



ENGL104: Technical Communication Syllabus Summer II 2015

“Writing is essential to my work. Everything we do at my company results in a written product of some kind — a formal technical report, a summary of key findings, recommendations and submissions to academic journals or professional associations. We also write proposals to help secure new contracts. Writing is the most important skill we seek in potential employees and nurture and reward in current employees. It is very hard to find people with strong writing skills, regardless of their academic background.”

- Paul Harder, President, mid-sized consulting firm
Quoted in Lannon & Gurak’s *Technical Communication*

I. Instructor Information

Dr. Tamara Girardi, Virtual Learning
Harrisburg Area Community College
Office Hours: Mondays 8-9 a.m., Wednesdays 2-4 p.m. and by appointment; contact via phone
Preferred Phone: 724-448-6044 (my cell is a faster option than the office)
Office Telephone: 717-780-2300 x711310
Email: tagirard@hacc.edu

II. Course Information

ENGL104: Technical Writing, CRN 1488

Catalog Description: Applies technical communication principles in the writing of effective reports and technical papers such as definitions, descriptions, instructions, proposals, and research reports. *This course is primarily for technical students.*

Required Materials:

Technical Communication, 13th ed., John M. Lannon and Laura J. Gurak
Reliable Internet connection students can access 5+ times per week

III. Teaching Philosophy for this Course

Technical writing focuses on simplifying ideas, so that they are concise, well-written, and accessible to many different audiences. With that in mind, I believe my primary goal should be to encourage you to develop writing assignments that are concise, well-written and accessible to many different audiences. Additionally, technical writing is practical, and I believe that the assignments you

complete in this class and the skills you learn should practically apply to your interests, your majors, your employment, and/or your intended career paths. Whenever possible, please be sure to connect your writing assignments in the course to one of those categories and try to determine how learning what you do in this class can benefit you and your endeavors outside of it.

IV. Learning Outcomes

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

- Compose the essential forms of technical writing, such as definitions, descriptions, instructions, proposals, and research reports
- Create factual, clear, coherent, concise, and complete texts
- Organize, compose, design, and present technical information based on the audience analysis, purpose, media, and usability
- Complete technical documents collaboratively and recursively
- Give presentations of technical information
- Conduct and document research using the APA documentation style

V. Policies

- a) **Attendance and Late Work:** Students are expected to log into and participate in the D2L shell **at least five times per week**. However, students will be considered absent when they do not complete all of the week's assignments by the noted deadlines (usually Thursdays and Sundays). Most weekly exercises will be accepted up to one week after the original due date. If assignments are submitted the week after they are due, students will lose 20% of the points available. After one week, makeup work will not be accepted. Also, the instructor reserves the right to overrule this policy if a student has become consistently behind in coursework, and therefore, they are no longer meeting the learning outcomes of the course in a timely manner. If the student falls two weeks behind in the course, the instructor reserves the right to withdraw the student from the course for lack of attendance. **Exams, peer feedback for workshops, and the course project will NOT be accepted late.**
- b) **Email:** It is my sincerest intention to help you in any way I can. I want you to be successful in the course, and for that reason and many others, I will respond to your emails most often within 24 hours. However, please be advised I have many students and teach many classes. Therefore I ask that you are as efficient and polite in your emails as possible. Regarding efficiency, please *email from your college account*, include an appropriate subject line, the CRN for the course, the name of the assignment you're asking about (if that's what you're doing), and as many specifics as possible, so that I can understand your question and respond quickly. Regarding politeness, please address me by name, include a greeting, be respectful in your language, and sign the email with your own name. Although it will pain me to do so, I reserve the right to delete, and not respond to, any emails that do not adhere to this policy. However, you are more likely to receive a response that simply states: Note the email policy on the syllabus. At which point, you will read this and hopefully respond with an efficient and polite email. Finally, it would be wise to embrace this policy for communication with other instructors and members of academic and professional communities.
- c) **Appropriate file types:** Appropriate file types for the course are: doc, docx, rtf, or pdf. To ensure your work can be read, you should plan to submit in one of these types. However, you should also be aware that formatting tends to change from computer to computer. For that reason, it might be wise to save documents as pdf files to ensure that the design you create for your technical documents is retained when you submit or share with classmates. Finally, if assignments are submitted in any files other than the ones

listed here, I might not be able to open the documents. If you have any difficulty saving in one of the types listed, please let me know, and we'll work something out.

- d) **Discussion Board:** Students often ask how I assess the Discussion Board posts. First, I expect students to respond to my original prompt or question with thoughtfulness and thoroughness. When possible, quote the text or share supplemental ideas from other sources you've encountered. Add some value to the discussion with your posts. I will assess these responses based on their quality and whether they add value to the learning in the course. Secondly, I assess whether students respond to the appropriate number of classmates, usually three. Your responses should be similar to those you would give in a face-to-face class setting. In other words, you wouldn't raise your hand in a classroom to simply say, "I agree." You would add some value to the discussion by offering a new idea or example. Do the same with your discussion posts. Finally, it is your absolute best interest when it comes to assessment, learning, and performing well in the course overall to read the comments that precede yours AND to log back into the Discussions after you post to read any feedback *your* posts receive. You can opt to subscribe to all of your posts, so that the responses go directly to your email as well. I will often respond to Discussion posts with feedback and clarifications that could help you, so be sure to engage these discussions often and follow them closely. Not doing so is similar to going to class but not paying attention to what's going on around you.
- e) **Academic Dishonesty:** As per the college's policy, "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." Consequences for academic dishonesty range from a lower grade on the assignment in question to removal from the course, as described in the Student Handbook. Students should review the handbook for more in-depth explanations of Academic Dishonesty and possible consequences. I reserve the right to administer any of the noted consequences depending on the magnitude of the dishonest act. Furthermore, when in doubt, discuss the choices you are making regarding sources in your essay with the instructor to ensure Academic Honesty.
- f) **"W" grades:** If students choose to withdraw within the college-allotted time-frame, they will earn a W grade in the course.

VI. Grading Procedures

According to my teaching philosophy, the purpose of enrolling in college courses is to learn. I believe students who make learning their top priority will earn grades of which they can appreciate and be proud. To learn the best they can, students should strive to read all homework assignments thoroughly and analytically, attend class regularly (signing in to D2L at least five times per week), engage in discussion with classmates and the instructor, complete assigned reading and writing tasks by the posted deadlines.

However, I understand the academic structure of which we are a part. Therefore, grades will be averaged and recorded as follows:

90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70% - 79%	C
60% - 69%	D
59% and Below	F

The final grade is calculated on a point system; in other words, points from all assignments are tallied in the gradebook, and a percentage is calculated from there. I understand grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors occur, but students should do their best to edit

their work before submission. Significant errors that challenge the instructor's understanding of the submitted content may affect students' grades.

VII. EEOC/PHRC Statements

STUDENTS IN NEED OF ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students with disabilities who are in need of accommodations should contact the campus disability coordinator listed below. Coordinators for each campus are listed here:
<http://www.hacc.edu/StudentServices/DisabilityServices/Contact-Us.cfm>

EEOC 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, genetic history/information, 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.

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRAct") 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 ("PFEOAct") 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:

Deborah Bybee
Coordinator, Disability Services
104F
735 Cumberland Street
Lebanon, PA 17042
Phone: 717-270-6333
Email: dabybee@hacc.edu

VIII. Advice for Excelling in Online Courses

- A major challenge in distance learning (online) courses is the lack of regular class sessions. It is easy to get behind without a scheduled class meeting. For this reason, it's a good idea to set a specific time and day to log on and work on the course. SPECIFICALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU LOGGING IN AND PARTICIPATING AT LEAST FIVE TIMES PER WEEK.
- Additionally, abbreviated courses are even more intensive as you will still be expected to meet the learning objectives for the course. Staying on deadline is imperative to be successful.

- From the beginning, establish a dialogue with your instructor via e-mail, phone or chat.
- I check e-mail daily (although my response tends to be slower on weekends); therefore, you should get a response within 24-48 hours. If you send an e-mail and you don't receive a reply within 24-48 hours (and it's during the week), please e-mail again or call and leave a voice mail.
- In addition, you are responsible for checking your grades online. If you submit an assignment through D2L and the grade does not appear in the online Gradebook within 3-4 days, feel free to contact me to see if I received it. Please check your grades regularly rather than waiting until the last week of the course. At that point, all makeup work would be beyond the late work policy and therefore not accepted for credit.
- Please do not hesitate to e-mail or call me. An online course is your opportunity to have more dialogue with your instructor. Take advantage of this opportunity.
- If you want an "A" in this course, periodically review the Learning Outcomes section of this syllabus. If you are aligned with those outcomes on an "excellence" level, then you should likely be in the "A" range. Of course, you may also check your grade any time via the D2L gradebook.
- If you are having difficulty with the class or a personal issue that could affect your performance or attendance in class, PLEASE SPEAK TO ME ABOUT IT. Together we can come to a solution that is positive for you.

IX. Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK	ASSIGNMENTS
ONE, Part I: July 6	Welcome Video and Discussion What is Technical Writing? Discussion Syllabus and D2L Portal Review Read Chapters 1 and 6 Assignments Due 11:59 p.m. EST July 8
ONE, Part II: July 9	Writing Memos Read Chapters 14 and 15 Persuasive Memo: <i>Communicating in an Academic/Professional Environment</i> Assignments Due 11:59 p.m. EST July 12
TWO, Part I: July 13	Semester Project Details and Models Identifying problems at HACC Read Chapters 2 and 3 Assignments Due 11:59 p.m. EST July 15
TWO, Part II: July 16	Finalize Project Topics Develop detailed research plan; Begin research Read Chapters 7 and 8 Assignments Due 11:59 p.m. EST July 19
THREE, Part I: July 20	Formal Analytical Reports Read Chapter 22

	Review APA Style Assignment Due 11:59p.m.EST July 22
THREE, Part II: July 23	Discuss Project Delivery Oral Presentation/Webinar: Read Chapter 24 Web Page: Read Chapter 25 Social Media: Read Chapter 26 Putting it all together: Read Chapter 9 Assignment Due 11:59p.m.EST July 26
FOUR, Part I: July 27	Supplemental Documents Process Description, Instructions, Definition Additional Documents of Student's Choice Read Corresponding Chapter Assignment Due 11:59 p.m.EST July 29
FOUR, Part II: July 30	Drafting Time Progress Update Meetings with Instructor Read Part 3 as Needed Students should schedule individual meetings Project Drafts Due for Project Workshop by Aug. 2 11:59 p.m. EST
FIVE, Part I: Aug. 3	Project Workshops Feedback Due Aug. 5 by 11:59 p.m. EST
FIVE, Part II: Aug. 6	Project Revisions
SIX, Part I: Aug. 10	Project Revisions Read Part 3 as Needed Final Projects Due with Reflection Letter By 11:59 p.m. EST Aug. 12

*To address the needs of students in the course, the schedule and assignments/point totals described in this syllabus may be altered at the professor's discretion.