

ENC 2210: Technical Writing - Syllabus

Instructor: Asmaa Ghonim

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Credits: 3

Class Times: online

Office Hours: online by appointment

UF Flexible Learning

16 weeks to complete

Course Description

UF Catalog Description:

A survey of the forms and methods of communication used in business, industry and government, including non-formal and formal reports, letters, resumes and proposals.

Overview:

This course introduces you to technical and professional writing. It offers practical information about communicating in different kinds of workplace environments and professional communities. You will produce and analyze many common technical writing genres: email messages, letters, resumes, memos, reports, proposals, technical descriptions, technical definitions, technical manuals, proposals, etc.

We are using workplace television shows and popular culture to provide content for assignments as well as drawing from your real-world experiences.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory

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completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Texts and Course Policies

Texts:

Johnson-Sheehan, Richard. *Technical Communication Today*, 6th edition with Revel Access (2018).

Williams, Joseph M. and Joseph Bizup. *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*, 5th Edition. Pearson (2015).

We will be watching the following episodes for assignments, which you can find through various online platforms like Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, Google Play, and iTunes.

- *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (1.01) "Pilot"
- *The Office* (5.3) "Business Ethics"
- *The Office* (7.25 and 7.26) "Search Committee"
- *Parks and Recreation* (3.2) "Flu Season"
- *Parks and Recreation* (3.5) "Media Blitz"
- *Parks and Recreation* (3.7) "Harvest Festival"
- *VEEP* (1.1) "Fundraiser"
- *Silicon Valley* (2.6) "Homicide"

For additional writing support, please see [More Resources](#).

Course Policies:

Assignment Completion:

You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

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Submission Schedule:

You may submit up to four assignments per week. To submit more than four assignments per week, you must seek approval from the instructor.

Participation and Attendance:

Unlike some of your classes, this course is skills-based. In other words, practice makes all the difference to writing; the more you write, the better you become. Consequently, the effects of this course are cumulative, and being “present” online means being active on discussion boards, in peer reviews, and other interactive elements of the course. In the online course, participation measures your attendance. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with [university policies](#).

Netiquette:

Since participation and discussion are an integral part of the course you are expected to treat your classmates with courtesy and respect as you would in a face-to-face setting. Collaboration is an integral part of the course design and applicable to real world workplace environments.

Formatting & Submission:

All assignments will be submitted by clicking the "Submit Assignment" button found on each Canvas assignment page. Save documents as a .doc/.docx/.rtf file with your name and assignment. Example: naltabaa_memo1.docx. Please follow the [MLA style and citation guidelines](#).

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:

Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the [Student Honor Code](#).

A Note on Plagiarism:

***Important tip: There should never be a time when you copy and paste something and don't provide the exact location and citation information for the source. ***

Plagiarism has serious consequences on your academic career. If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, I will award him or her a failing grade on the assignment. Additionally, University policy suggests that, as a minimum, instructors should impose a course grade penalty and report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. You should know that your work might be tested for its “originality” against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism guardian sites to which the

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University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute proof of plagiarism. Other forms of academic dishonesty will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty. Examples include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations to include in your assignments.

Grades:

Here is information about [UF Grading policies](#).

Course Evaluations:

Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to [go online and evaluate this course](#).

Flexible Learning Policies

Technology Requirements:

Students must use their Gatorlink email account for this course. Students are recommended to check their email account DAILY for the duration of the course. Access to and on-going use of a computer with Internet access is required for all students. Competency in the basic use of a computer is required. At times, computers crash and Internet connections fail. It is in your best interest NOT to wait until the last minute to complete assignments.

Help:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-4357 (select option 2)
- at.ufl.edu

****** Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues **MUST** be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You **MUST** e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Length of time to complete a Flexible Learning course:

- Students are allotted 16 weeks to complete a course from the date of their enrollment. For course(s) not completed within the 16-week time limit, a failing grade of "E" will be reported to the registrar.
- Students who have academic goals such as graduation or applying to graduate school, are strongly advised to complete their course(s) 14 days prior to their personal deadline. This is to ensure the grades will be posted in plenty of time for transcripts.

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Most courses cannot be completed in less than 8 weeks because it is necessary for the student to receive feedback.

Disability Accommodations:

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations. The professional employees at the Disability Resource Center serve as full-time advocates for students with disabilities ensuring students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs. One of the services provided by the Disability Resource Center includes:

- Testing Accommodations:

disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodated-testing-request

Students with disabilities who need to drop a course due to disability-related reasons are permitted to petition for additional drops. Find more information by contacting the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#).

The Flexible Learning Office needs to be notified of any special accommodations required by the student when they begin their course by emailing the Accommodations Letter to learn@dce.ufl.edu.

Extension Policy:

Students are allowed 16 weeks from their date of enrollment to complete and submit their coursework.

If the student has made sufficient academic progress, which is defined as completing and submitting at least 50% of the coursework and has an extenuating circumstance, the student may petition the Flexible

Learning Office for a course extension before the course expires. Please email learn@dce.ufl.edu with your extension request.

If the student has not submitted at least 50% of their coursework, or the extension is denied, a failing grade of "E", "EO" or "E1" will be issued and recorded to the UF Registrar.

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Course Cancellation

Course cancellations must be completed in [ONE.UF](#) within 10 days of enrollment. No refunds are granted after 10 days.

It is the student's responsibility to verify that the cancellation has been received by the Flexible Learning office within the allotted time.

To cancel a course:

1. Sign on to [ONE.UF](#) , select "Register/View Schedule" in the Courses & Registration section.
2. Then select the course(s) you wish to cancel and submit.

[oneuf_drop](#)

Course Drops Within 14 weeks of enrollment date

To drop a course, you will need to complete your request in [ONE.UF](#) within 14 weeks of the date of enrollment. The course grade will appear as "W" on a UF transcript.

1. Sign on to [ONE.UF](#), select "Register/View Schedule" in the Courses & Registration section.
2. Then select the course(s) you wish to drop, include reason and submit.

[oneuf_drop](#)

*UF Undergraduate Students Only-Once you have done this, you must notify your Academic Advisor that you have submitted a drop request.

It is the student's responsibility to verify that all drop requests have been received by the Flexible Learning office within the allotted time. The course grade will appear as "W" on a UF transcript.

Full Term Withdrawals:

All full-term withdrawals must follow University of Florida policies/ procedures. An approved withdrawal form must be submitted to the [Dean of Student Affairs](#). for review and final approval. Students must also notify the Flexible Learning of this request by learn@dce.ufl.edu.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify Flexible Learning of their approved medical or retroactive withdrawal, so the students' record is updated. [Email](#) to our office a copy of the approval.

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Medical Withdrawals: [Medical Withdrawal Process](#)

Retroactive Withdrawals: [Retroactive Withdrawal Process](#)

Order UF Official Transcripts:

registrar.ufl.edu/services/transcripts

1. If you are unable to order your official transcript online, please contact the [UF Office of the University Registrar](#). In addition, on more information on mailing in a transcript request form by remitting a check or money order.
2. The Registrar's Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and their phone number is 352-392-1374. Persons with hearing impairments can call FRS # 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

UF Flexible Learning Contact Information:

Email: learn@dce.ufl.edu

Phone: (352) 294-6300

Website: [UF Flexible Learning](#)

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday, except Holidays

8:00am-5:00pm EST

Assignments

Assignments will total 7000 words, not including journal entries and writing reflections.

Journal Entries (8 entries; 10 points each, 80 points total)

- You will write a discussion (250 words minimum) based on the readings and viewings for the week(s). There will be specific questions and prompts to help guide you. Consult Canvas for prompts and due dates.
- You must answer all the questions in the prompt. You can structure the writing either as a series of short questions/answers or you can write paragraphs that engage the questions holistically. Whatever writing style you choose, make sure you engage all of the questions to receive full credit.

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Self-Evaluation Writing Reflections (2 reflections; 10 points each, 20 points total)

- You will write a 250-word memo to your instructor addressing the writing issues you've come across and what you hope to work on moving forward.
- Write a 250-word memo to your instructor discussing how you've improved as a technical writer over the semester and specific areas where you have noticed a marked improvement in your writing.
- These will be administered through UF Flexible Learning Online's ProctorFree.

Unit 1: Writing Correspondence: 2250 words, 220 points

As seen in the recent news, media, and politics, memos and letters are an integral part of the workplace structure and office communication.

Memo #1: Dress Code (250 words; 20 points)

For this assignment, you will respond to the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* episode "Pilot" and write a memo to the precinct from the perspective of Captain Holt addressing the importance of a precinct wide mandatory dress code.

Memo #2: Workplace Ethics (350 words; 30 points)

For this assignment, you will respond to the *Office* episode "Business Ethics" (5.3) and write a memo from the perspective of Michael Scott to the office about ethical practices in an office setting.

Memo #3: Staff Communication (450 words, 40 points)

For this assignment, you will respond to the *VEEP* episode "Fundraiser" (1.1) and write a memo from the office of Vice President Selina Meyer to her staff addressing the PR and communication issues that the office deals with during the episode.

Memo #4: Memo about Memos (550 words; 50 points)

For this assignment, you will respond to the *Washington Post* article, "James Comey's memo has shaken a presidency. Here's why memos have always mattered." You will write a memo to your instructor discussing the article and the significance of the memo genre in the recent political climate. Think critically about the significance not only of memos as a genre, but how this memo in particular has "shaken a presidency" -- why does this matter right now?

Memo #5: Health Advisory Notice and Info Graphic (650 words, 70 points)

For this assignment, you will respond to the Parks and Recreation Episode, 3.2 "Flu Season." You will write a memo from Nurse Ann Perkins to the employees of City Hall about the flu epidemic and appropriate flu prevention. This assignment will include at least 1 infographic to help illustrate your points.

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Unit 2 Project Proposal: (2450 words, 340 points)

For this unit, you will focus on the Harvest Festival Story arc from *Parks and Recreation*, Season 3, episodes 1-7).

Part 1. Project Proposal Memo (350 words, 40 points)

For this assignment, you will write a brief memo to Chris Traegar and Ben Wyatt from Leslie Knope proposing the Harvest Festival as a means to help alleviate the current budget problems the Parks Department has faced.

Part 2. Professional Letter (400 words, 60 points)

For this assignment, you will write a letter to a desired sponsor or vendor asking them to donate goods or services from the perspective of one of the Pawnee Parks and Rec staff (Lelise, April, Tom, Donna, Jerry, Ron, or Ben). For example, you could write the Pawnee Police Department asking them to donate officers for security.

Part 3. Progress Report (600 words, 100 points)

For this assignment, you will write a progress report to City Manager Chris Traegar and the Pawnee City Council from Leslie detailing the progress of the Harvest Festival. You will need to include a detailed list of outlines the operation of the Harvest Festival, including a working budget, vendor list, and venue information. More details will be provided on Canvas.

Part 4. A Note to the Sponsors (500 words, 50 points)

For this assignment, you will respond to the *Parks and Recreation* episode “Media Blitz” (3.5) and write a letter from the perspective of Leslie Knope about the Harvest Festival media campaign to the Harvest Festival sponsors.

Part 5. Harvest Festival Press Release (350 words, 30 points)

For this assignment, you will write a press release about the Harvest Festival for media and the general public outlets.

Part 6. Harvest Festival Promotional Materials (60 points)

You will create a visual document as part of your Harvest Festival promotion. This can be a print or online document. The goal of this is to streamline the information in your project for your target audience. In addition, you will write a separate brief metadiscourse reflection (250 words) about the design choices made in your promotional materials. More details will be provided on Canvas.

Part 7. Thank You Letter (250 words, 30 points)

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For this assignment, you will write a thank you note to the sponsors and volunteers of the Harvest Festival and addressing the difficulties that came up in episode 3.7 "Harvest Festival."

Unit 3: Technical Concepts: (1450 words, 210 points)

Research Analysis Memo: (350 words, 40 points)

For this assignment, you will write a brief memo to your instructor addressing the issues and rhetorical strategies used in the [John Oliver segment on "Vaccines."](#)

Technical Memo: (250 words, 30 points)

For this assignment, you will write a brief memo to your instructor addressing why you want to write on the topic you are writing about for your technical concept assignment. In addition to addressing your choice in term, you will also need to describe the medium and genre through which your technical description will be circulated. Will this be a blog post on the homepage of a company website? A post on your organization's Facebook page? A short video uploaded to YouTube? In defending your choice of medium, make sure to consider how your this technical concept might be better communicated through video, image, sound, or some combination. Also consider how different media and platforms (i.e. Facebook, twitter, website, YouTube, podcast, etc.) work better for different audiences.

Pitch Analysis Blog: (350 words, 40 points)

For this assignment, you will analyze the issues that occur in the *Silicon Valley* episode "Homicide" (2.6). You will write from the perspective of a tech industry blogger about the success and failures of the Hooli "Nucleus" launch. Keep your audience in mind -- who is reading this blog and what do they hope to gain from reading it?

Technical Concept Paper (500 words, 100 points)

For this assignment, you will pick a term or concept that is significant to your field. You will conduct research and provide an overview of that term for a lay audience. You must include 1-2 secondary sources.

- Option 1: You will write a traditional technical paper that will circulate in a prose medium (blog post, social medium update, etc.).
- Option 2: You will create a digital document (video/podcast, etc.) to engage your concept and write a brief discussion about why you chose this particular medium. If you chose this option you can create the actual digital document or write a script for it.

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Unit 4 Job Packet: (850 words, 130 points)

Part 1. Analyzing Job Ads (250 words, 30 points)

Find an application description for a job, internship, graduate school, and/or professional organization. Once you find the job description/application instructions, write a memo to your instructor in which you analyze this ad based on the following questions:

- What is the overall role of the position within the organization?
- What skills, experience, qualifications, training, abilities and qualities are “essential” for the position?
- What skills, experience, qualifications, training, abilities and qualities are “preferred” for the position?
- In the context of organization, what are the important needs, and how will the position address them? What outcome is the position expected to achieve?
- What are the potential challenges and barriers in the role and what knowledge, skills and abilities are necessary to meet them?
- What kinds of opportunities does the position provide?
- What are the keywords in the job ad?

Part 2. Write a Job Ad (350 words, 40 points)

You will write a job ad for the position of “Manager” for the Scranton Branch of Dunder Mifflin based off the Office episode “Search Committee” (7.25-6).

Part 3. Cover Letter and Resume: (250 words, 60 points)

Write a Cover Letter and Resume for the job ad you analyzed in part 1. In your cover letter, make sure you:

- Introduce yourself as an ideal candidate
- Address any shortcomings in your resume
- Provide specific examples from previous work/school experience that illustrate primary and secondary skills listed on your resume.

Remember, your cover letter should highlight the *most important* elements of your resume by crafting a coherent narrative about your qualifications for the position as it is described in the job ad. Do not try to restate every element of your resume.

In addition to the cover letter, craft a clear, concise resume demonstrating your skills and qualifications for this position. Consult your textbook for formatting and style guidelines.

Recommended Schedule

Unit 1 Writing Correspondence

Week 1 /Module 1: Welcome! Course Introduction

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Read: *Technical Communication Today* Chapter 1: Technical Communication in the Entrepreneurial Workspace and Chapter 19: Revising and Editing for Usability

Welcome Memo Due

Week 2/Module 2: Technical Communication Basics

Read *Technical Communication Today* Chapter 6: Emails, Memos, and Letters

Read Lesson 1: Understanding Style from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace* (S)

Watch *Brooklyn-Nine* "Pilot" (1.1) episode

Journal Entry #1 Due

Memo #1 Due

Week 3/Module 3: Communication and Ethics

Read: *Technical Communication Today*: Chapter 2: Profiling Your Readers and Chapter 4: Managing Ethical Challenges

Read: Lesson 2: Actions and Lesson 11: The Ethics of Style from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

Watch *The Office* Episode "Business Ethics"

Memo #2 Due

Journal Entry #2

Week 4/Module 4: Effective Communication

Read: *Technical Communication Today*: Chapter 15: Organizing and Drafting

Read: Lesson 11: Basic of Clarity and Grace *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

Watch *VEEP* episode "Fundraiser" (1.1)

Memo #3 Due

Week 5/Module 5: Memo Legacy: Writing for Your Readers

Read: *Technical Communication Today*: Chapter 13: How to be Persuasive

Read: Lesson 3: Characters from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

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Read: [Washington Post article, "James Comey's memo has shaken a presidency. Here's why Memos have always mattered."](#)

Memo #4 Due

Week 6/Module 6: Writing with Graphics

Read: Technical Communication Today: Chapter 18: Creating and Using Graphics

"10 Steps to Creating the Perfect Infographic" <https://www.creativebloq.com/design/10-steps-creating-perfect-infographic-3145672>

Watch *Parks and Recreation* "Flu Season" episode (3.2)

Journal Entry #3 Due

Memo #5 Due

Unit 2: Harvest Festival Proposal

Recommended Viewing: *Parks and Recreation* Season 3, episodes 1-7

Week 7/Module 7: Proposing Projects

Read: Technical Communication Today: Chapter 9: Proposals, Chapter 10: Brief Reports, Chapter 11: Formal Reports

Read: Lesson 4: Cohesion and Coherence from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

Proposal Project Part 1: Project Proposal Memo Due

Proposal Project Part 2: Professional Letter Due

Week 8/Module 8: Writing Coherently

Technical Communication Today: Chapter 16: Using Plain and Persuasive Style

Journal #4 Due

Proposal Project Part 3: Project Progress Report Due

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Week 9/Module 9: Writing Emphasis

Read/Revisit: *Technical Communication Today*: Chapter 19: Revising and Editing for Usability

Read: Lesson 5: Emphasis from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

Watch Parks and Recreation "Media Blitz" (3.5)

Proposal Project Part 4: A Letter to the Sponsors Due

Proposal Project Part 5: Harvest Festival Press Release Due

Week 10/Module 10: Media Management

Read: *Technical Communication Today*: Chapter 17: Designing Documents and Interfaces

Read: Lesson 6: Motivation from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

Watch Parks and Recreation "Harvest Festival"(3.7)

Journal Entry #5 Due

Proposal Project Part 6: Harvest Festival Promotional Materials Due

Proposal Part 7: Thank You Letter Due

Writing Reflection # 1 Due

Unit 3: Technical Concept

Week 11/Module 11: Breaking Down Ideas

Read: *Technical Communication Today*: Chapter 7: Technical Descriptions and Specifications and Chapter 8: Instructions and Documentations

Read: Lesson 9 "Shape" from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

Watch [John Oliver segment "Vaccines"](#)

Research Analysis Memo Due

Technical Memo Due

Week 12/Module 12: Pitching Your Ideas

Read: *Technical Communication Today*: Chapter 12: Thinking Like an Entrepreneur and Chapter 21: Writing for the Internet

Watch *Silicon Valley* episode "Homicide" (2.6)

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Journal #6 Due

Pitch Analysis Blog Due

Week 13/Module 13: Know Your Audience: Technical to General

Technical Communication Today: Chapter 14: Researching in the Technical Workspace and Chapter 20: Presenting and Pitching Your Ideas

Read: Lesson 10: Elegance from *Style: Basics of Clarity and Grace*

Technical Concepts Paper Due

Unit 4: Job Packet

Week 14/Module 14: Jobs!

Read: Technical Communication Today: Chapter 5: Starting Your Career and Chapter 3: Working in Teams

Watch *The Office* Episode "Search Committee" (7.25-6)

Journal #7 Due

Job Packet Part 1 Due

Week 15/Module 15: Jobs 2.0!

Research Job Ads

Job Packet Part 2 Due

Journal #8 Due

Week 16/Module 16: Jobs and Beyond

Course Wrap Up

Job Packet: Cover Letter and Resume Due

Writing Reflection #2 Due