAKE MANY SUBSTANTIVE REVISIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR TEXT.

ChatGPT and other writing and research support tools: Use of Grammarly, word processing spell and grammar checking software, outside human readers, ChatGPT, and similar LLMs and related tools are allowed in this class. Your effective use of writing aids will be evaluated along with the quality of the final product.

- An explanation of how, and how extensively you used such aids must be noted at the end of your submission in a separate paragraph entitled Support Tools Used.
- All text copied and pasted from any source should be footnoted. (Follow the rules for [Citing LLMs](#) in APA style on the Penn State Library website. Add the prompt you used to generate the text you quoted to the footnote.)
- A copy of any corrections or inputs from these tools must also be submitted along with the assignment. Any additional requirements regarding these tools will be specified in individual assignments.
- Failure to report accurate use of these tools may result in a penalty for the assignment.