# RWS 3355: Workplace Writing

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| CRN: **16548** | Instructor: Jennifer Falcon |
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| Place: Hudspeth 200 | Phone: 323-243-4739 |
|  | Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 – 12:00, and by appointment |
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# Course Description

The primary goal of English 3355 is to develop students’ effective communication in professional contexts. This effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities as well as knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process.

This class presents an approach to communication that helps students determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different situations within the workplace. Students will produce a variety of documents and presentations while gaining more confidence and fluency in written, visual, and oral communication.

# Learning Outcomes

* Develop an efficient and effective writing process that includes strategies for invention, researching, drafting, revising, and editing
* Determine and analyze workplace rhetorical situations
* Understand the generic conventions of documents commonly used for workplace communication
* Create effective documents in genres commonly used for workplace communication
* Conduct research within the context of the workplace that will inform your writing
* Work collaboratively with a team to create written documents and multimedia presentations
* Consider the ethical dimensions of composing and working within organizations
* Recognize and respect various cultural attitudes toward and conventions for workplace communication

# Required Texts & Materials

* Markel, M. (2010). *Technical Communication* (10th Ed) Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin’s.



* Various PDF articles on Blackboard

# Course Assignments

The Undergraduate Rhetoric and Writing Studies Program at UTEP uses Blackboard. Projects will be submitted and graded through Blackboard.

You will complete six major assignments and several smaller, weekly assignments over the course of the semester. All major and some minor assignments will be submitted using the “Assignments” feature in Blackboard. Assignments should be submitted as attachments unless otherwise specified. **Late work will not be accepted.** The following is a list of major assignments, brief descriptions, and point values. More detailed assignment sheets are available on Blackboard. Minor assignments will be announced weekly and will include reading, discussion posts, peer reviews, short essay responses, short multimedia presentations, etc.

1. 200 points **Minor Assignments and Class Participation:** Short weekly assignments,

weekly response posts, discussion board posts and participation in class

activities and discussions.

1. 75 points **Routine/ Positive Letter:** Letter that includes a neutral tone and is

intended to convey information or present a perspective

1. 75 points **Sensitive/ Negative Letter:** Letter that is intended to convey sensitive or

negative information.

1. 250 points **Job Application Portfolio:** This portfolio will include a posting for a job

position for which you qualify now or will qualify in the future; an analysis of the organization, job position, and audience for the application; a cover letter; and a resume.

1. 100 points **Informative Memo:** This memo will inform team members about the

cultural communication style of a foreign country outside of North America. It will also analyze potential problems with communication and provide solutions.

1. 200 points **Proposal:** The proposal will include a cover letter, executive summary,

analysis of a business situation requiring a solution, proposed solution with implementation of timeline and costs, and references pages. This project will be completed as a team.

1. 100 points **Proposal Presentation:** Groups will present their proposal to the class.

The presentation will assume the audience is a group within the studied organization who can take some action regarding the proposed recommendations.

**Grade Distribution (Students can earn a total of 1000 points for the course):**

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| 1000-900 = A | 899-800 = B | 799 -700 = C | 699- 600 = D | 599 and below = F |

# Course/Instructor Policies

**Project Format:** All projects must be word-processed and saved as a .doc file. They should be in 12 pt. font, have one-inch margins, and be double-spaced. Use a font style that is easily readable like Times New Roman, Arial, or Georgia.

Microsoft Word is available to students at all campus computers and can be purchased at the UTEP Bookstore using a current UTEP ID card at discount.  Students may also go to openoffice.org and download a free and compatible version of Word/Office.

**Rough Drafts:** Part of the participation grade will include the submission of rough drafts. In order to get the most useful feedback, rough drafts should be completed projects. They must also be submitted before or on the due date.

**Rough Draft Feedback:** On the rough drafts, students will receive marginal comments as well as comments at the end of the project. The purpose of this feedback is:

1. To be sure that the project is on the right track: that it meets the requirements of the assignment.
2. To comment on the “big issues.” Students will receive comments based on the most important elements of the assignment. Addressing these concerns should help students write a more effective project. The comments will NOT focus on grammar and such—so it is a good idea to get additional help from instructors and the Writing Center for this.

**University Writing Center:** UTEP’s University Writing Center (UWC) offers free writing tutoring assistance for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help to understand any writing assignment and help work on comprehending difficult textbook material. Note: To facilitate revision, UWC tutors will not hold a tutoring session fewer than 12 hours before the assignment is due.

**Students can access Blackboard by the steps outlined below:**

* Go to [http://my.utep.edu](http://my.utep.edu/)
* Login is e-mail ID. Password is e-mail password.
* Click on the link to Blackboard
* Once logged into Blackboard, all the courses a student is registered for are listed under the appropriate semester.
* Click on the course title to access the course.

**Classroom Etiquette:**

* No checking email, typing assignments, or surfing the web during class.
* Absolutely no food or drinks in this classroom.
* Turn off cell phone ringers, and please do not text message or listen to iPods/MP3 players during class.
* If possible, please bring a laptop, tablet, or smart phone to use in class. Please note that these should be used in class to participate and/or complete assignments.

**Online “Netiquette”:**

* Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.
* Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
* When reacting to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a f2f situation.
* Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

**Attendance:**

Students are required to attend all classes. However, occasionally, unforeseeable events may prevent you from attending class. You should send me a professional email when you are absent. The class discussions will help you learn to improve your writing, often through the discussion of a sample student project (sometimes yours, sometimes one written by a classmate). This is part of the work of the course. Thus, you need to be in class on time and with the books and your work.

* Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor constitutes an absence.

**Late Work:**

* **Major projects must be submitted to Blackboard. No late work will be accepted. All work must be submitted via Blackboard. I will not accept email submissions.**

**Email Policy:**

* If you email me I will do my best to replay within 24 hours. I will not answer questions about major assignments the day they are due. It is your responsibility to understand the guidelines, and due dates for each major assignment.

**Academic Integrity**

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards.

Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP), and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and on the homepage of the Dean of Students at www.utep.edu/dos, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to a failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others. (<http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418>)

**Copyright and Fair Use:** The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

**ADA:** The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you suspect that you have a disability and need an accommodation, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). The CASS is located in Room 106, Union East Bldg. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.

**The calendar is subject to change. As of now this is our plan for the course, but if changes are made you will be notified and given an updated calendar.**

**RWS 3355 Calendar**

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| Calendar | Monday | Wednesday | Friday |
| Week One  8/22 - 8/26 | Introduction to class, and review of syllabus.  Read Syllabus, and review Course Policies | **Week 1 Discussion Board/ Introduction post due 8/24 by 12:00 p.m. (before class begins)**  **Read:** Introduction to Technical Communication **p. 2 - 8** | Discussion of Characteristics of a Technical Document (continued) & Measures of Excellence in Technical Communication  **Read: p. 12 – 14**  **Weekly Response #1 Due at 12:30 p.m. (Due before class)** |
| Week Two  8/29 - 9/2 | Analyzing Audience and Purpose  **Read: p. 40 - 43, p. 84 - 94** | Continue Discussion of Audience and Purpose  **Read: p. 104 - 111** | Introduction to Letters (Assignment #1)  **Read: p. 370 – 379**  **Reading Response #2 due at 12:30 p.m.** |
| Week Three  9/5 - 9/9 | Routine/Positive Letter Example  Ethical and Legal Considerations  **Read: p. 17 - 28, p. 227 - 249** | Ethical and Legal Considerations (continued)  **Reading: p. 203 - 220**  **Response #3 Due 11:59 p.m.** | Letter #1 **Due at 12:30 p.m.**  **Read: p.46 – 55, Peer Review Guidelines (Posted on BB)**  **Peer Review Letter #1** |
| Week Four  9/12 – 9/16 | Introduction of Letter #2 (Sensitive/Negative Letter)  **Read: p. 29 - 36** | Sensitive/Negative Letter Continued  **Read: Blackboard handouts, PDF** | **Letter #2 Draft Due**  **Peer Review Letter #2**  **Read: Peer Review Guidelines (Posted on BB)** |
| Week Five  9/19 – 9/23 | **Letter #1 Final Draft Due 11:59 p.m.**  **Researching Your Subject**  **Read: p. 118 - 136** | Researching Subject (Continued)  **Read: p. 137 - 142** | **Letter #2 Final Draft Due 11:59 p.m.** |
| Week Six  9/26 – 9/30 | Organizing Information  **Read: p. 152 - 161** | Introduction Assignment #2 Informative Memo  **Read: p. 29 – 36,** | **Online Workshop**  **Reading Response #4 Due 11:59 p.m.**  **Read: p. 162 - 180** |
| Week Seven  10/3 - 10/7 | Peer Review Informative Memo  **Read: Peer Review Guidelines (Posted on BB)** | **Revising the Informative Memo**  **Read:** p. 227 - 239 | **Revising the Informative Memo**  **Informative Memo Due 11:59 p.m.**  **Read:** p. 240 - 253 |
| Week Eight  10/10 – 10/14 | **Introduce Assignment #3 Job Portfolio** | **Find a Job Listing**  **Read: p.398 - 404** | **Prepare Resume and Job Application**  **Read: p. 405 – 425**  **Reading Response #5 Due 12:30 p.m.** |
| Week Nine  10/17 - 10/21 | **Prepare Resume and Job Application Continued**  **Read:** p. 425 - 438 | **Read:** Readings available in BB | **Reading Response #6 Due 12:30 p.m.**  **Read:** Readings available in BB |
| Week Ten  10/24 – 10/28 | **Peer Review Job Portfolio**  **Read:** Readings available in BB | **Peer Review Job Portfolio**  **Read:** Readings available in BB | **Job Portfolio Due at 11:59 p.m.** |
| Week Eleven  10/31 – 11/4 | **Introduce Final Project**  **Read: Assignment Guidelines on BB** | Writing a Proposal  **Read: p.439 - 448** | **Online Workshop (Conference)**  **Read: p. 449 - 456**  **Reading Response #7 Due 12:30 p.m.** |
| Week Twelve  11/7 – 11/11 | Writing a Cover Letter  **Read:** Readings available in BB | Continuing Discussion of Cover Letter  **Read:** p. 634 - 655 | **Cover Letter Draft Due**  **Reading Response #8 Due 12:30 p.m.** |
| Week Thirteen  11/14 – 11/18 | Peer Review Final Portfolio  **Read:** p. 634 - 655  **Read: Peer Review Guidelines (Posted on BB)** | Peer Review Final Portfolio  Conference Final Portfolio  **Read: Peer Review Guidelines (Posted on BB)** | Peer Review Final Portfolio  Conference Final Portfolio  **Read: Peer Review Guidelines (Posted on BB)**  **Reading Response #9 Due 12:30 p.m.** |
| Week Fourteen  11/21 – 11/24 | Mock Presentations  **Read: p. 605 - 623** | Mock Presentations  **Read: p. 624 - 628**  **Reading Response #10 Due 12:30 p.m.** | **No Class** |
| Week Fifteen  11/28 – 12/2 | Presentations | Presentations | Presentations  **Reading Response #9 Due 12:30 p.m.** |
| Week Sixteen  12/5 – 12/9 | **Finals week** |  | **Portfolio due – 12/9 by 11:59PM** |