

English 104 - Report and Technical Writing
Summer 1 2010
Dr. Wesley Britton
CRN: 4385

Time and Place: MTWR 9:50-1130, MD 2.
Mon. and Tues: room 119
Wed. and Thurs.: room 115 (computer lab)

As there are no classes on Memorial Day (May 31), we will meet on Fri. June 4th as a make-up in 119.

Please turn all cell-phones off or set them to vibrate during class hours. Please conduct your phone discussions in the hall and not the classroom.

Office phone: 780-2437, extension 3

(If you leave a message and are providing your phone number, please speak slowly—best to say it twice.)

E-mail: spywise@verizon.net

Please do not use my HACC Groupwise e-mail address as I check that infrequently. Papers submitted to that address will not count. This syllabus, sample papers, and most handouts will be posted at: www.Spywise.net

Required Texts and Materials:

Lannon, John M. *Technical Communication*. 11th Ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2008.

Students should also come to class with thumb-drives for lab work. You will need an e-mail address to submit papers and communicate with your group.

Catalogue Description: Application of the principles of communication in the writing of effective reports and technical papers, including letters, memos, proposals, instructions, and research reports. This course is primarily for technical students.

Prerequisites: Eligibility for enrollment in English 101 and completion of English 003, when required by the college placement test, with a grade of "C" or higher.

Learning Outcomes: These outcomes are necessary to enable students to attain the essential knowledge and skills embodied in the program's educational objectives.

Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics of technical writing, such as creating factual, objective, clear, coherent, concise, and complete text.
2. Exhibit how to incorporate focus, development, organization, style, mechanics, and design in composing technical writing.
3. Organize, compose, design, and present technical information so information is immediately useful to the intended audience.
4. Identify importance of ethical and legal considerations in designing and composing technical communication.

5. Demonstrate knowledge of research methodologies, as by completing a research project with emphasis on proper documentation for technical communication.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of how to adapt effective writing strategies, including audience analysis, purpose, media, and usability to various types of technical communication.
7. Compose the essential forms of technical writing such as definitions, descriptions, proposals, instructions and reports.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of how to communicate technical information using computer mediated communication.
9. Complete technical communication documents collaboratively and recursively, often through peer reviews.
10. Demonstrate an understanding of how persuasion is used in technical communication.
11. Complete oral presentations of technical information.

Planned Sequence of Learning Activities: These are designed to help students achieve the learning outcomes.

- Invention
- Drafting
- Revision
- Editing
- Proofreading

Educational Beliefs:

In writing courses, the teacher should be considered more a coach than lecturer. This class will be very much a hands-on experience with much in and out of class time spent with students working on a variety of documents both in groups and individually. My job will be to set up the assignments, provide explanatory material, and then allow you to learn by practice.

English 104 is designed to be a very practical course, so I'm hoping the work you do in here can carry over into your professional life. With luck, the projects can directly benefit you on the job now or perhaps help you plan for future goals in your chosen field.

Along the way, we'll work on refining and polishing your writing skills in terms of clear sentences and paragraphs as well as correct punctuation and grammar.

Attendance and Late Papers

Note: You should become intimately familiar with the policies and guidelines discussed here. Many, many questions students ask regarding late papers, missed class periods, and group work are spelled out here in considerable detail. These are policies that have evolved in my classes over the past three decades, and many are strict for a variety of reasons. I regret many of these rules more than you. Please believe me—I take no pleasure in disappointing students. The bottom line--I decided on many of these rules in order to be fair to all students.

Regular and prompt attendance is key to your success, especially in a summer class. If you know now you're planning to miss a week for vacations or other situations, now is not the time to sign up for a six-week class. As many projects will depend on group participation, your attendance is required each day for not only yourself but also your classmates. If attendance becomes a problem, I may give quizzes either at the beginning or end of a class period.

There is NO late work accepted in this class without a written excuse verifying an emergency, so missing class, or coming late, may result in missing grades. If you miss periods where papers are due or group work is part of

your grade, you can lose points. In addition, if your group works on a project when you are not here, they may drop your name from the assignment. Further, it is impossible to do makeup work for group projects or for draft reviews as they are designed to be interactive. This policy applies to both working drafts and final submissions.

Remember--No late papers are accepted without a written medical excuse or some written document verifying any family emergency. Period. Attach these to any late paper you ask me to consider. There is no make-up for missed drafts or quizzes. As explained below, you can still have final papers graded if sent by e-mail on time even if you can't make class that day.

Very Important notes About Drafts and e-mail Submissions

There are several advantages to submitting your final drafts of both group and individual papers via e-mail. E-mail submissions are those graded first and returned quickly, often on the same day you sent it. All group projects must be submitted via e-mail; if you don't submit individual papers by e-mail, I will want to discuss your problem with you. If you are unable to attend class, you will not lose the grade if your work is e-mailed. This applies to final drafts only and not working drafts. Please note these important conditions:

1. DO NOT SEND PAPERS AS ATTACHMENTS! I DO NOT OPEN ATTACHMENTS! One reason for this is the prevalence of viruses that come with attachments. Also, many programs students use do not translate well when opened for reading and grading. For your submission to even be looked at, it must be in the body of a normal message. Except for letters, documents should have a memo heading with a clear subject line. If you submit a paper as an attachment, it will not count as a submission.
2. Your e-mail paper MUST be received at the due time expected for all students. You may not submit a paper late via e-mail and expect a grade. E-mail submissions are the primary way to turn in your work, not a means to get an extension. It is important you know I must receive the paper for it to count-- simply telling me you e-mailed it won't count unless I get the submission when due. However, if you've turned in hard-copy on time on the due date, you can submit an e-mail version later. Be sure to use the e-mail address listed above and not my HACC Groupwise account.
3. Very important: remember that cutting and pasting from a word-processing program (such as MS Word or WordPerfect) into the body of an e-mail can result in a document filled with "nonsense" symbols. Some programs automatically convert all apostrophes and quotes into "smart quotes" or convert dashes and ellipses into other special characters. These hidden codes do not translate when copied into an e-mail document. Formatting codes such as bold or italic also transform into gibberish when copied, and the end result is annoying for anyone to read.
4. To avoid this problem, turn off special-character commands in your word-processing program before copying. Or on a PC you can use the Notepad text editor, which is found under your Accessories part of your computer. On a Mac you can use TextEdit. This is a simple text editor that doesn't allow any special-formatting characters. You'll need to double-space between paragraphs and headings, as conversion from word processing to e-mail deletes all tabs. (If this seems confusing—don't worry. Groupmates can be very helpful with these technological issues.)

Grades and Class Policies

Your writing assignments will be typed, single-spaced, with normal font and margins. Do not put in line breaks between headings and paragraphs and use the block paragraph style. (That is, don't indent paragraphs.) Multiple page documents must be stapled.

Your grades will be determined by an accumulation of points averaged together at the end of the semester, with a total possible score of at least 1100 points. Scheduled assignments include:

Group Recommendation Report--100 pts.
 Group Proposal—100 pts.
 Instructions draft—25 pts.
 Instructions—50 pts.
 Individual Proposal—100 pts.
 Group Progress Report—50 pts.
 Letter draft—25 pts.
 Individual Letter—50 pts.
 Group Project—200 pts.
 Individual Job Letter and Resume—100 pts.
 Individual Project—200 pts.
 Oral Report—100 pts.

The instructor reserves the right to add quizzes if attendance or participation becomes a problem. You can calculate your own semester grade by adding up the total number of points you've earned at any given time in the semester and divide that by the number of total possible points we've covered to that point. You'll get a decimal score-- .90 or above is an A, .80 to .89 a B, and so on.

A word to the wise: always keep copies of your work, especially graded papers. This is always important with your group papers, and I strongly recommend each member have copies of your submitted work as well as graded papers. If a group member disappears or drops out and has the only copy of your work, I can't help you if any problems arise with bookkeeping at semester's end.

Incomplete or Withdrawal Requests

Requests for a grade of "I" (Incomplete) will be honored only in the most extreme of circumstances. A medical excuse is required to verify that an emergency precluded you from attending class during the final week of class.

You may receive a "W" grade by filling out the appropriate document and bringing it to me for my signature. Be sure to fill out all information including your section and student ID Numbers. Also include the date you last attended class. Only leave blank the grade and line for my signature. Don't simply e-mail or phone me stating you wish to drop the class--it's up to you to fill out the form, bring it to me, and then take your signed form to the appropriate office. Be sure to know the cut-off date for this withdrawal.

Again—be sure to include the last date you attended class as this information is required by the registrar's office. If all the information is not filled out on the form, your request will not be processed.

Important note: College policy permits teachers to drop a student who misses 15% of our classes and is no longer able to successfully pass the course. In this case, missing a week of class is more than enough evidence you cannot pass this class. If I notice you've stopped attending and have missed key work, I may elect to drop you with a WF. If you want a W for your grade, again, it's up to you to fill out the paperwork and ask me to sign the form. If it's left to me to do the work, you will get the grade you've earned to that point, and this usually means a non-passing grade. So don't simply stop attending and expect a W.

Very Important Words about Group Work

As you look over our class schedule, you will see much of our class time will be spent in groups, primarily in peer-group reviews, critiques, and editing of your papers. Much time is also spent with working on group papers, which can be rewarding or torment, depending on YOU. Keep the following ideas in mind:

While your first group will likely be made up of students you are sitting close to or know from other classes, these are not permanently assigned groups. From time to time, I may assign groups but mostly I rely on you to determine the makeup of your chosen group. From time to time, different groups may be working on different issues, and you may decide to re-organize your groups to be involved with projects you are most interested in.

Groups may be of three or four members, no more, no less. You are well-advised to keep an eye on your fellow students to see who comes to class prepared, and then make sure you hook up with such folks. If you find yourself with members who are not prepared or are not contributing to class discussions, you may choose to leave that group and join another or ask unprepared students to leave your group. I am assuming I am dealing with adults so I do not plan to administer group structure unless I have to.

You may not substitute an individual paper for a group assignment without an explicit authorization from the instructor. And these will be very rare and granted only to students who discover they are writing these papers with minimal help from their peers. Doing individual work defeats the purpose of these projects, so if you miss periods when groups organize, work on the project, or if your group is unhappy with your participation, you may well pay a heavy penalty.

Most problems for students begin when someone misses the days on which groups organize and have no place to go. To avoid this, be sure to keep in contact with previous group members in case of an emergency. While groups are working on a paper, they sometimes have a member who either misses periods or does not come to class prepared and contributes little to the discussions. Remember--groups may elect to drop members not carrying their weight, and if this happens, you've blown a grade. All groups should keep me posted on any problems.

When groups are reviewing individual papers, your job is not to merely proofread for grammar and spelling problems. Through each draft of each paper, you will be helping groupmates by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of their work, which, in turn, will help you analyze your own work. This is a major activity of this class--by reading and improving your fellow students' papers, you will be learning important skills about writing in a variety of ways. In addition, writing group papers will help you work with a variety of points of view and help you learn organizational and developmental skills.

Let me reinforce that point--many times, out of friendship or worry that someone will fail a grade despite the fact they contributed nothing to a paper, students will sometimes allow their peers to share the grade. This is dishonesty, not helping a friend. Think of this as letting another student copy off your test in another class--it makes both of you cheaters. Ponder this.

Believe it or not, collaborative writing is more than a classroom exercise; it is a widely used practice in the business world. Frequently, business documents are written by teams and are often evaluated and read by teams. There are of course disadvantages as well as advantages in collaborative writing, but over the years I have found it to be an effective and popular teaching tool WHEN students are prepared for class. So, again, keep an eye out for working students as they will help your grades and growth in a number of ways.

If you're feeling nervous about group work, Colorado State University published a very useful discussion that might help you clarify and understand your possibilities. You can explore their suggestions on group structure and dealing with any fears you might have at:

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/processes/group/index.cfm>

Academic Dishonesty

While the details of HACC's ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 594 dealing with "Academic Dishonesty" are included in your student handbook, you should be aware of the following points for this class:

Academic dishonesty is defined as an intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person, or uses unauthorized material or fabricated information in any academic work. It includes plagiarism - the offering of someone else's work, words, or idea as one's own or using material from another source without acknowledgement. It also includes interfering without permission with the work of another student either by obtaining, changing or destroying the work of another student; buying or selling of term papers, homework, examinations, laboratory assignments, computer programs, etc; and knowingly assisting someone who engages in the above.

Penalties for this class begin with your receiving a grade of 0 if dishonesty is discovered. It's possible you can be dismissed or suspended from the course or HACC as well. Further:

The Division Dean/Chief Branch Campus Administrator (CBCA) responsible for the student's curriculum may impose harsher measures within the context of the College such as,

- disciplinary probation-may include a limitation on credits, mandatory repeat of a course, etc.
- suspension from a curriculum.

Faculty are asked to report incidents resulting in disciplinary action to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) so multiple incidents of dishonesty by the same student are monitored. These reports shall be kept in the in Office of the CAO. Depending on the seriousness of the infraction, the student may be asked to meet with our division dean to discuss actions beyond those we can resolve in the classroom.

In this course, the most frequent and serious offense is plagiarism, especially turning in papers in whole or in part that are copied from other sources. This is reckless behavior which is often easy for me to discover. Should I find you've plagiarized a paper, you will automatically receive a zero and your paper along with the evidence of the dishonesty will be forwarded to the appropriate office to keep in your record. Further action will be determined by the circumstances of my investigation—often students choose to drop the class rather than face more severe consequences the college may deem appropriate.

Consider this essential information—experienced teachers are well-acquainted with the sources and means students use to submit plagiarized papers, so the odds of your getting away with this type of dishonesty are stacked against you.

To avoid unintentional plagiarism, remember statistics, general facts, and information you did not experience first-hand should always be cited. We will be discussing this much in class, but it will help to learn to use phrases such as "According to," "Smith claims," "Smith believes," or says, asserts, notes, stated etc. to insure ideas from other writers are not plagiarized. You don't need to directly quote all the time, paraphrasing is often the better way, but always, always let the reader know where you got your information. We will be discussing this throughout the semester, and don't be afraid to ask about this subject any time. I presume you dealt with the MLA citation style in Freshman English 101, so I expect you to know and use the skills you learned when you took that class.

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy 005:

It is the policy of Harrisburg Area Community College, in full accordance with the law, not to discriminate in employment, student admissions, and student services on the basis of race, color, religion, age, political affiliation or belief, gender, national origin, ancestry, disability, place of birth, General Education Development Certification (GED), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any legally protected classification. HACC recognizes its responsibility to promote the principles of equal opportunity for employment, student admissions, and student services, taking active steps to recruit minorities and women. Inquiries should be directed to the Assistant to the President, One HACC Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17110, Telephone: (717) 780-2657.

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act:

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act prohibits discrimination against prospective and current students because of race, color, sex, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, handicap or disability, record of a handicap or disability, perceived handicap or disability, relationship or association with an individual with a handicap or disability, use of a guide or support animal, and/or handling or training of support or guide animals. The Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act prohibits discrimination against prospective and current students because of race, religion, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, record of a handicap or disability, perceived handicap or disability, and a relationship or association with an individual with a handicap or disability. Information about these laws may be obtained by visiting the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission website at www.phrc.state.pa.us. If an accommodation is needed, please contact:

Carole Kerper
Whitaker 123
(717) 780-2614
clkerper@hacc.edu

Students with Special Needs:

If you are a student with a disability, it is your responsibility to notify your instructor and register with the Office of Disability Services at least one week prior to the needed service so that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Courtesy: Please conduct yourselves as the collegiate learners you are. Respect among students will foster a professional, positive learning environment. Unless you have circumstances which require leaving such devices in operation, please turn off all cell phones and similar electronic devices prior to entering the classroom. Listen when others are speaking and have respect for points of view which may differ from your own. Be motivated and prepared.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

May 24. Welcome and introduction to course. Discussion of syllabus, class goals, and basic principles of report writing. After class, think about possible projects you can work on this semester that might benefit your career. Working students often discuss ideas with their supervisors who might have ideas you could use including manuals or extensive reports on one matter or another. Students associated with non-profit agencies often work on reports that benefit the organization which you can add to your resume. Students considering establishing their own businesses often work on marketing or business plans. There are many possibilities for you.

May 25. Before class, skim Chapter 12: focus on the sections discussing storyboarding, paragraphing, organization and chunking. Introduction continued.

May 26. (meet in computer lab). Research orientation. Note: students unfamiliar with using the MLA citations style might find this website very useful: www.dianahacker.com/resdoc

May 27. (meet in computer lab) Before class, research the topic of employers using Facebook and My Space posts to determine the suitability of potential hirees or deciding on firing employees who use social networking

in a way disrespectful or offensive to the company. Bring your research to class. In groups, use the period to generate a report addressed to a fictional supervisor who is considering adopting this practice. In a report at least two pages long, recommend why he (or she) should or should not use this technique. Present alternative viewpoints, legal ramifications, ethical considerations, or any other aspects for which you have researched evidence. Due at end of period. (100 pts.) E-mail and submit hard-copy backup. Follow submission instructions outlined above.

May 31. Memorial Day. No classes.

June 1. Before class, read Chapter 23 (Proposals). Think about possible projects for your group to begin tomorrow. Discussion of chapter.

June 2. (meet in computer lab) Come to class with preliminary ideas and research for group project. By end of period, should have your outline and give each member assigned sections to write for tomorrow's class.

June 3. Continue work on group proposal. Complete by end of period. (100 pts.) Submit both e-mail and hard-copy.

Fri. June 4. (make-up for Monday). Before class, read

Chapter 22 (Instructions and Procedures.) Discussion of chapter. Assignment: for Monday's class, write a two to three page set of instructions. Draft due by beginning of period on Monday.

June 7. At beginning of class, exchange hard-copy draft of your instructions assignment. (25 pts. for draft.) Get draft stamped to earn points. Before class, look over Chapter 16, especially the discussion on progress reports (begins on pg. 333). Skim sections on justification, evaluation, and recommendation reports as one of these formats might fit your group and individual projects. Discussion of memo reports. Should have time to work on group project.

June 8. Turn in instructions assignment; e-mail is due by beginning of class. Attach your marked, stamped draft. (50 pts. for final version, 25 pts. for stamped draft.)

June 9. (meet in computer lab) Individual proposal due by beginning of period. (100pts.) Work on group project, and begin organizing your progress report.

June 10. (meet in computer lab). Continue group project. By end of period, submit group progress report (50 pts.)

June 14. Before class, read Chapter 17 (Workplace correspondence). Discussion of letters. (Note letter on 360-361 as a model of letter as contract.) Before tomorrow's class, write a letter as described in class. (Will likely choose a rejection scenario beginning on page 388.)

June 15. Bring draft of letter assignment. Exchange with other students for critique. (25 pts.) Get draft stamped.

June 16. (meet in computer lab). Letter assignment due by beginning of period (50 pts.) Work on group project.

June 17. (meet in computer lab.) Before class, skim Chapter 25 (Front Matter). Work on group project.

June 21. Before class, look over Chapter 24 (Formal Reports.) Discussion of chapter.

June 22. Before class, review Chap. 18. Discussion of job letters and resumes. For next week, work on your letter and resume.

June 23. (meet in computer lab) Work on group project.

June 24. (meet in computer lab) Complete group project. (200 pts). Due by end of period.

June 28. Turn in job letter and resume. (100 pts.) Bring draft of individual project for exchange workshop.

June 29. Turn in individual project. due by beginning of period. (200 pts.)

June 30. Before class, read Chapter 26 (Oral Presentations).

July 1. Oral reports (100 pts.)