

Texas A&M University - Central Texas
English 3309: Spring 2018
Technical Writing and Document Design ONLINE

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This course is a 100% online course and uses the TAMU-CT Canvas Learning system (<https://tamuct.instructure.com>). To log on to this system, you will use the Canvas username and password communicated to you in this syllabus under section 9.0 Technology Requirements.

911 Cellular:

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management) [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

1.0 Course Overview

Like any workplace, this class is governed by a set of guidelines. Your professional attitude and persona should emerge strongly in this class. I expect everyone to communicate clearly and courteously with one another. I expect everyone to contribute productively to electronic discussion. I expect everyone to respect others and to demonstrate a professional attitude toward this class.

2.0 Objectives of Course

Technical communication is the study and practice of how best to convey information to multiple audiences with different goals and needs. After completing this class, you will be able to:

- Recognize and be able to analyze rhetorical features of various types of technical information (written, oral, visual, and electronic), including rhetorical contexts, purposes, and audiences.
- Communicate using clear, concise, and grammatically correct language.
- Demonstrate principles of effective document design in professional communication.
- Recognize the influences of organizational settings and communities of practice.
- Plan, design, develop, and present professional/technical information (written, visual, and electronic) for various contexts, purposes, and audiences.
- Work in a variety of roles in collaborative activities and team projects.

3.0 Required Textbook and Materials

Lannon, John M. *Technical Communication*, 14th edition. New York: Longman, 2017. This text does not need to be purchased in the campus bookstore, but it is your responsibility to obtain a copy (whether or you buy or rent) BEFORE the first assignments are due. This text is also available in electronic format, by download or internet access.

4.0 Course Requirements

- **Chapter Discussions (100 points cumulative total, average of top ten Discussion grades):** Most weeks of our course include at least one relevant Discussion board for which you will prepare and post an electronic response. Potential topics will be provided for each Discussion. Each Discussion board will be open for a minimum of two consecutive weeks, and may be made unavailable at the end of that time. Responses to your fellow students' posts are encouraged, and can be used to count toward your minimum ten postings. Missed Discussion postings CANNOT be made up.
- **Chapter Quizzes (100 points cumulative total, average of top ten Quiz grades):** Most weeks of our course include at least one relevant Chapter Quiz which you must complete. Each Chapter Quiz consists of ten questions in True/False format. Each Chapter Quiz will be open for a minimum of two consecutive weeks, and may be made unavailable at the end of that time. Missed Chapter Quizzes CANNOT be made up.
- **Library Assignment (100 points):** This Major Assignment is a 15-question assessment designed to develop electronic research skills, and is presented in multiple-choice format.
- **Job Search, Cover Letter, and Resume (150 points):** This Major Assignment consists of three separate components, including a professional-quality resume, a job application

letter in standard business correspondence format, and a short essay designed to help organize your search for a job. A handout will be provided to help you prepare your Job Search.

- **Product Description and Definition (150 points):** This Major Assignment requires you to create a document designed for marketing a specific product, including a detailed definition of that technical object. The item used for this assignment must be approved by your instructor.
- **Instructions (100 points):** This Major Assignment is a detailed document including step-by-step instructions to assemble a technical object or describe a technical process. The subject used for this assignment must be approved by your instructor.
- **Proposal Letter and Article Summary (100 points):** This Major Assignment consists of two separate components, including a cover letter in response to a specific Request for Proposal, and a summary of a technical article. The purpose of this assignment is to assist you in selecting and analyzing an appropriate Request for Proposal for your final Major Assignment.
- **Proposal (200 points):** This Major Assignment is a formal Proposal, prepared in response to a specific Request for Proposal. Your document will be evaluated based on its professional appearance, as well as your thorough analysis of the proper audience for your document.

5.0 **Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion**

- 100 points - Chapter Discussions (average of top ten Discussion grades)
- 100 points - Chapter Quizzes (average of top ten Quiz grades)
- 100 points - Library Assignment
- 150 points - Job Search, Cover Letter, and Resume
- 150 points - Product Description and Definition
- 100 points - Instructions
- 100 points - Proposal Letter and Article Summary
- 200 points – Proposal

Grading Scale:

900 - 1000 points	A
800 - 899 points	B
700 - 799 points	C
600 – 699 points	D
Below 600 points	F

6.0 Posting of Grades

All grades will be posted in our Canvas class. Grades for Chapter Quizzes are available upon completion of each respective Chapter Quiz, since those submissions are graded automatically. Grades for Discussion postings will be available within one week after that respective Discussion board has closed. Grades for Major Assignments that are submitted on or before their respective due dates will be returned within one week of the assignment due date.

7.0 Complete Course Calendar (subject to change)

Tentative Instructional Outline:

Week	Chapter	Graded Elements Due	Point Value
1	Introduction to Course 1: Introduction to Technical Communication 2: Meeting the Needs of Specific Audiences	Chapter 1 Discussion Chapter 2 Discussion	
2	3: Persuading Your Audience 4: Weighing the Ethical Issues	Chapter 3 Discussion Chapters 1 – 3 Quiz Chapter 4 Discussion Chapter 4 Quiz	
3	6: An Overview of the Technical Writing Process	Chapter 6 Discussion Chapter 6 Quiz	
4	10: Organizing for Readers	Chapter 10 Discussion Chapter 10 Quiz LIBRARY ASSIGNMENT	 100
5	16: Resumes and Other Job-Search Materials 15: Workplace Memos and Letters	Chapter 16 Discussion Chapter 16 Quiz Chapter 15 Discussion	
6	14: Email and Text Messages	Chapter 14 Discussion Chapters 14+15 Quiz JOB SEARCH, COVER LETTER, and RESUME	 150
7	17: Technical Definitions 18: Technical Descriptions, Specifications, and Marketing Materials	Chapter 17 Discussion Chapter 17 Quiz Chapter 18 Discussion Chapter 18 Quiz	

8	11: Editing for a Professional Style and Tone 12: Designing Visual Information	Chapter 11 Discussion Chapter 12 Discussion PRODUCT DESCRIPTION and DEFINITION	150
SPRING BREAK!			
9	19: Instructions and Procedures	Chapter 19 Discussion Chapter 19 Quiz	
10	7: Thinking Critically about the Research Process 8: Evaluating and Interpreting Information	Chapter 7 Discussion Chapter 8 Discussion INSTRUCTIONS	100
11	21: Formal Analytical Reports 9: Summarizing Research Findings and Other Information	Chapter 21 Discussion Chapter 21 Quiz Chapter 9 Discussion	
12	22: Proposals	Chapter 22 Discussion Chapter 22 Quiz PROPOSAL LETTER and ARTICLE SUMMARY	100
13	23: Oral Presentations and Video Conferencing	Chapter 23 Discussion Chapter 23 Quiz	
14	25: Social Media	Chapter 25 Discussion PROPOSAL PROGRESS MEMO	
15		PROPOSAL	200
16	End of semester		

8.0 The Operation of the Online Course and Being an Online Student: Assignment Submission Policy

I expect you to submit your assignments before midnight on the day they are due. All assignments will be submitted electronically. Online learning requires students to be very self-disciplined, so be sure you understand and are prepared to comply with all required class assignments and deadlines. For this course, all assignments are available under the “Weekly Assignments” tab on our course home page, and will be available for a minimum of two weeks. All activities will be due on Sundays, as listed in the Course Calendar.

8.1 Discussion postings and Chapter Quizzes may NOT be submitted late. If a Discussion posting is not submitted by the due date, or a Chapter Quiz is not completed by the due date, a zero grade will be recorded for that assignment.

8.2 Late Submissions. If a Major Assignment is submitted after midnight on the day it is due, that assignment will be considered late. Late assignments will be penalized for each day beyond the due date. For example, an assignment due on Sunday would receive a deduction if submitted on Monday, and it would receive an additional deduction if submitted on Tuesday. If an assignment is not submitted within one week after the submission date, then the assignment will be considered “missed” and a grade of zero will be recorded for that assignment. This policy is intended to prepare you for the rigors of professional writing situations and professional deadlines.

8.3 Extended Submission Date. I will consider negotiating an extension of no more than one week **on one occasion** during the course for a single Major Assignment, should the need arise. A **formal** request for an extension must be sent by email at least 24 hours **before** the assignment is due. The extension request should be in memorandum format, and you **must**:

- Ask for an extension
- Explain why the assignment will not be submitted by the due date
- Specify a revised submission date within one week of the original due date.

If no formal request is made for an extension, the assignment will be considered late. If the assignment is not submitted by the revised submission date, a grade of zero will be recorded.

8.4 Revision Policy. You will be allowed to revise Major Assignments Two, Three, Four, and/or Five one time each if you receive a grade equivalent to 89% or lower, and would like to raise your grade for the assignment. (Submissions which earn a grade equivalent to 90% or higher may not be rewritten, and your Proposal Assignment may not be revised due to time constraints.) I will average the grade on the revised submission with the original grade for the assignment. Revisions are due one week after the graded assignment is returned to you. However, before you begin a rewrite, you must contact me to outline your revision plan. In order to improve your grade through revision, you must **SUBSTANTIALLY** revise your assignment, but I am happy to help you do so.

8.5 Backup Copies. Always keep backup electronic copies of ALL your work, as well as ALL graded copies of your work in case a grade dispute arises.

9.0 Technology Requirements

9.1 Course Access. This course will use the TAMU-CT Canvas learning management system. Log on to <https://tamuct.instructure.com> to access the course.

Username: Your myCT username

(xx123 or everything before the “@” in your myCT email address)

Initial password: Your myCT password

9.2 Technology Support. For technology issues, you should contact Help Desk Central, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

Web Chat: <http://hdc.tamu.edu>

When calling or chatting for support, please let your support technician know you are a TAMU-CT student. For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Technology issues are not an excuse for missing a course deadline – make sure your computer is configured correctly, and address issues well in advance of deadlines.

10.0 Classroom Communication Policy

All questions or concerns should be sent to me through email. I will attempt to answer each email message in a timely manner. However, if your email is sent after normal business hours, then I may not respond until the next business day. Please plan accordingly.

If I have not responded to your email message through Canvas within one (1) business day, please send a duplicate message to me at s.hill@tamuct.edu.

11.0 Drop Policy and Incomplete Grade Contracts

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf) [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf]. Instructors **cannot** drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar’s Office will provide a deadline for which the form must be returned, completed and signed. Once you return the signed form to the Records Office and wait 24 hours, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled in the class. Should you still be enrolled, FOLLOW UP with the Records Office immediately. You are to participate in class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absences. Should you miss the deadline to drop or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F for the course.

The Incomplete Grade Contract procedure is designed for students who encounter significant life-altering circumstances **after** the drop deadline. Ongoing difficulties in a class do not meet the requirements for an Incomplete Grade Contract to be arranged, and any such request will not be approved. If you fail to participate fully in the class before the drop deadline, an Incomplete Grade Contract cannot be requested simply to allow you more time to complete your work.

12.0 Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University – Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. TAMU-CT expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment, and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt regarding collaboration, citation, or any other issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

13.0 Academic Accommodations

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion) webpage [https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion].

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines online](#), please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

14.0 Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Larry Davis at lmdavis@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

15.0 The University Writing Center

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library on Mondays from 6:00-9:00pm. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

16.0 University Library

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](https://tamuct.libguides.com/) [https://tamuct.libguides.com/].

17.0 Artifact Collection

To ensure the English Department's learning outcomes are met, there is a program-wide artifact collection process. To that end, some of the projects you complete for ENGL 3309 this semester may be used for programmatic assessment. Please note that all efforts will be made to keep your identity anonymous; as such, all identifying markers will be removed from your work if used for programmatic assessment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

18.0 A Note about Sexual Violence at Texas A&M-Central Texas

Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. The university offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are mandated reporters, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of Domestic/Dating Violence or Stalking) while a student at TAMUCT, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX Office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Student Counseling (254-501-5955) located on the second floor of Warrior Hall (207L).

Sexual violence can occur on our campus because predators often feel emboldened, and victims often feel silenced or shamed. It is incumbent on ALL of us to find ways to actively create environments that tell predators we don't agree with their behaviors and tell survivors we will support them. Your actions matter. Don't be a bystander; be an agent of change. For additional information on campus policy and resources visit the [Title IX webpage](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php)[https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php].

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