

Course Syllabus

English 235: Technical Writing [Winter 2015]

Sections OAS, OBS (1170, 1171)

Instructor: Sydney C. Dietrich

Office: Room R 230, Office O

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 T/W/Th, or by appointment

Phone: 564-2109 (office, voice mail)

564-2341 (A & H Office)

Email: sydney.dietrich@bellevuecollege.edu

Textbook: *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* by Mike Markel (2013). You may use **either** the print or the e-book version of the textbook.

Course Expectations

Your success in this class, and your enjoyment of it, depends largely on your **thorough reading and understanding of all of the information presented on the course site and in your textbook**. For many of you, technical writing is a new form of communication, so the principles explained in our course materials will differ from other kinds of writing you may have done in the past.

Since it is important that everyone in class **understands and shares the accepted vocabulary, rules, and correct applications of technical communication**, please follow these simple rules:

- **Complete all assigned textbook reading each week**
- **Thoroughly read and understand the requirements of each assignment, including page design/formatting aspects**
- **Start planning each assignment as early as possible (these reports cannot be written quickly or "at the last minute")**
- **Follow the Rubrics provided with each assignment when planning and writing your reports**
- **Ask questions about aspects you do not understand *before* you write your reports**

Course Focus

The aim of this course is to show you how to report technical information **clearly, accurately, and persuasively**.

Technical writing shares many of the same concerns of other kinds of writing, such as attention to *Purpose, Audience, and Readability*.

It is characterized by:

1. a **practical, no-nonsense approach to the writing process**
2. **the forms through which it is conveyed (e.g., memos, instructions, proposals, informal and formal reports)**
3. **its arrangement and division for selective reading**
4. **its use of typographical page design elements**
5. **its use of graphics to convey information visually**

This course will cover the four components of good technical writing: **problem-solving/analysis, report design, informational content, and technical communication skills** [written, visual, and spoken].

We will base our work in class on the **eight Measures of Excellence in technical communication**:

- **Honesty**
- **Clarity**
- **Accuracy**
- **Comprehensiveness**
- **Accessibility**
- **Conciseness**
- **Professional Appearance**
- **Correctness**

English 235 Course Outcomes

At completion of the course, each student should be able to:

1. Understand the purpose and process of communication in business and industry.
2. Recognize and be able to analyze effective and ineffective technical communication.
3. Understand and execute the written, visual, and verbal processes of technical communication.
4. Communicate technical information in a complete, accurate, and honest form.
5. Prepare various types of technical documents [memo, instructions, proposal, progress report, data report, feasibility report] that are appropriate and effective for various audiences.
6. Balance written and visual elements of communication in technical documents.
7. Use clear, focused, specific, and grammatically correct language in technical documents.

8. Use effective strategies for collaborative work in group projects and preparation of documents.
9. Communicate technical information clearly and effectively in all class discussions, group work, and course assignments.

Course Requirements

1. **Assigned textbook reading** (usually one chapter a week)
2. **Working with other students in Canvas Group work and Discussions**
3. **A Comparative Feasibility Research Study [requiring technical data collection, analysis, and conclusions]**
4. **Six (6) written assignments:**
 - **Written Assignment 1: Email Evaluation**
 - **Written Assignment 2: Research Topic Choice Form**
 - **Written Assignment 3: Set of Instructions (Group Assignment)**
 - **Research Report 1: Project Proposal**
 - **Research Report 2: Project Data Report**
 - **Research Report 3: Project (Completion) Final Report**

Discussions:

Online Discussions will give you the chance to discuss and share the *technical communication* (TC) principles you are learning with your classmates; you cannot be a fully involved student in the discussions unless you have finished the assigned reading in the textbook and understand the concepts and strategies covered and their practical applications.

Research Projects:

Your three research reports are generated from **a feasibility study** that each of you will design, research, develop, and report on during the course. You will be given complete instructions about choosing your research topics for your project early in the quarter. You will be asked to define a **specific topic, purpose, and reader** for your project, usually by the fourth week of class.

Grading:

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Your course grade will be calculated in the following way:

Written Assignment 1: Email Evaluation	10%
Written Assignment 2: Research Topic Choice Form	5%
Written Assignment 3: Set of Instructions	10%
Research Report 1: Project Proposal	15%
Research Report 2: Project Data Report	15%
Research Report 3: Project (Completion) Final Report	25%
Online Canvas Group work/Discussions (8)	20%

	100%

Grades on assignments are calculated using a 100-point scale:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
100-99	98-92	91-90	89-88	87-82	81-80	79-78	77-72	71-70	69-68	67-62	61-60	59-50

Due Dates:

All assignments are due on the dates listed in the course schedule: Assignments should reach me by **midnight** on the due date. All assignments will be posted to the Canvas course site for grading.

Please **attach** your assignments as **Word** documents or other programs that will maintain the page design formatting of your assignments, if possible. Word format also allows me to use the Comment function in Canvas to add marginal comments to your reports. If you experience problems attaching your assignments to the Canvas site, you may send them as attachments to the **course email** or to my campus email address, sydney.dietrich@bellevuecollege.edu .

Extra Day Option: You may take an "extra day" to submit Reports 1-3 by arranging it with me on or before the due dates.

Late reports should be turned in no more than **one day after the original due date**, and must arrive in electronic form by **midnight**. Any report turned in **more** than one day late **may be marked down for lateness**. Assignments turned in **late because of illness** should be cleared with me before submission.

Revisions:

You may **revise Report 1**, the **Project Proposal**, for a better grade. Revisions **should show substantial work** and **improvement** to earn a higher grade.

Saving and Sending Your Work:

Be sure to back up your 235 work in more than one place to avoid having to rewrite any of your reports. Keep your research notes and drafts of your assignments until your report is posted and graded on Canvas. All graded reports should be saved until the end of the quarter as proof of work completed.

You should be able to see that your attached assignments have posted to Canvas, but you are responsible for verifying that I have received any assignments that you send through email. If you do not receive a confirmation from me, or if you are concerned that an assignment didn't attach, please check with me to verify that I have received it. Your assignments will appear as 0% until I have graded them.

▪ Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity

Cheating, stealing, and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Success for investigation. Specific student rights, responsibilities, and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct at: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050/>

Honesty and the ethical consequences of cheating in technical communication are much greater than in many other situations. Since you will use your technical communication skills in the workplace, it is crucial that you communicate all technical information accurately, completely, and honestly and within the law. Most professional organizations, including the Society for Technical Communication, have clearly defined codes of ethical behavior.

Please Note: On Canvas, your assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com, an originality checking service. You may access those reports immediately after you submit your assignment. Because you will be using research data from outside sources and sample student reports from my classes, be especially cautious about borrowing too much unoriginal work. As a guideline, the percentage of page design elements and language from outside sources should not exceed 20% in your Turnitin reports.

Submitting plagiarized work as your own will result in failure of the assignment and, if repeated, failure of the class.

Important Links

▪ Bellevue College E-mail and access to MyBC

All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. <https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/netid/>

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the <http://depts.bellevuecollege.edu/helpdesk/students/>

▪ Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc., please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is an additional access program available to you. Contact asn@bellevuecollege.edu or 425.564.2764. ASN is located in the Library Media Center in D125. www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/

The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc.

• The Writing Lab

The Writing Lab – D204-d <http://bellevuecollege.edu/asc/writing>

Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Friday 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

The Writing Lab is a place where you can work on developing college-level writing skills. As a student, you can receive personalized feedback on your writing for class, college applications, or short personal correspondence. Tutors can listen to your ideas and help you develop strategies to see and avoid significant errors.

Students can drop in any time the Writing Lab is open as well as make an appointment. We recommend visiting the lab at least two days before a paper is due. A tutoring session is a 35-minute, face-to-face conversation to discuss your writing. The tutor will not fix your paper but will work with you to identify areas to revise independently.

▪ Final Exam Schedule

Your Final Report replaces a formal Final Exam in English 235 so there is no scheduled Final Exam.

<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/courses/exams/>

▪ Academic Calendar

The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.

- Enrollment Calendar - <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/deadlines/> . On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.
- College Calendar - <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/holidays/> This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.

▪ Public Safety

Public Safety and Emergencies

Public Safety is located in the K building and can be reached at **425-564-2400** (easy to remember because it's the only office on campus open 24 hours a day—2400). Among other things, Public Safety serves as our Parking Permits, Lost and Found, and Emergency Notification center. Please ensure you are signed up to receive alerts through our campus alerting system by registering at <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/alerts/?ref=footer>

If you work late and are uneasy about going to your car, Public Safety will escort you to your vehicle. To coordinate this, please phone ahead and let Public Safety know when and where you will need an escort.

Please familiarize yourself with the emergency postings by the door of every classroom and know where to go in the event of an evacuation. Your instructor will be asked if anyone might

still be in the building, so check in before you do anything else. Emergency responders will search for anyone unaccounted for.

If a major emergency occurs, please follow these two rules:

1) Take directions from those in charge of the response -We all need to be working together.

2) Do not get in your car and leave campus (unless directed to) - Doing so will clog streets and prevent emergency vehicles from entering the scene. Instead, follow directions from those in charge.

Please do not hesitate to call Public Safety if you feel safety questions or concerns at any time.