SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Science · Computer Science

Graduate Technical Writing CS 200W

Spring 2026   Section 02   In Person   3 Unit(s)   01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026   Modified 01/21/2026

👤 Contact Information

Dr. Gregory Tomlinson

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DMH 217

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 pm or by appointment (in person or Zoom)

🕐 Course Information

This class will meet in-person on Mondays and Wednesdays from in 9-10:15 am in MQH 223.

💻 Course Description and Requisites

Graduate technical writing workshop to develop advanced communication skills that will meet the professional needs of computer scientists, along with research methodologies and proper documentation for the master's thesis project.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate standing. Allowed Declared Major: Bioinformatics, Computer Science, Data Science, Mathematics, or Statistics. Or instructor consent.

Note(s): This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program. This course does NOT satisfy the undergraduate GE Area Z requirement.

Letter Graded

✳ Classroom Protocols

- If you know that you will be absent on a certain day, please do let me know via email.
- I reserve the right to make changes to assignments and the course schedule but usually notify you of this at least 48 hours in advance.
- Courtesy and respect towards your fellow students and towards me are expected at all times.
- It is important to me that all students feel welcome and comfortable in my classroom. If you have a problem with the classroom environment, or the behavior of one of your classmates, please speak to me

privately about the issue so that it may be resolved.

Program Information

Diversity Statement - At SJSU, it is important to create a safe learning environment where we can explore, learn, and grow together. We strive to build a diverse, equitable, inclusive culture that values, encourages, and supports students from all backgrounds and experiences.

Course Goals

- Assignments are considered to be submitted when they are fully uploaded to Canvas. You should not wait until the last minute to submit an assignment, as uploads may take some time and you might miss the submission deadline. Other assignments will be submitted in-class.
- If you miss a deadline and cannot submit an assignment to the Canvas submission portal, DO NOT email me your assignment or submit it as an attachment to a comment; assignments that are submitted in these ways WILL NOT be graded.
- Assignments are graded as uploaded to Canvas, and incorrect, blank, or unreadable files will receive no points. To avoid this, click on the "View Submission" option after uploading your work to ensure you have submitted a file that I can read. **Always double check.**
- You can re-submit assignments as many times as you would like before a deadline; Canvas shows me your final submission and that is what I will grade. If you submit an assignment by the due date and then decide to re-submit it for grading during the late period, a late penalty will be assessed.

- Late work is accepted up to 48 hours after a due date, except where otherwise indicated (typically, the final assignments of the semester must be submitted by the specified due date/time and no late submissions are accepted).
- **Work submitted up to 24 hours late will receive a 10% penalty**, and **work submitted from 24 to 48 hours late will receive a 20% penalty**. These penalties are based on the total points possible and are automatically assessed by Canvas.
- **After 48 hours, no late assignments are accepted;** the online assignment Canvas submission portal will close and you will NOT be able to submit assignments or access quizzes/exams. Ungraded course content, like videos and readings, remains available throughout the semester.

Exceptions are made to this policy only in rare circumstances; for example, for a long illness. Please contact me regarding this.

Plagiarism and Cheating

I place a high value on the honest pursuit of knowledge and have zero tolerance for plagiarism and cheating. Submitting an assignment that contains the work of another person without giving them credit is a violation of the SJSU policy on cheating and plagiarism, which reads as follows:

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University and the University's Academic Integrity Policy (Academic Senate Policy S07-2), requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all alleged violations of the Academic Integrity Policy to Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Plagiarism on a written assignment will result in a score of zero and administrative sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have previously submitted or plan to submit for another class, please speak with me before doing so. Should you be tempted to cheat because you find an assignment challenging, the better course of action is to contact me for help.

Final versions of all assignments must score lower than 30% AI-generated to be accepted.

📊 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

1. **Compose** with a clear focus on purpose, scope, and audience.
2. **Critically observe and discuss** the composing processes of self and peers.
3. **Write** using a variety of technical writing formats.
4. **Organize and produce** papers and documents according to discipline-based editorial and citation standards, using ACM style.
5. **Create** appropriate graphics to accompany a report.
6. **Effectively use** library resources and electronic databases pertaining to their discipline to carry out research.
7. **Distinguish** between scholarly and non-scholarly published literature as well as **define** the characteristics of good scholarly writing in terms of content, format, and style.
8. **Organize, analyze and synthesize** information from various sources to **develop** a literature review.
9. **Determine** the difference between plagiarized and non-plagiarized text.
10. **Organize and deliver** an effective oral presentation for a professional audience.

📋 Course Requirements and Assignments

Textbooks/Technology Requirements

There is no course textbook; all readings and other materials will be found on Canvas or will be distributed to you in class. However, you will need to have access to the following: a working laptop/tablet, Microsoft Word or a compatible word processing program, PowerPoint, reliable internet access, a webcam and a microphone (can be integrated into your computer or external), and a printer. **Technology issues will not be accepted as an excuse for late work (so have backups).** For help with technology problems, visit the IT Service Desk page here: SJSU IT Service Desk. To prepare for the course you should do the following:

- Visit SJSU IT Software Installation Page and download Microsoft Word (for PC and Mac) and

PowerPoint (available at NO CHARGE to SJSU students)

Writing and Research Resources
The Writing Center

If you find writing a challenge, I encourage you to work with the SJSU Writing Center, which offers one-on-one tutoring services and workshops on a variety of writing topics. For more information, visit the Writing Center website: Visit the SJSU Writing Center. Note that the services provided by the Writing Center are **free** to all SJSU students.

Library Liaison

To obtain help with the library research you will be conducting for this class, please contact the SJSU Computer Science Subject Librarian Anamika Megwalu via email: anamika.megwalu@sjsu.edu.

✔ Grading Information

AI Writing Contract: Students must acknowledge that they will do their own work without AI.

Resume and Cover Letter Assignment: You will prepare a targeted résumé highlighting your education, accomplishments and relevant job experience, and will also practice writing job application materials (e.g. a short description of research accomplishments) using the established conventions and protocol of professional communication. A cover letter is also required.

Novice/Expert Documents: You and a partner will create two documents describing a topic in both specific, technical detail and in a format that can be easily understood by a layman with no technical knowledge. The class will work on drafts in class and final, short, 1-2-page documents of each format will be submitted together.

Summarizing and Paraphrasing Assignment: You will practice research and writing skills by reading, summarizing, and paraphrasing from a CS-related news article.

Project Proposal: At the beginning of the semester, you will select a research topic of interest and later will write a project proposal that includes a description of the project's importance, how the project will be

implemented, a work plan for carrying out the project, and a description of possible challenges presented by the project. This assignment has two parts: first, you will write a one-page description of your topic and then you will write the full project proposal. You will submit one draft of the topic worksheet and two drafts of the proposal.

Literature Review: Using the topic you selected for your proposal, you will write a literature review of scholarly sources (books, peer-reviewed journal articles, refereed professional conference proceedings) that describe work already completed in your research area. The review will be written following IEEE editorial standards, and will include at a minimum a title page, an abstract, a table of contents, the review itself, and a list of references in IEEE format. You will submit a draft of the literature review as well as a final copy.

Class Presentations: There will be two oral presentations in this class: In the first you will present your research topic to your classmates. These presentations will be given in a small group setting. You will present the findings of your literature review in a TED/Grad Slam-type, 3-minute-long presentation that uses a maximum of four PowerPoint slides.

In-Class Writing Exercises: You will complete brief exercises throughout the semester focusing on various aspects of academic writing, including grammar, editorial style, and formatting.

Breakdown

You will meet the CS200W GE and Course Learning Outcomes with the following assignments:
Title

Title	Points	GELO	CLO
AI Writing Contract	10		
Writing Exercises (10 for 12 weeks)	120	1,3	1,2,3
Resume/Cover Letter	100	1,3	1,2,3
Summary/Paraphrasing Assignment	50	1,3	1,2,3
Expert/Novice Documents	75	1,3	1,2,3
Project Proposal	145	1-5	1-4, 6
Topic	20		
First Draft	25		

Final Draft	100		
Literature Review	175	1-5	1-6, 8
First Draft	25		
Final Draft	125		
Final Revisions	25		
Class Presentation	125	2	5,10
Script	25		
Presentation	100		
Total	800		

Breakdown

Breakdown

Grading Information

My goal is to make the grading process as clear to you as possible. Descriptions of how assignments and exams will be graded can be found in the assignment or exam instructions, or in the associated grading rubric.

Here are some facts about how your grades will be determined in this course:

How your grade is calculated: Each assignment in this course is given a point value. Once the assignment is scored, the points you earn are applied to your final course grade, which will be determined by the number of points that you earn out of the 800 points possible.

Grading turnaround: My goal is to return your assignments to you as soon as possible after you submit them, and you can expect that I will grade your assignments within two weeks after they are submitted, although in most cases they will be returned to you sooner.

Final course grade: Your final course grade will be the grade that is shown on Canvas after the final assignment of the semester is completed and graded. There will be no extra credit or extra work offered at the end of the semester to raise your grade, nor will your grade be rounded up.

Your final grade will be assigned based on the following scale:

784+ pts = A+   744-783 pts = A 720-743 pts = A-

704-719 pts = B+ 664-703 pts = B 640-663 pts = B-

624-639 pts = C+ 584-623 = C   560-583 pts = C-

559-D+

Guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found in the following two university policies: University Syllabus Policy S16-9 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) and University Attendance and Participation policy F15-12 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf)

🏛 University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

The class will meet in person on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9-10:15 am in MQH 223.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	TR 1/22	NO CLASS
2	MW 1/26-1/28	**Monday:** Course Introduction and Technical Writing Basics, Part 1 **Wednesday:** Technical Writing Basics, Part 2
3	MW 2/2- 2/4	**Monday:** Writing Resumes/Keywords **Wednesday:** Writing Cover Letters

4	MW 2/9-2/11	**Monday:** Writing and Editing Day **Wednesday:** Peer Review of Resumes and Cover Letters
5	MW 2/16-2/18	**Monday:** Simplifying Technical Communication: "Novice Test" *Assignment Due, 9 am: Resume and Cover Letter* **Wednesday:** Note Taking and Planning Session

6	MW 2/23-2/25	**Monday:** Writing and Editing Day
		
		Wednesday: Paraphrasing, Citations, and Plagiarism
		
		  Assignment Due, 9 am: Novice/Expert Documents
		
		  Assignment Due, 11:59 pm: Article Paraphrasing Exercise

7	MW 3/2-3/4	**Monday:** Introduction to the Project Proposal **Wednesday:** Research and Writing Day
8	MW 3/9-3/11	**Monday:** Visit from Subject Librarian, Dr. Anamika Megwalu *Assignment Due, 11:59 pm: Project Proposal Topic Selection* **Wednesday:** Writing Problem Statements
9	MW 3/16-3/18	**Monday:** Research and Writing Day - *Check In* **Wednesday:** Peer Review of Project Proposals *Assignment Due, 9 am: Project Proposal Draft*
10	MW 3/23-3/25	**Monday:** Literature Reviews: Purpose and Analysis *Assignment Due, 9 am: Project Proposal Final* **Wednesday:** Organizing and Synthesizing Literature

11	MW 3/30-4/1	NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK
12	MW 4/6-4/8	**Monday:** Introducing a Literature Review/Scientific Illustrations **Wednesday:** Research and Writing Day
13	MW 4/13-4/15	**Monday:** Research and Writing Day **Wednesday:** Peer Review of Literature Reviews *Assignment Due, 9 am: Literature Review Draft*

14	MW 4/20-4/22	**Monday:**Writing Abstracts
		
		Wednesday: Designing Effective PowerPoint Presentations/ Giving A Grad Slam Presentation
		
		    Assignment Due, 9 am: Literature Review Final
		
		    Assignment Due, 11:59 pm: Presentation Script

15	MW 4/27-4/29	**Monday:** Grad Slam Presentations **Wednesday:** Grad Slam Presentations
16	MW 5/4-5/6	**Monday:** Grad Slam Presentations **Wednesday:** Grad Slam Presentations
17	5/11	**Monday:** Writing and Editing Day *Assignment Due, 11:59 pm: Literature Review Revisions*