

# English 107—Professional Technical Writing, Spring 2008

Instructor: Kelly Harrison

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Section: 1 F 10:00 - 12:45, Clark 316

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## REQUIRED TEXTS, WEBSITES, AND MATERIALS

- *Technical Communication in the Twenty-first Century*, Sidney Dobrin et al. ISBN 978-0-13-117288-3
- <http://www.prenhall.com/dobrin/>
- <http://sjsu6.blackboard.com/>
- Microsoft Office (available from Spartan Bookstore for \$30)
- College-level dictionary
- Lined binder paper, 8.5x11, for in-class writing.
- Blue or black pens for in-class writing, colored pen (green, purple) for workshops
- Internet access and email

## PREREQUISITES

- English 1A/B
- Upper-division standing

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 107 introduces students to the techniques, demands, and responsibilities specific to the field of Technical Communications. You will learn to prepare and present technical information effectively and efficiently to both general and specialized audiences. This course requires substantial work outside of class time. A typical 3-unit class demands 9 hours of homework per week.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will learn to assess information/documentation needs for varying technical audiences.
2. Students will learn how to apply for jobs, interview, and create resumes, curriculum vitae, and cover letters, and they'll explore the field of technical communications, professional organizations, and standards, and career development
3. Students will learn to write concise and detailed instructions, procedures, and processes, including appropriate use of lists (numbered and bulleted).
4. Students will learn styles, tones, grammar, and usage appropriate for technical documents.
5. Students will understand the general principles and processes for writing technical documents, including ethical and legal responsibilities, use of graphics, design elements for page layouts and online media, and modern production cycles.
6. Students will learn approaches to research for technical documentation, including interviewing SMEs and accessing equipment.
7. Students will learn methods, approaches, and skills used by professional technical writers, including indexing, peer editing, and production tools, and they'll learn how to apply those principles and processes to the composition of clear and purposeful technical documents designed to inform, instruct, define, describe, analyze, recommend, report, or persuade

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Technical Manual (60% of course grade):** Each student will write, revise, and submit a small manual (printed and soft copy) targeted for a specific audience. The manual will be designed (proper layout, running headers/footers, page numbers, etc) and will consist of the following parts:
  - a title page
  - an introduction and/or preface
  - graphics, photos, and/or screen captures
  - a help topic or web page
  - a generated table of contents
  - one or more chapters
  - an index
  - optional: glossary, appendices

2. **Resume/CV, Letters, Quizzes, Homework, In-class Assignments, Workshops, Class Participation (30% of course grade):** Includes participating in online and in-class discussions, asking questions, responding to other students' work in workshop, doing in-class and out-of-class writing and editing activities. In-class assignments cannot be made up if you are not in class.
3. **Final Exam (10%):** Based on readings, class discussions and activities. Comprehensive.

## GRADING

The "A" paper will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively for the given situation. Such essays will be free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The "B" paper will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the "A" paper. The chief difference is that the "B" paper will show some slight weakness in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The "C" paper will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weaknesses in fundamentals, usually development, with barely enough specific information. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the "B" essay.

The "D" paper will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or too short. The paper may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that are serious and/or frequent enough to interfere substantially with the writer's ability to communicate.

The "F" paper will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS

You are adults and responsible for attending class and turning in assignments on time. If you must miss class, contact a **classmate** about what we covered. **Do not email me** asking me what we discussed or if you missed "anything important". (You did.) Instead, contact a classmate for that material.

It's OK to email me if you need clarification on an assignment or need to arrange an appointment to meet in person. Please use standard English (including capitals and punctuation) in all emails to me. Please do not use text messaging or chat abbreviations (like cul8r, ur, i'm, etc). Treat your communications with me as you would with an employer. Yes, I'm an English teacher, and yes, I expect professional language skills from college students!

You cannot make up in-class projects, discussions, quizzes, or other work. If you turn in an assignment late, you will lose one full grade for each day the assignment is late. That is, an A becomes a B after one day, and then a C after two days. Each day is a calendar day, not a class session!

**I will not take any assignments more than one week late.**

## QUIZZES, CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, AND HOMEWORK

Throughout the semester, I will give quizzes on the assigned reading and assignments. These quizzes will not be announced in advance and cannot be made up. I will assign various responses to reading and other short writing assignments both in and out of class.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism means passing someone else's work off as your own, such as:

- using content from a book or website without citing it as such
- using web text directly in your papers without citing
- having someone else write all or part of your assignments

Any assignment containing plagiarized passages will receive an F grade automatically, and I will report the incident to Academic Integrity.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism or cheating on any portion of any assignment, including copying more than seven consecutive words from a web site, will result in a failing grade for assignment and possibly the course. All student work is subject to review at <http://www.turnitin.com> to identify possible sources of plagiarism. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty will be reported to the proper authorities and may result in a grade of NC or F.

**TURNITIN.COM Class ID: 2576303 Password: sjsu**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT (FROM OFFICE OF JUDICIAL AFFAIRS)**

Your own commitment to learning, as evidence by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found at (<http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>).

### **BLACKBOARD ONLINE CLASS**

This class is a "blended" course, meaning that in addition to meeting regularly on campus, we'll conduct part of the class online via Blackboard.

Online sessions are marked on the syllabus and I will try to remind the class ahead of time. Blended classes, and this class in particular, require significant time. If you have problems logging in, please contact SJSU via the eCampus.

### **COMPUTERS & "TECHNOLOGY" IN THE CLASSROOM**

If you have a laptop that you'd like to bring to class, you can. However, I expect that you will use the computer for classwork and not email, MySpace, Facebook, web browsing, or other non-class activities. Cellphones must be on vibrate during class. If you have an emergency and need to text or check a call, do it discretely. I will ask you to stop using your phone if I find you are distracting other students.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Date, location</b>	<b>Work, assignments, homework</b>
1/23 In class	Welcome! Course overview HW: Buy/order textbook, <a href="http://online.sjsu.edu/">http://online.sjsu.edu/</a> read section "Getting started with CE6"
1/30 <b>Online</b>	<b>DUE: Post introduction</b> to discussion board (20pts) Your projects Cover Letters (block, modified block), Resume vs CV Skim CH 1-2HW: CH 11-12 (Correspondence)
2/6 In class	Topics for manuals, intro to page layout Workshop: resume/cover letter HW: CH 13 (Employment), CH 3 (Technologies), 6 (Organization) Bring a manual to next class
2/13 In class	<b>DUE: Cover letter, resume/CV (100 pts)</b> Group assessments of topics Manual examples, proposals (CH19) HW: CH 9 (Revision)HW: CH 10 (Usability)
2/20 <b>Online</b>	<b>DUE: Proposal for manual, topic + outline (50pts)</b> Usability studies Style guides and style sheets, "styles" in MSWord HW: CH 5 (research), CH 8 (Layout), 18 (Manuals)

2/27 In class	<b>DUE: Style sheet for your manual (50pts)</b> Graphics, images, photos Writing introductions and prefaces HW: CH 14 (Definitions), CH 15(Descriptions)
3/6 In class	<b>DUE: Definitions (50pts)</b> <b>DUE: Intro/preface draft (50 pts)</b> HW: CH 17 (Instructions)
3/13 In class	<b>DUE: Chapter 1-2 of your manual (50pts)</b> HW: Editing HW: Editing
3/20 <b>Online</b>	<b>DUE: Instructions (50pts)</b> MS Word and production Q&A Production cycles HW: Continue writing/researching your manual
23 – 27 March SPRING BREAK	
4/3 In class	Indexing HW: Index your book
4/10 In class	<b>DUE: Manual draft, workshop (50pts)</b> (Print 2 copies, upload soft copy) Editing Workshop HW: Editing projects
4/17 <b>Online</b>	Online help, web writing HTML course via textbook website HW: Begin help topic/web page
4/24 In class	<b>DUE: Edit of manual</b> Writing for online media, workshop for help/HTML HW: CH 16 (websites)
5/1 In class	Q&A, Presentation skills HW: CH 22, Prepare and practice presentation
5/8 In class	<b>DUE: FINAL MANUAL (200pts)</b> Presentations
Wednesday, May 20, 0715-0930 FINAL EXAM (100pts) <b>DUE: Help Topic/web page (100pts) uploaded to blackboard before start of final exam</b>	

### Important SJSU dates, Spring 2009

Thursday, January 22	First Day of Instruction
Tuesday, February 3	Last Day to Drop Without Entry on Permanent Record
Tuesday, February 10	Last Day to Add Courses & Register Late
Wednesday, February 18	Enrollment Census Date
Monday–Friday, March 23-27	Spring Recess
Tuesday, March 31	Cesar Chavez Day - Campus Closed
Wednesday, May 13	Last Day of Instruction
Thursday, May 14	“DEAD DAY” Study/Conference Day (no classes or exams)
Friday–Thursday, May15-21	Final Examinations
Friday, May 22	Final Examinations Make-Up Day
Saturday, May 23	Commencement