

## TWC 401: Principles of Technical Communication

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This course is offered by the College of Letters and Sciences. For more information about the school, visit our website: <https://cls.asu.edu/>. If you have questions or concerns about the course, please talk with me or send an inquiry to [cls@asu.edu](mailto:cls@asu.edu).

This goal of this course is to prepare you to communicate in the workplace you want to join after you graduate. There are no universal formulas for effective communication in all workplaces, but some common genres or forms such as descriptions, procedures, reports, proposals are common. These forms have conventions that are used such as using graphics, tables, lists, and page design.

This kind of writing is different from academic writing in that it usually has a specific, practical purpose and must communicate clearly and directly to a variety of intended readers.

The course is organized in 6 modules corresponding to the 6 weeks in the semester.

## Course Description & Learning Outcomes

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TWC 401/501 is a fundamental technical writing course.

Basic information design principles to produce effective written, oral, and electronic technical communication. Understanding of rhetorical and audience analysis.

### *Rhetorical Knowledge*

- Identify, articulate, and focus on a defined purpose
- Respond to the need of the appropriate audience
- Respond appropriately to different rhetorical situations
- Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- Understand how each genre helps to shape writing and how readers respond to it
- Write in multiple genres
- Use appropriate technologies to organize, present, and communicate information to address a range of audiences, purposes, and genres

### *Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing*

- Use information, writing, and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power including social, cultural, historical, and economic issues related to information, writing, and technology

### *Processes*

- Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
- Learn to critique their own and others' works
- Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part

### *Knowledge of Conventions*

- Learn common formats for different genres
- Learn standard tools for accessing and retrieving information
- Learn and apply appropriate standards, laws, policies, and accepted practices for the use of a variety of technologies
- Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling

## Required Texts & Materials

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***Technical Communication Today*** 5<sup>th</sup> ed. by Richard Johnson- Sheehan. Published by Pearson Longman. Additional readings as assigned; these will be available through links within the course Blackboard site.

## Tools & Technologies

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You will need the following technology and tools in order to complete the work for this course:

- Microsoft Word – Submit assignment documents in the format of Microsoft Word 2016 or older versions. (If you create in something else, make sure you save in Word.)
- ASU email account. Use Blackboard email as your primary contact for assignments and questions about the class.
- Access to Blackboard from your MyASU page. (Course Management System).
- Graphics features within Excel, Word, and PowerPoint.
- *Please be sure to back up all of your work in case of a technology failure. If you have any technology-related difficulties, please contact the ASU Help Desk at 480.965.6500.*

**Remember: keep copies of all your assignments; back up all of your work!**

## Helpful Resources at ASU

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- **Writing Centers** (<http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/writingcenters>) offer assistance to ASU students who are completing writing assignments for their courses. The centers offer assistance for any type of writing project and for any stage of the writing process. While tutors won't do your writing for you, they will work with you to improve your skills. We will advantage of this free service for our "Trusted Writer Reviews." I encourage you to use this valuable service for all your academic writing projects. Please schedule your appointment early. The Polytechnic Writing Center is in CNTR 92 (Academic Center Building): 480.727.2708.
- **Online Writing Tutors** (<http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/online>) are available by appointment for all ASU students, with "virtual" walk-ins accepted if there is an opening in the schedule.
- **ASU Libraries** ([www.asu.edu/lib/](http://www.asu.edu/lib/)) offer 24/7 access to librarians through "Ask a Librarian" online chat and help by librarians in person at the Reference Desk during most hours the libraries are open.
- **Student Success Center** (<http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/polytechnic>) provides students with services and programs for academic success. The Polytechnic Student Success Center is on the lower level of the Academic Center Building, 480.727.1452.

## Course Policies

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**Course Schedule Due Dates/Times.** All assignments are due at midnight; see exact dates on course Schedule. Changes may be made to the office hours, assignments and due dates. Any changes will be announced via ASU email, and in multiple ways in our online course in Blackboard (announcements, discussion, and during online office hours). All times given in this course are Phoenix, AZ Mountain Standard Time. Please adjust from your location. <http://time.gov>

The course is structured as follows:

- **The Take-away Memos and/or Discussion Questions, Activities and Peer Reviews are due Thursdays by midnight, Mountain Standard Time (MST).** This will be the due date for the responses associated with reading the text and will involve two activities:
  1. Working with writing projects, debriefing, peer reviewing and critiquing.
  2. Posting a Take-Away memo and/or discussion post on the discussion board of Blackboard.
- **Document Assignments are due Sundays by midnight, Mountain Standard Time (MST).** This will be for the written documents which reflect the different types of documents or genres you will encounter. The document assignments will be submitted through the Assignment Link (Dropbox) in Blackboard under each individual Module located under the **Course Content** link.

Courses work best with consistent mechanics such as due dates and submission methods. There is a **Course Schedule** link in Blackboard. Here are the items in the general approach:

- **Readings.** Each week consists of reading usually two - three chapters in the text (See the Summary Table attachment inside the Course Schedule link).
- **Lecture Notes.** Most weeks there are Lecture Notes. These are short documents with some hints and additional details for the assignments.
- **Discussions & Activities.** Each week in class we will discuss topics and work with some ancillary material. We will also use a variety of activities focusing on the course competencies. *You must post to the discussion board*

to receive credit for any activity. Please see the [Discussion Post Grading Criteria](#) link for details located inside the sidebar on Blackboard.

- **Document Assignments.** Each week you submit a document demonstrating what you have learned in the readings and during previous weeks. These documents are practice with the particular genres of writing. (See the Course Schedule inside the sidebar on Blackboard).
- **Final Summary Memo.** After reflecting on your learning this term, consider what you've learned and respond to the questions presented.

**Communication.** All official e-mail correspondence with and from ASU must use ASU e-mail accounts. This includes all work done for Tech Comm courses. You can find ASU's e-mail policy, which includes help setting up your ASU e-mail, at [http://help.asu.edu/Email at ASU](http://help.asu.edu/Email_at_ASU).

I usually respond to messages sent weekdays within 24 hours; expect a slightly longer response time on weekends. Likewise, I expect you to read and respond to course-related email in a timely fashion.

**Course Time Commitment.** This three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. Please expect to spend around 15-20 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course.

**Keeping up.** This course is fast-paced and highly productive. Successful online students are consistently active learners! If you get behind in this class, it is unlikely you will catch up enough to earn a passing grade. If you are seriously behind at the end of Week 3, it may be appropriate to drop the class.

**Academic Integrity.** As a student in this course you are expected to complete your own work and to write your own assignments. If you wish to recycle your own work from a previous class, please contact me first, and with the final draft, include the original document with the submission of your newly derived writing assignment. The use of all sources should be properly cited and documented. **You are responsible for reading and understanding your rights, responsibilities and obligations under ASU's Student Academic Integrity Policy** ([http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic\\_integrity.htm](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic_integrity.htm)).

**Disability Accommodations.** Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

**Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations:** Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately.. Campus-specific location and contact information can be found on the DRC website. DRC offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. Check the DRC website at <https://eoss.asu.edu/drc> for eligibility and documentation policies.

**Title IX** is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <http://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs/students>.

**Grading Scale:** The following percentage scale at the end of the semester will apply:

A	90-100%
B	80-89.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.99
E	Below 60

+ - grades at the discretion of the instructor

You should be able to track your progress on the My Grades tab of Blackboard.

## The Meaning of Grades

Because the work in this class is based on writing in the professional workplace, the following correspondence between grades and workplace standards will apply. Assignments that fulfill the assignment requirements earn a "C". Assignments that earn an "A" or a "B" exceed what was required in terms of quality (not necessarily quantity).

Grades	Workplace Standards
A	Manager would be impressed and remember the work when considering a promotion for you.
B	Manager would be satisfied with the job, but not impressed.
C	Manager would ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing clients or others to see the work.
D	Manager would be troubled by the poor quality of the work.
E	Manager would be looking for someone else to replace you.

### Extra Credit:

The curriculum is carefully designed to fit the number of course weeks. In order to uphold academic rigor and integrity, student/learner grades must be based on the degree to which the course requirements listed in the syllabus are fulfilled. **Extra credit assignments, make-ups or redo's are not accepted.**

### Late Assignments:

All assignments are expected to be submitted on time. If for *any* reason, you miss a deadline, you are granted an additional 24 hours to get your assignment in. The late policy pertains to "Document" assignments *only*, and does not apply to Take-Aways, Discussion Posts, Peer Reviews or Activities.

All late assignments will receive a 20 percent penalty. Late assignments must be emailed to [michele.mosco@asu.edu](mailto:michele.mosco@asu.edu). Any assignments submitted *after* the 24 hour period will be marked as a zero in my Gradebook. ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS!

Please note: There is no grace period on the final assignment. Final papers will not be accepted late.

**Technological issues are not considered valid grounds for late assignment submission.** Be sure you have access to a "back up" system in case your home computer or laptop is not functioning. In the event of a University server outage, students should submit assignments to the instructor.

Please follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practices](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment [due to University-sanctioned activities](#).