

Technical Writing

Instructor

Michael David Measel
"David"

Contact

mmeasel@g.clemson.edu
(501)580-6096

Office Location & Hours

Available by appointment,
Meetings online via Zoom

Course

ENGL 3140-416
CRN 54588

Semester

Summer 2020
June 22- August 7

Meeting Times

No class meetings, all
course content in Canvas

Description

This course is writing-intensive. Throughout the semester you will be producing samples of technical writing in addition to composing daily discussion posts in which you will reflect on your interaction with technical writing. Each week we will cover a separate topic in technical writing, from the ethics of technical writing to multimodal composition of instructions. You will learn to recognize technical writing in your daily life; represent yourself professionally to employers, colleagues, and customers; produce efficient infographics; and compose written, oral, and multimodal instructions. Through study of technical writing and technical writing theory, consideration of technical writing in multiple contexts, and reflection on your own experiences with technical writing, you will come to understand technical writing as an evolving element ever-present in our daily communications.

Required Materials

Laptop featuring Microsoft Office (specifically Word and PowerPoint), and Adobe Acrobat; both software collections are available to you for free via your association with Clemson. If you are not capable of running the Adobe software suite on your computer, including Premiere Pro and Audition, be prepared to use campus resources to utilize this software.

Course Learning Outcomes

TECHNICAL WRITING IN CONTEXT

Develop an understanding of technical writing as a long-established and consistently developing form of communication. Recognize its varying definitions and relationship to professional writing.

ETHICS OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Become familiar with the ethics of technical writing and be able to explain how and why they are necessary to avoid communication errors both large and small. Be able to identify errors in technical writing and their related consequences.

CRITICAL THINKING

Become proficient at performing rhetorical analyses of technical writing, with an emphasis on understanding of ethos and the ability to delineate between high quality technical writing that is ethically appropriate and technical writing that is poorly researched or otherwise violates technical writing ethics.

CLARITY & EFFICIENCY

Develop strategies for writing efficiently and effectively according to the guidelines of Standard Written English. Communicate ideas in a clear, direct style appropriate for practical applications.

GENRE AWARENESS & DOCUMENT DESIGN

Identify and compose in various technical writing genres, using document design techniques appropriate to each. Apply appropriate formal elements according to the rhetorical situation in the composition of various technical writing documents.

AUDIENCE AWARENESS & AUDIENCE ADDRESS

Develop an understanding of audience as varied, complex, and nuanced. Identify the audiences of various technical compositions and compose appropriately for various audiences according to their degree of knowledge of the topic at hand. Compose written, oral, and multimodal instructions which are efficient, effective, and accessible to a non-specialized audience.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION

Present yourself professionally to employers in your field of interest. Discover the skills for adapting your job application materials to the needs of employers through application documents and development of a professional online persona.

MUSICAL LISTENING

Apply the tenets of Musical Listening in the composition of technical documents, with an emphasis on oral and multimodal instruction.

Assignments

Readings & Discussions (20%)

You are expected to complete all assigned readings. Your reading assignments are listed in the class schedule. Readings are subject to change to meet the needs of the class. You must respond to a discussion prompt each weekday in the Discussions section of Canvas. There will be 26 discussion prompts to which you can respond across the semester, one for each weekday (aside from Fri, July 3rd, for the July 4th holiday. Discussion prompts will be based on class discussion topics and will challenge you to communicate solutions regarding issues in technical writing. Your responses must be intellectually substantial and expressed with clarity. Discussion posts but be at least 150 words in order to receive full credit. **These weekly discussion posts are the basis for your Participation grade.**

You have until Sunday at 11:59 of each week to submit the five discussion posts from the previous week (for example, posts for Monday through Friday of Week 1 are due the following Sunday, just prior to the beginning of Week 2). Each week on Monday, the previous week's discussion will close for comments. If you need to make up discussion posts, contact me and we will discuss that option, which may or may be available depending upon how late the posts will be. Late posts are subject to the late assignment policy.

Document Design (10%)

I will provide you with content for a product description and instructions on how to use that product (see Announcements). Arrange the information provided appropriately according to genre conventions and the needs of your audience. Refer to Markel's text and actual product manuals, electronic and print, for product descriptions and instructions.

Résumé (10%)

Compose a résumé in response to a job description which you will seek out for this project. Your resume must reflect your understanding of document design; do not produce a plain-text resume. This job description should ideally be in the field which you are pursuing in your studies at Clemson. Internships are acceptable, as well as alternate application documents (Curriculum Vitae; etc. - **discuss it with me before submitting a document other than a résumé**). Include appropriate professional summary, education, employment history, and skills for the position to which you are applying. No more than two pages, not including job description; if two pages, the résumé must extend to the end of the second page. **Include the job description to which you are responding with your résumé as the first page, followed by your résumé.** Submit as pdf.

Written Instructions (10%)

Considering options for your instructional video project in Week 6, compose a detailed, accurate set of written instructions that meets the needs of an audience entirely new to the topic that you are discussing. Your topic for written instructions should be one in which you take an interest, preferably associated with your chosen area of study. The task for which you provide instructions should require several (between ten and twenty) steps and should explain those steps in detail and in layperson's terms so that they are accessible to your audience.

Oral Instructions (10%)

Using audio recording software, produce a second set of instructions, with your options for your instructional video project in mind. Follow the guidelines of the "Written Instructions assignment," but compose instructions that meet the needs of an audience who is already highly familiar with your topic (*the topic*, not necessarily the task that you are detailing). Audio recording should be no less than two minutes, no more than four. Using Adobe Audition or another audio cleanup software, clear your recording of background noise, clicks and pops, and clipping.

Infographic (10%)

Review the statistical information about technical writing at the Bureau of Labor Statistics website at. Gather statistical information from the following links: "Pay," "Similar Occupations," "Job Outlook," and "Work Environment." Create an efficient infographic representing these four collections of statistical data without duplicating graphics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Design your own graphics making them visually different from what is on the BLS website. For example, if you see a bar graph on BLS, do not represent the same statistical information in your infographic in the form of a bar graph. You may go beyond efficiency to make your infographic aesthetically pleasing and attention-grabbing, but remember that the primary purpose of your infographic is to inform, not to entertain.

Workplace Correspondence (10%)

Based on a situation posed to you by Mr. Measel, compose two letters of workplace correspondence. One of these will be a bad example, the other a good example: compose one document (the genre will depend on the situation posed to you) that meets the ethical and professional guidelines of the workplace situation, and a second that does not. The purpose of writing both letters is to give you a feel for both what is appropriate in workplace communication and what is not. Submit 2 pages (one for each piece of correspondence), combined in a single document. Submit as docx.

Instructional Video (20%)

Choose a task that requires a significant degree of technical knowledge and choose an appropriate audience whom you can address with instructions on how to complete this task. Using digital tools provided by Mr. Measel (instructional YouTube videos), record audio (your voice) and video (this can be a screen capture) in a 5-to-7-minute instructional video. Layer your voice over an appropriate instrumental audio file to set an appropriate tone for your instructional video. You may produce this audio yourself or harvest it from a source. Submit as link or wmv, mp4, or mk4.

Citation & Formatting Guidelines

You are encouraged to utilize the resources at the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL, https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) to assist with citation and other formatting elements. We will review the Purdue OWL on the first day of class and use it throughout the semester as necessary during course discussions.

Schedule

***Assignments and due dates are in red.

Week 1 Introduction & Ethics (Wed, Jun 24 - Fri, Jun 26)

Wed Markel Ch. 1

Thurs “A Brief History of Technical Communication” (O’Hara), “Constructing a Contextual History of English Language Technical Writing” (Crabbe)

Fri Markel Ch. 2, excerpt from “A Brief Introduction to Ethics” (Velasquez), STC Ethical Principles (link below)

<https://www.stc.org/about-stc/ethical-principles/>

Week 2 Audience, Genre, Document Design (Mon, Jun 29 - Fri, Jul 3)

Mon Markel Ch. 6

Tues Markel, Ch. 4

Wed “Audience Invoked” (Johnson),

Thurs Markel, Ch. 7

Fri “An Introduction to Genre Theory” (Chandler)

Sun, 7/5 Document Design (10%), due @ 11:59 p.m.

Week 3 Job Application Documents, Professional Correspondence (Mon, Jul 6 - Fri, Jul 10)

Mon Markel Ch. 10

Tues “Business as Usual” (Ross & Young)

Wed Mr. Measel’s Website, CV (link below)

michaeldavidmeasel.com

Thurs Markel Ch. 9

Resume (10%), due 11:59 p.m.

Fri Sample Letters & Memos (see Announcements)

Sun, 7/12 Workplace Correspondence (10%), due @ 11:59 p.m.

Week 4 **Written & Oral Instructions** (*Mon, Jul 13 - Fri, Jul 17*)
 Mon Markel Ch. 14
 Tues Sample Written Instructions
 Wed “Music, Rhythm, Rhetoric” (Measel)
 Thurs Sample Oral Instructions (see Announcements)
 Written Instructions (10%), due @ 11:59 p.m.
 Fri

Sun, 7/19 **Oral Instructions (10%), due @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 5 **Creating Graphics** (*Mon, Jul 20 - Fri, Jul 24*)
 Mon Markel Ch. 8
 Tues Bureau of Labor Statistics website
 Wed “Infographics: A Toolbox...”
 Thurs Sample Infographics (see Announcements)
 Fri “How to Make an Infographic...” (YouTube, link below)
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQXf_d5Mgjj&t=801s

Sun, 7/26 **Infographics (10%), due @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 6 **Multimodal Technical Writing** (*Mon, Jul 27 - Wed, Jul 29*)
 Mon “Excellence in a Technical Presentation” (Padgett & Yoder)
 Tues Sample Videos (see Announcements)
 Wed Sample Videos (see Announcements)

Sun, 7/31 **Instructional Video (20%), due @ 11:59 p.m.**

***** Instructional videos will be accepted no later than 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, August 2, 2020. There will be no exceptions for this deadline.**

Key Dates

Jun 22, Mon	Orientation
Jun 23, Tues	Late enrollment
Jun 24, Wed	Classes begin
Jun 25, Thurs	Last day to register or add a class or declare Audit
Jun 29, Mon	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the University without a W grade
July 3, Fri	July 4 th holiday
July 13, Mon	Last day for instructors to issue midterm evaluations
July 17, Fri	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the University without final grades
July 29, Wed	Last day of classes
July 30, Thurs	Study day
July 31, Fri - Aug 3, Mon	Exams
Aug 4, Tues	2 p.m. - Deadline to submit candidate grades
Aug 5, Wed	9 a.m. - Deadline to submit other grades
Aug. 6, Thu	Candidates for graduation may access grades
	Doctoral hooding at the Brooks Center
Aug. 7, Fri	Graduation

Policies & Procedures

Late Assignments

All assignments due dates are available in the course syllabus and in Canvas Assignments. Unless otherwise noted by instructor, all assignments must be submitted by the day and time indicated in the syllabus and in Canvas in order to receive full credit. All late assignment submissions are subject to a penalty of one (1) point per day.

Technology Requirements

This course requires the use of computer technologies in and out of class. Students are expected to bring their laptops to class with batteries fully charged. While some class time is provided for computer literacy instruction, the instructor will either provide additional help on an individual basis or recommend other support for advanced applications. **Cellular phones must be both turned off and stored away during class.**

Office Hours

Please note my regular office hours above. You also can arrange to see me at other times that are mutually convenient. Office hours belong to you just as much as our class time. Do not hesitate to take advantage of my availability and the help I am ready to offer. If you need to contact me outside of class time or office hours, it is best to communicate with me by email.

Course & University Policies

Attendance

You may accrue a total of three (3) absences without a change to your final grade. All absences contribute to the same pool; there are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences. Any additional absences beyond three can result in the dropping of the final grade by 10%, or one letter (A, B, C, D, F).

Because privacy regulations stipulate that faculty and staff communicate with students through authorized University channels, use your University email account or Canvas's messaging system to contact me.

Canvas allows you as a student to quickly notify instructors of an absence from class and provides set categories (e.g. court attendance, illness, family illness or death, military duty, hospitalization, university function, religious observance). This does not serve as an excuse from class but allows students to communicate with instructors (all or some, of their choice). Consult with instructors when discussing absences. The Dean of Students' office can also be of assistance.

Student Accessibility Services

Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the professor know and make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu, or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center building. Appointments are strongly encouraged - drop-ins will be seen if at all possible, but there could be a significant wait due to scheduled appointments. Students who receive

Academic Access Letters are strongly encouraged to request, obtain, and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to follow this process each semester. You can access further information at the [Student Accessibility Services Website \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and the [Office of Access and Equity Website \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Email Policy / Response Time

You can expect a response to your email inquiries within 36 hours, excluding weekends and university holidays.

Copyright

All materials found in this course are strictly for the use of students enrolled in this course and for purposes associated with this course; they may not be retained or further disseminated. Clemson students, faculty, and staff are expected to comply fully with institutional copyright policy as well as all other copyright laws.

Privacy Policy

This course is designed with your privacy in mind. If, however, you feel that an assignment or technology tool undermines your right to privacy, please contact me immediately. We will work together to determine an alternative assignment that will help you achieve the course learning outcomes.

Online Conduct

Appropriate online academic conduct means maintaining a safe learning environment based on mutual respect and civility. All participants in Clemson courses are expected to behave professionally by adhering to these standards of conduct:

- Never transmit or promote content known to be illegal.
- Respect other people's privacy as well as your own.
- Forgive other people's mistakes.
- Never use harassing, threatening, embarrassing, or abusive language or actions.

Online communication that fails to meet these standards of conduct will be removed from the course. Repeated misconduct may result in being blocked from online discussions, receiving a grade penalty, or being dismissed from the course. Such misconduct in the online environment may also be reported to officials for appropriate action in accordance with University policy. If you ever encounter inappropriate content in our course, please contact me with your concerns.

Academic Integrity

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

A simple definition of plagiarism is when someone presents another person's words, visuals, or ideas as his or her own. The instructor will deal with plagiarism on a case-by-case basis. I will use, at my discretion, the Plagiarism Resolution Form. All infractions of academic dishonesty will be reported to Undergraduate Studies for resolution through that office.

See the [Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy \(Links to an external site\)](#). website for additional information about academic integrity at Clemson.

Academic Grievances

Students are advised to visit the [Ombuds' Office \(Links to an external site\)](#). prior to filing a grievance. After discussion with the undergraduate academic ombudsman, students should contact Undergraduate Studies (656-3022) for assistance filing official paperwork.

Non-Discrimination

Clemson University is committed to providing a higher education environment that is free from sexual discrimination. Therefore, if you believe you or someone else that is part of the Clemson University community has been discriminated against based on sex, or if you have questions about Title IX, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Alesia Smith, who also serves as the Executive Director of Equity Compliance, at 110 Holtzendorff Hall, 864-656-3181 (voice) or 864-656-0899 (TDD). The Title IX Coordinator is the person designated by Clemson University to oversee its Title IX compliance efforts. Please consult the [University's Title IX policy \(Links to an external site\)](#). for full details.

Student Support Services

Academic Success Center

The Academic Success Center provides free services, including tutoring, academic coaching, and academic skills workshops, for all Clemson students. Visit the [Academic Success Center website \(links to an external site\)](#) for more information on their services and workshops.

Writing Center

Clemson University's Writing Center offers free one-on-one tutoring for all Clemson students. Visit the [Writing Center's website \(links to an external site\)](#) for more information about their services or to make an appointment.

Cooper Library

Reference librarians are available in person and via text, phone, email, and chat to answer your research questions. Visit [Ask a Librarian \(links to an external site\)](#) for more information or to get in touch with a librarian.

Technical Support

If you are having hardware or software problems, CCIT's Service Desk may be able to help you. Contact them at ITHELP@clemson.edu with a detailed description of your problem.

Academic Advising

[Academic advising \(links to an external site\)](#) is an ongoing educational process that connects the student to the University. Academic advising supports the University's mission of preparing the student for learning beyond the confines of the academy. Academic advisors represent

and interpret University policies and procedures to the student and help the student navigate the academic and organizational paths of the institution.

Registrar

The [Registrar's office \(links to an external site\)](#) provides information about important deadlines, degree and program requirements, and other key information, including use of iROAR to add, drop, or withdraw from courses.

Please print your name, sign, and enter the date on the lines below and return this document in pdf format to Mr. Measel. Please return the document in full rather than submitting just this page.

By printing and signing your name below, you are indicating that you have read and are aware of all aspects of this course as represented in the syllabus, and that you agree with all course and university policies and procedures.

Print _____

Sign _____

Date _____