

Technical and Business Writing Syllabus

Dallas College, Eastfield Campus

Contacting Your Instructor

Instructors typically respond to emails from students within 24 hours; however, over the weekend and holiday periods, there may be a delay in response. Find out more about [contacting your instructor](#).

Instructor Contact Information

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Course Information

Course Title: Technical and Business Writing

Course Number: ENGL 2311

Section Number: 42303

Semester/Year: Spring 2022 (Flex II - 8 weeks)

Credit Hours: 3

Class Meeting Time/Location: Asynchronous [Online](#)

Certification Date: 3/26/2022

Last Day to Withdraw: 4/27/2022

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisite [Required](#): ENGL 1301.

Course Description

Intensive study of and practice in professional settings. Focus on the types of documents necessary to make decisions and take action on the job, such as proposals, reports, instructions, policies and procedures, e-mail messages, letters, and descriptions of products and services. Practice individual and collaborative processes involved in the creation of ethical and efficient documents. (3 Lec.) **Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 2313035112**

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will.

1. Recognize, analyze, and accommodate diverse audiences.
2. Produce documents appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre.
3. Analyze the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication.
4. Locate, evaluate, and incorporate pertinent information.

5. Develop verbal, visual, and multimedia materials as necessary, in individual and/or collaborative projects, as appropriate.
6. Edit for appropriate style, including attention to word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling.
7. Design and test documents for easy reading and navigation.

Texas Core Objectives

The College defines essential knowledge and skills that students need to develop during their college experience. These general education competencies parallel the Texas Core Objectives for Student Learning. In this course, the activities you engage in will give you the opportunity to practice two or more of the following core competencies:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills** - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. **Communication Skills** - to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
3. **Empirical and Quantitative Skills** - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
4. **Teamwork** - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
5. **Personal Responsibility** - to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making
6. **Social Responsibility** - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Required Course Materials

If your Dallas College course requires learning materials, they will be provided as part of the [IncludEd program](#) or as free materials that you can access in your online course shell.

If you opt-out of the IncludEd program, you are responsible for obtaining all your required learning materials by the first day of the class. (For more details, see [Institutional Policies](#).)

- **Main Guide:** Ramos, Rufel. [“Index of /syllabi/ENGL2311”](#), *Rowena’s World*, 2022, rowenasworld.org/syllabi/ENGL2311/
- **Additional Guides:**
 - **Online Grammar Checkers:** [Grammarly](#) and [OnlineCorrection.com](#)
 - [“OWL Search Results.”](#) *Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)*, Purdue U Writing Lab, Purdue University, 2022, owl.purdue.edu/search.html.
 - [“Cite a Website.”](#) *EasyBib*, 2022, www.easybib.com/mla/website/search-form
 - [“Dallas College Databases.”](#) *Dallas College Library*, Dallas College, 2022, libguides.dcccd.edu/az.php.
 - Ramos, Rufel. [Structures: The Reluctant Writer’s Guide to College Essays](#), 2nd ed., Rowena’s World, 2019, rowenasworld.org/author/Structures2ndEd2019copy.pdf.

Graded Work

The tables below provide a summary of the graded work in this course and an explanation of how your final course grade will be calculated.

Summary of Graded Work

Assignments	Subtotal Percentages
Discussion Responses (10 each)	10%
Collaborative Comments (10 each)	10%
Project 1: Résumé and Cover Letter	25%
Project 2: Instructions	25%
Project 3: Technical Report and Business Email	30%

TOTAL: 100%

Final Grade

Percentages	Letter Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
0-59%	F

Description of Graded Work

Discussion Responses (DR): 10 responses (your DR 1-10) to assigned readings and/or lectures. These writing assignments are informal and are at least 100 words long for each one. Instead of producing polished responses, you should use these DR assignments to get in the habit of writing regularly.

Collaborative Comments (CC): 10 short responses (CC 1-10) to your classmates' DRs, so that you get in the habit of working with your peers. These CC writing assignment "replies" are informal and have no required word count.

Project 1 -- Résumé and Cover Letter: Choose a job posting, analyze the hiring team or manager as an audience, and write a résumé and cover letter for the job posting. **Items required:** First Draft, Peer Review, Final Draft in [Edited American English](#), and Reflection.

Project 2 – Instructions: Choose a task and write instructions that detail how to complete that task. In this assignment, we'll focus on procedural rhetoric and writing to [a style guide](#). **Items required:** Document Plan, First Draft, Peer Review, Final Draft in [Edited American English](#), and Reflection.

Project 3 -- Technical Report and Business Email: You'll write a technical report about a specific, “in real life” problem -- either in your academic field/ major, your workplace, or your local neighborhood and/or hometown -- that you believe deserves more attention from a local organization that can possibly solve that problem. You will also write a business email that introduces this report to a specific audience who is a member of that local organization. **Items required:** First Draft, Peer Review, Final Draft, written in [Edited American English](#), Business Email written in [Edited American English](#), and Reflection.

Attendance and Your Final Grade

Attendance and success in the course are related because class participation is part of the learning process and will affect your final course grade. You are expected to attend every class (or access eCampus at least weekly if entirely online) and be ready and willing to work.

If your absences exceed two weeks' class sessions (or exceed two weeks' worth of assignment deadlines), I may advise you to drop the course (if this occurs before the drop date), or you may be given a grade of “F” for the missing work. Please understand that this is not meant to penalize you unfairly but is meant to encourage participation in order that you may receive maximum benefit from the course, including the maximum possible grade.

An absence, however, is excused due to illness, car problems, family emergencies, or religious obligations (absence due to religious holy day[s]). Please inform the instructor before or **immediately** after the absence so that the instructor can excuse the absence. You are required to complete any assignments or take any examinations missed as a result of the absence within the agreed-upon revised timeframe specified by the instructor.

Late Work Policy

You are expected to submit assignments on time. The instructor will deduct ten points for each week the assignment is late for a maximum 20 points deducted. After two weeks, the instructor will not accept any late work. No late work will be considered for full credit unless you discuss with her about **why** the work will be late **prior** to its due date. She will give you a new due date. The absolute deadline to turn in any acceptable late work is **To Be Announced**, before 11am. Afterwards, the instructor will accept no late work.

Other Course Policies

Classroom Etiquette

While discussing Collaborative Activities, Discussion Prompts, and other class topics, please understand that disrespectful comments (even if you didn't mean it) to yourself, your classmates, and/or your instructor will negatively affect any non-Project assignment grade. The

instructor will respect you and your classmates; please have the courtesy to do the same. As for smartphone/tablet/laptop: only use them for class related tasks.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism—English Departmental Policy

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. As a college student, you are considered a responsible adult. Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the [Dallas College Code of Student Conduct](#).

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on tests, plagiarism and collusion. *Cheating* includes copying from another student's test or homework paper, using materials not authorized, collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test, knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting the contents of an unadministered test, and substituting for another person to take a test. *Plagiarism* is the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own written work. *Collusion* is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense in college. You can be given a failing grade on an assignment or test, can be failed for the class, or you can even be suspended from college. In any written paper, you are guilty of the academic offense known as plagiarism if you partially or entirely copy the author's sentences or words without quotation marks. For such an offense, a student will receive a **zero** on the assignment and could even receive an **F** for the course. You cannot mix the author's words with your own or "plug" your synonyms into the author's sentence structure. To prevent unintentional borrowing, resist the temptation to look at the source as you write, unless you are using a direct quote. The author's words, phrases, sentences must be put in your words, in your way of writing. When you do this, you are demonstrating the ability of understanding and comprehension.

Please be advised that academic dishonesty and plagiarism are serious issues that may result in serious consequences. Students should be aware that they are responsible for their behavior concerning these issues. This class will adhere to the student's "Responsibility" as detailed in the [Dallas College Code of Student Conduct](#).

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty and/or Plagiarism: Any student in this English class found guilty of cheating on an examination or of Plagiarism (using the definitions given for both terms in the attached document) will receive **one** or more of the following penalties:

- o The grade of **zero (0)** on that particular assignment.
- o A course grade of **F** (depending on the severity of the student's dishonesty or plagiarism).
- o The professor may request that the student drop the class.

Institutional Policies

[Institutional Policies](#) include information about tutoring, Disabilities Services, class drop and repeat options, Title IX, and more.

Course Schedule

Week	Readings & Assignments
Week 1: 3/21-3/26 (<i>Census Day</i> 3/26)	<p>STUDY, Part I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete the eCampus/Blackboard course page's "Start Here" Orientation by 1st day of class, including posting in the "Discussion Board" these three tasks: (1) the Syllabus Acknowledgement, (2) Discussion Response 1, and (3) Collaborative Comment 1 <p>DO DISCUSSION RESPONSE & COLLABORATIVE COMMENT, Part I, DUE by Mon, March 21: DR1: 1st Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Why are you taking a Technical and Business Writing class?What most excites you about this class?What makes you most nervous about this class? <p>THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR1 = Collaborative Comment 1</p> <p>DO DISCUSSION RESPONSE & COLLABORATIVE COMMENT, Part II, DUE by Wed, March 23: DR2: Audience and Tone in Writing</p> <p>Two increasingly important aspects technical and business writing is knowing your audience and matching your tone when writing to that audience. Based on your experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">How should you write differently in tone for a friend and for a supervisor about the same information?And WHY should you write differently in tone for a friend and for a supervisor even though the information is the same? <p>THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR2 = Collaborative Comment 2</p> <p>STUDY, Part II: "Project 1: Résumé and Cover Letter"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Assignment Overview (page 1) <p>DO DISCUSSION RESPONSES & COLLABORATIVE COMMENTS, Part III, DUE by Sat, March 26:</p> <p>DR3: Staying Positive</p> <p>"Business Letters: Accentuating the Positives" explains the importance of staying positive in your wording. This response has three parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Why is it important to use positive wording in your business letters (like a cover letter)?Why is it important to soften negative information with a positive point of view?Write one personal "weakness" that can be stated in a positive way in a cover letter.

Week	Readings & Assignments
	<p>THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR3 = Collaborative Comment 3</p> <p>DR4: Strong Action Verbs "Power Verbs for Your Resume" shows even stronger action verbs. This response has three parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to use the active voice in your résumé? • Why is it important to use powerful verbs (instead of weaker verbs like "helped") in your résumé? • Write one bullet point for your résumé using a strong action verb. <p>THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR4 = Collaborative Comment 4</p>
<p>Week 2: 3/27-4/2</p>	<p>DO PROJECT 1: "Project 1: Résumé and Cover Letter" all DUE by Sat, April 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part I Résumé: First Draft (page 2) • Part II Cover Letter: First Draft (page 3) • Part III Résumé and Cover Letter: Peer Reviews (page 4) • Part IV Résumé and Cover Letter: Final Draft (page 5) • Part V Résumé and Cover Letter: Reflection (page 6)
<p>Week 3: 4/3-4/9</p>	<p>DO DISCUSSION RESPONSES & COLLABORATIVE COMMENTS DUE by Wed, April 6:</p> <p>DR5: Steps in Instructions The Farkas reading proposes five components for procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Title 2. Conceptual element 3. Infinitive subheading 4. Steps 5. Notes <p>Steps are the most important of these components. The Steps section contains many subsections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic action steps • Steps with a facilitating modifier • User option steps • Conditional steps • Purpose explanations in steps • Feedback statements in steps <p>Choose one of these subsections -- other than Basic Action Steps -- and write, in your own words, a summary of when you would use this kind of step and why it helps the reader.</p> <p>THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR5 = Collaborative Comment 5</p> <p>DR6: Style and Grammar Reynold's "Understanding Prescriptive vs. Descriptive Grammar" and OSU Writing Center's "Prescriptive and Descriptive Grammar" explain well these two differences of "correct" grammar.</p>

Week	Readings & Assignments
	<p>Prescriptivism states rules about style and grammar that writers must follow if they want to write correctly. Professional and technical writing typically takes a prescriptivist approach to style and grammar, such as the GNOME "Developer Documentation Style Guidelines."</p> <p>In contrast, the spoken and/or informal grammar takes a descriptivist approach, by recognizing that grammar is always changing and that you might use different grammar and style in different settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What place do you think informal grammar has in professional and technical writing? Can you think of an example, from professional and technical writing, when you would take a descriptivist approach to grammar instead of a prescriptivist approach? <p>THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR6 = Collaborative Comment 6</p> <p>STUDY: "Project 2: Instructions"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment Overview (page 1) <p>DO PROJECT 2: "Project 2: Instructions" DUE by Sat, April 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part I Instructions: Document Plan (page 2)
<p>Week 4: 4/10-4/16</p>	<p>DO PROJECT 2: "Project 2: Instructions" all DUE by Sat, April 16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part II Instructions: First Draft (page 3) • Part III First Draft Instructions and Doc Plan: Peer Review (page 4) • Part IV Instructions: Final Draft (page 5) • Part V Instructions: Reflection (page 6)
<p>Week 5: 4/17-4/23</p>	<p>STUDY, Part I: "Project 3: Technical Report and Business Email"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment Overview (pages 1-2) <p>DO DISCUSSION RESPONSES & COLLABORATIVE COMMENTS all DUE by Sat, April 23:</p> <p>DR7: Different Types of Technical Reports</p> <p>Jake Wobbrock's paper "Catchy Titles Are Good: But Avoid Being Cute" gives great advice for writing an academic research paper, particularly for the Human Computer Interaction field where he does most of his research.</p> <p>What advice from Wobbrock's paper would you change for writing technical reports in a business and professional setting? Choose ONE of the sections in Wobbrock's paper (Abstract, Introduction, Related Work, etc.) and describe how the advice for this section (and maybe its title or even existence) would be different for a technical report written in a business and professional setting. (Keep your answers short. You do not need to address every piece of advice in the section that you choose.)</p> <p>THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR7 = Collaborative Comment 7</p>

Week	Readings & Assignments
	<p>DR8: Graphics in Your Technical Report After reading the first three pages from <i>Technical Communication</i> Chapter 12: <i>Creating Graphics</i>, you might be thinking about including a graphic in your technical report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information might a graphic convey in your technical report? • What type of graphic might you include and why would you use that type? <p>(Note: Your technical report does not need to include a graphic, but at least explore the possibility here.) THEN “Reply” to a classmate’s DR8 = Collaborative Comment 8</p> <p>DR9: Technical Reports Only for STEM? As implied by NISO’s “Scientific and Technical Reports” instructional report, technical reports seem to ONLY be used for STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) to investigate number-based problems. But can they be used in other fields, like business, education, or the social sciences (psychology, government)? Explain. THEN “Reply” to a classmate’s DR9 = Collaborative Comment 9</p> <p>STUDY, Part II: RESEARCH ADVICE FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL SOURCES FOR PROJECT 3 You can use articles from Dallas College library’s article database “Academic Search Complete” (see video for how to do that), reputable web sources (see Structures pages 16-17, as well as Easybib.com to format the web articles), and even personal interviews that you’ve conducted (as long as the individuals you interviewed are either experts, witnesses, or participants of the issue you’re writing about).</p>
<p>Week 6: 4/24-4/30 (Drop date 4/27)</p>	<p>DO PROJECT 3: “Project 3: Technical Report and Business Email” all DUE by Sat, April 30:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part I Technical Report: First Draft (page 3) • Part II Technical Report: Peer Review (page 4) • Part III Business Email: First Draft (page 5)
<p>Week 7: 5/1-5/7</p>	<p>FINISH PROJECT 3: “Project 3: Technical Report and Business Email” all DUE by Fri, May 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part IV Technical Report and Business Email: Final Draft (page 6) • Part V Technical Report and Business Email: Reflection (page 7) <p>FINISH DISCUSSION RESPONSE & COLLABORATIVE COMMENT DUE by Sat, May 7: DR10: About This Course</p>

Week	Readings & Assignments
	What has been the most valuable part of this course for you personally? How did you grow as a writer? What would you change if you were planning the course for next semester's students? THEN "Reply" to a classmate's DR10 = Collaborative Comment 10
Week 8: 5/8-5/10	FINAL WEEK: No Final Exam. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit any missing assignments for a late grade. • LAST DAY TO SUBMIT LATE WORK IS Tues, May 10 by 11am IN THE MORNING.

Final Course Grades can be viewed on eConnect, beginning May 16.

MISSION

Dallas College English faculty help students become confident, competent writers who can communicate effectively in diverse situations to a variety of audiences, using writing skills as well as critical thinking to develop and express their ideas.

DISCLAIMER RESERVING RIGHT TO CHANGE SYLLABUS/COURSE SCHEDULE

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.

SYLLABUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please post on the "**Discussion Board**," in the "Syllabus Acknowledgement" forum, this message:

I have read the syllabus and agree to its terms and policies.