

Fall 2024

COM 313-015-019-021: Technical Writing

John Egan

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Recommended Citation

Egan, John, "COM 313-015-019-021: Technical Writing" (2024). *Humanities Syllabi*. 877.
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Course Syllabus **Technical Writing COM 313.015 Fall 2024**

NJ Institute of Technology
COM 313.015

Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00 – 11:20
Office Phone: (973) 596-6305

Professor. John Egan
Office: Cullimore 424
Classroom: FMH 309
Email: jegan@njit.edu

OFFICE HOURS Fall 2024

Mon 11:35- 12:35 Tues 2:35-3:35 Wed 2:35 – 3:35 Th 11:35-12:30
and by appointment; contact me face to face or by email to set up an appointment.

Prerequisite: completion of HUM 102 with a C or higher.

Required Textbook: The Essentials of Technical Communication, 5th Edition by Tebeaux, Elizabeth and Sam Dragga. Oxford University Press ISBN: 9780197539200
You will need this book to do well in the class. You can buy the book or the electronic e-book, or rent it. We will use it for discussion and for exercises.

Note: the 4th edition has much the same content but different page numbers. Editions 1, 2 and 3 are so different you can't use them.

Course Outline:

Technical Writing is an advanced writing course which combines current theory with actual practice to prepare students for professional writing. Students analyze complex communication situations and design appropriate responses through tasks that involve problem solving, rhetorical theory, document design, oral presentations, writing teams, audience awareness, and ethical considerations, so that their professional communication is clear and concise, with appropriate level of reader awareness.

You can submit your assignments by paper copy in class, by email, or put a paper copy under my door, Cullimore 424. Please use Word documents for ease of making comments. You can download Microsoft Office for free at Instructional Resources at NJIT. Look for downloads. Don't download the entire Office suite; it will clog your computer.

Chat and other AI Programs

If you use Chat GPT or other AI programs, cite them as you would any source you use in an assignment. The academic world is still evolving about how to use AI so there may be modifications.

Methods of Instruction

The class will use in-class writing tasks, lectures, group and individual review and revision.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:	Job Application	Info-graphic	Ethics	2 Presentations	Sentence Writing, Style, Tone	Peer Review	Writing Instructions	Summaries	Proposal
Write and revise various types of professional technical communications to produce a set of technical documents demonstrating your ability to write clearly and accurately in a concise professional style.	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Read and interpret material on technology and explain the ideas, issues, and problems involved in writing about technology and in workplace writing.		X		X			X	X	X
Demonstrate information literacy: the ability to formulate appropriate questions, find, select, assess, analyze information sources, both print and electronic, from the open web and/or the NJIT Library, and to synthesize, credit, and integrate those sources in your own work.	X	X	X	X				X	X
Develop collaborative work habits, including those necessary for effective cooperation with other students and instructors.		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Identify your own strengths and weaknesses in writing.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

By the end of the course, you will be able to recognize and incorporate the elements of good writing and document design, able to write appropriately for various audiences, and have the elements of professional style in your writing.

You will be able to write in the correct formats a job application, professional memos and emails, short reports on various topics, compare ethics at NJIT and other universities, a proposal to improve NJIT (this one will be modified because of limited campus access), or a long report, concise summaries that are not merely condensations.

Course Requirements

There will be some writing weekly, both some short in-class assignments, and some homework. You can start many homework assignments in class. You will also give at least 2 presentations, usually 6-8 minutes. There will also be some short grammar lessons, as needed.

The big assignment is a proposal or a report, 8 pages minimum, not including the cover sheet, the table of contents or the works cited section/page.

You may revise assignments that receive a letter grade once to improve the grade, provided the rewrite is handed in within a reasonable time, usually a week after receiving the corrected first draft. To raise the grade, the revision must be substantially your work, not correcting, for example, grammar errors the teacher has flagged.

Your Evaluation:

You will receive a letter grade for this class based on

- Participation. This means not only attendance during class and punctuality but also the class activities such as taking part in discussions or other activities. 10%
- In-class analysis and in-class writing assignments. 20%
- Improvement in word choice and grammar, and addressing your writing issues, as noted in homework and in-class assignments 15%
- Homework assignments. 35%
- Presentations. 15%
- Improvement in professional writing including errors that make you appear unprofessional. 5%

The scale for converting the number grades in Canvas is based on the standards given by Canvas, but will be modified by factors not in Canvas such as participation and progress in language. If you want to know your status in class, ask the instructor.

Your instructor will keep a separate grade sheet for activities that may not get a grade in Canvas, for example short discussions in class or in-class writings.

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 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”

Students and the professor will be expected to follow the NJIT Academic Integrity Code. As for written work and for any quizzes or tests, papers copied from another source without proper documentation, or using unauthorized help, may fail the assignment, and for a major project such as a proposal, failing the course and being sent to a dean who will decide the case. Failing a class for cheating may result in an FX grade which can only be removed by completing an ethics workshop. For more information see the NJIT Academic Integrity Code.

<www.njit.edu/academics/integrity.php>

SCHEDULE COM 313.015 Technical Writing FALL 2024

Mondays and Wednesdays

Schedule subject to change

All page numbers are from our book *The Essentials of Technical Communication*, unless otherwise noted.

Week Date Assignments, Tasks, Projects.

Week 1 Sept 4 & 9 Introductions and job applications

- Introductions. Introduce yourself. Format will be sent to you.
 - Writing samples.
 - Assignment: find and discuss an employer in your field you would like to work for. This assignment will continue through Sept. 11.
 - Discuss resumes, cover letters, follow up letter assignment.
- Outcome: To know the formats of a cover letter/letter of application, a resume, and the basics of what to include. Also, when are cover letters more important than resumes? Vice versa?
- Discuss cover letter format and what to include, P 336- 340
Two types of resumes and formats, P 340-347.
 - Power words to try to use on resumes when appropriate, P 337.
 - P 344, why focus on the objective?
 - Follow up letter P 347-348
 - Discuss letters in class. To know: the difference between a profile and an objective.
 - In class assignment: P 354, # 1 # 2, #3 #6. These can be done in groups.

• **Homework 1:** Prepare a short talk on the company in the cover letter and resume you are applying to, or a company in your field that you would consider applying to. Requirements are on Canvas.

Due next class and the following class, presentation order given in class.

• **Homework 2** for next week: read Ch 1 and 2, be prepared to discuss them and to start the exercises at the end of the chapters.

• **Homework 3:** Write a standard resume, requirements to be posted on Canvas.

Due by class on Wednesday 9/11:

Completion of or a good start on your resume and your cover letter/
application letter for peer review and possible use in the

NJIT Fall 2024 Career Fair

Career Fair

Wednesday, September 25th, 11:00 AM - 4:30 PM.

In-person Register via Handshake

See the NJIT HR page for more information.

After doing the resume, you will have a good grasp of what should be included in one.

Week 2 Sept 9 & 11

- Discuss resumes
- Presentations about employers from last week.
- Review punctuation rules. See appendix in back of text book; come with questions.
- Discuss Ch 1 and 2, Especially P 4-8. Look at Case Studies, P 9-12

CH 2. Writing for your Readers.

P 19, the 6 Cs for composing your writing.

- Read, discuss P 20-25 Case 2-1 and 2-2, Discuss P 26 Revising.

In class/homework: Do in class: P 29-30

As homework, P 13 # 1,

Homework: cover letter and follow up letter for your job application

Homework: read, be prepared to discuss Ch 5, Designing Documents.

After doing the resume, cover letter and follow up letter, you will have a good grasp of what should be included in a job application.

You will know what readers expect in professional writing.

Homework Due: 9/16 & 18 full job application, cover letter, resume, follow up letter

Week 3 Sept 16 & 18 Resumes, Job Application

9/17-/19 Review of 2nd draft of Resumes

- In-class activity: What makes a good document? An easy to read report? Ch 5 with some Ch 8, and handouts.

- Short report on interest rates, connection with geometric, exponential, if any, financial literacy and other topics.

- **Homework Assignment:** start in class, to be completed as homework, write a short report according to the directions on Canvas. This can be done individually or in small groups.

After doing the short report, you will have a good grasp of the formats and what to include in a short professional report.

► More homework: For next week read Ch 6, Designing Illustrations.

Week 4 Sept 23 & 25 Graphics

Homework due: your short report

9/24 & 26 Handout, graphs and charts. Discuss Ch 6.

Objective: to be able choose and make an appropriate graph or chart

- Discuss chapter. P 133-136 Discuss infographics.

- Discuss P 136-137 Ethical illustrations.

- In-class P 143-144 Ex 4.

Homework Assignment Due Sept 30 Design an infographic according to the directions on Canvas. Your infographic can be either an informative brochure or other infographic. Requirements given in class and will be posted. This assignment can be done individually or in groups.

- Short conferences.

- After doing the infographic, you will have a good grasp of the elements needed for the purpose of the graphic or brochure.

► **Advance notice:** Topics for **Presentation 1** and requirements given.

Topic: A project at work or school Due Date: Oct 9 & 11

► **For next week:** Read Chapter 3, Ethics. We'll discuss the issues in the chapter.

Bring any stories you have from other classes or work or the headlines.

Week 5 Sept 30 & October 2 ETHICS

Outcome: to reinforce the seriousness of integrity in the workplace and NJIT Discuss ethics with Ch. 3 as the springboard, and acceptable summarizing and paraphrasing, ethical situations.

► **Activity:** Start during class, finish as homework on NJIT's code of academic integrity compared to other universities. Assignment will be given shortly before class.

- In class, discuss and do some of three exercises, P 50-53.

These assignments will help expand your grasp of professional ethics.

► **Presentations Next Week!**

Week 6 Oct 7 & 9 PRESENTATIONS

Objective: to make a good professional presentation. This includes content and delivery: good voice, stand straight, look at the audience and present, not read.

► After Presentations: Go over specifications for the **Proposal/Report** assignment and their due dates.

This is the single most important assignment for the class. We'll do this in modules, so that you will know if you are on the right track. Due dates and specs are on Canvas.

Objective: to know the format of a proposal or a formal report

Homework for Oct 14: Read, discuss Ch 4, Achieving a Readable Style

Week 7 Oct 14 & 16 **Style and Tone**

Style and Tone. Discuss the sentences and how to improve your sentences.

Also: P 149 Discuss the 6 Cs P 150- 152 Discuss tone

P 76-78 Exercises

Review of principles and 10 questions.

Look at cases P 145-153, 7-1 - 7-6

P 156 Letter requesting information P 162 unfavorable letter P 163 instructions

Conferences

► In-class homework Ex P 165-166 #1 or #2.

Discussing and completing the assignments will help in writing professional sentences through vocabulary and sentence structure, and maintaining audience awareness throughout a document.

Week 8. October 21 & 23 Midterm and To Be Announced

Tuesday MIDTERM: an in-class writing, with some vocabulary, grammar and tone sections. 60-75 minutes

Wednesday 10/23 AFTER midterm activities: to be announced.

► **Homework for 10/29:** read Ch 10, Instructions and Ch 5, Designing Documents
Conferences

Week 9. Oct 28 & 30 Discuss instructions

Assignment: design a creation, write instructions.

Outcome: writing clear instructions appropriate to the audience level.

Homework: Read Ch 9, Proposals

Week 10. Nov 4 & 6 Review Ch 4 Readable Style, 5, Designing Documents.

Discuss Ch 9, Proposals. Review the requirements for your proposal.

- Handouts/posted: read, watch, write short reports on articles or videos, discuss which are good and why.

Start in class, complete as Homework: P 266, # 1, #2, 3

Conferences.

Week 11. Nov 11 & 13 Summaries.

- Activities to be given in class

Week 12 Nov 18 & 20 & 25 **PRESENTATIONS** on your proposal.

- Presentations on your proposals, one third of the class on each day.

- Due: LAST DAY to submit: Written form of Proposals or Reports! You will not get feedback and will lose points if you submit a first draft now. Work for 313.

•• Thursday November 28 THANKSGIVING DAY. No classes, NJIT closed.

Week 13 December 2 – 4 Catch up

Complete presentations. Catch up. Sum up: what makes good professional writing. Work for 313

Other activities to be announced.

Week 14. December 9 & 11 TBA and Final Writing!

Monday Dec 9 To be announced.

Wednesday Dec 11

60 minutes of writing on a topic, grammar, tone,
audience awareness vocabulary too.

•• Monday December 9: Last Day to hand in APPROVED ONLY Late Work!

Wednesday December 11: OUR LAST DAY! NO exam for us during EXAM period

LAST DAY of CLASSES for NJIT.

Good Luck with Finals and Projects! Happy Winter Break: do great things.