UVU UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY™

Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: https://catalog.uvu.edu/

Semester: Spring
Course Prefix: ENGL
Course Title: Technical Communication

Year: 2025
Course and Section #: 2100-002
Credits: 3

Course Description
Teaches basic technical writing skills used in a variety of professional settings. Emphasizes audience analysis, document design, and using precise language for a particular audience.

Course Attributes
This course has the following attributes:
☒ General Education Requirements
☐ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
☐ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
☒ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
☐ Elective Core Requirements in Program
☐ Open Elective
Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information
Instructor Name: Mark Pepper

Student Learning Outcomes
- Learn and use a variety of technical communication genres that are common in workplace writing
- Profile audiences for clear, effective, and professional communication that takes into account their needs, values, and knowledge
- Write accurately and precisely about technical objects in a clear style that allows readers to take action
- Design document interfaces that enhance the readability and usability of a text

Course Materials and Texts
Technical Writing Essentials, Last, Neveu, and Smith.

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Major Assignments: Long Form Genre Assignments
- Technical Description (200 points)
- Instruction Set (200 points)
- Proposal and Pitch (300 points)

Group Work: In-Class Practice Activities
- Rhetorical Situation Brainstorm (25 points)
- Profiling Readers Activity (50 points)
- Responding to Rude Co-Workers (50 points)
- Mini Technical Description (50 points)
- Mini Instruction Set (25 points)
- Usability Test (25 points)

Reading Responses: Three short replies to course readings (75 points)

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82.9	D+ = 67-69.9
A- = 90-92.9	C+ = 77-79.9	D = 63-66.9
B+ = 87-89.9	C = 73-76.9	D- = 60-62.9
B = 83-86.9	C- = 70-72.9	E = 0-59.9

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments
All required readings use chapters from the course text that align with the lectures below.

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion
Week 1: Course Introduction
- *TWE*, Chapter 1: "What is Technical Communication"

Week 2: Applicability of Technical Communication
- *TWE*, Chapters 2 and 7: "Professional Style" and "Correspondence"

Week 3: Language, Culture, and Intent
Week 4: Basic Document Design
- *TWE*, Chapter 3: "Document Design"

Week 5: Rhetorical Situations and Profiling Readers
- *TWE*, Chapter 4: "Teamwork and Communication"

Week 6: Ethics in Technical Communication
Week 7: Dealing with Rude Colleagues
Week 8: Technical Descriptions
- *TWE*, Chapter 7: "Technical Descriptions and Definitions"

Week 9: Editing
Week 10: Spring Break
Week 11: Instruction Sets
- *TWE*, Chapter 7: "Writing Instructions"

Week 12: Usability Testing and UX Experience
Week 13: Peer Edit of Instruction Sets
Week 14: Proposals
- *TWE*, Chapter 7: "Proposals"

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

Artificial Intelligence chatbots, like ChatGPT, OpenAI, Perplexity, etc., are here to stay, and will only grow. I could say something like "don't use them," but I don't think that's realistic at this point. Instead, I think it's important to understand both the strengths and limitations of these technologies. AI is already proving its usefulness in brainstorming writing ideas, simplifying complex topics, and performing rudimentary research. AI is a tool with potential usefulness for writers. However, AI is also fraught with serious issues. It possesses accuracy problems while simultaneously sounding very confident about its incorrectness. It also frequently generates fake summaries, citations, and quotations. It cannot understand the complexities and contexts of human communication. Finally, the way AI is trained on other texts poses several ethical questions about copyright and intellectual theft of property (along with uncritically inheriting the biases of the texts it's trained on).

To be clear, copying the exact wording of an AI chatbot is considered plagiarism and means that you will be held accountable for violating academic integrity. However, below are some uses of AI that I deem acceptable.
- Checking grammar and refining style
- Translating complicated passages of text to aid in comprehension (as long as those translations are not then copied word for word)
- Brainstorming and refining research topics
- Discovering counterarguments to positions

Be aware that AIs generate language that has some tell-tale signs that AI has been used. No, I'm not going to list what those are, but trust they are seared into my brain when grading nowadays. When I get suspicious of this kind of language in any of your assignments, I wonder about two things. Did you copy AI directly word for word into your assignment or have you used AI so much that you're starting to write like one even when not using it (because you assume AI is producing "good" writing)? All this to say, **I may occasionally leave feedback on your writing that says: "This sounds like an AI wrote it." I want to encourage you to not read that feedback as some damning accusation, because I am not blindly or simply anti-AI. I want you to see it as an opportunity to reflect upon why the marked language sounds this way**. I want it to allow us to have a conversation about what "good" writing sounds like. I want it to create a moment where we can explore together how AI writing is changing the nature of how we write and think in real-time.

Using Remote Testing Software

☒ This course does not use remote testing software.

☐ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic

honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities
Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity
At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: *Student Code of Conduct*](#).

Equity and Title IX
Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a specially dedicated space for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.