ENC 3254: Professional Communication for Engineers
Section 1486
Tuesday, Thursday Period 5-6, 6
Anderson 021 ---- Spring 2009

Steven J. LeMieux
s.j.lemieux@ufl.edu
Tigert 302
Office Hours:
Tuesdays and Thursdays, Period 4

Course Description:

Technical communication is the practice of conveying technical information to multiple audiences who may have very different goals and varying technical needs for that information. In this class you not only learn how to research, organize, and present technical information, but also how to write effectively, participate in group collaboration, and use various technologies to support your communication efforts.

ENC 3254 is designed to help students master a variety of communication strategies and genres of writing relevant to engineering. We will focus primarily on the composition and design of larger documents such as proposals, instructions, and formal reports. We will also compose and design smaller documents such as memos, letters, resumes, and informal reports--as well as construct formal presentations. Communicating technical information effectively, and understanding the economic, environmental, ethical, and social impact that such communication entails with a global, multicultural framework, is the goal of this course.

We will practice analyzing writing situations in the technical workplace; then we will use the strategies for audience-analysis, organization, style, and page layout to develop documents that address those rhetorical situations. The objective of this course is to help you learn how to write for the professional engineering community you will join.

Required Texts:

Lannon, John M., *Technical Communication,* 11th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman (2008)

<u>Assignments and Group Projects:</u>

***Introductory Memo**: Using a standard memo format, you will send an email to the class listserv introducing yourself, your career goals, your areas of specialization, and your writing experiences. You will also need to include your schedule, with marked times available outside of class for group project work.

***Job Application Packet**: (Cover letter, Resume, Follow-Up Letter) In this multi-part assignment you will first identify a job you hope to have. Next, you will research the field and construct a profile for the ideal candidate for this position. Finally, you will write a cover letter and a resume for this particular job, as well as a follow-up letter thanking your fictional employer for your interview which restates your interest.

***Technical Definition**: You will first generate a list of technical terms or concepts specific to your area of engineering in a small group, and then subsequently identify an audience and a purpose for the terms using a profile sheet. You will first write a sentence definition of one of your chosen terms, then an expanded paragraph definition for a first-year engineering student. Next, you will write a 600 word expanded definition for a lay person. You will also detail the four expansion strategies you use for both versions, including at least one visual and one rough diagram. You must cite and document at least four outside sources, using APA style, for both expanded versions.

***Progress Report**: During the Formal Proposal process you will write an individual progress report. This will track activities, problems, and progress for both your individual assigned tasks, and the group's overall task. The focus will be on schedules, setbacks, problems solved, and the dates and stages of your progress.

***Instruction Manual**: You will construct an instructions manual for a product, process, or task. The actual technical instructions will be for a "thing" any and all students at UF would find useful. The manual will contain descriptions and specifications, product warnings, maintenance and troubleshooting advice, and any other information the user is likely to need to complete the task, use the product, or fulfill the process. The manual will be assessed on the quality and readability of the instructions, on the functionality of the instructional visuals, on the effectiveness of the design, and on the rhetorical style of the steps, sequencing, and transitions.

***Usability: Formal Report**: Working in a small group, you will do usability testing on one of the Instructions Manuals produced by one of the members of the group. Next, you will produce a formal report explaining the process and the results of your testing. Using both focus groups and protocol analysis, you will design and administer the tests, then, using feedback from the users, revise and update your chosen Instructions Manual. Your formal report will explain your testing process, your test results, and the revisions the group makes to the manual.

***Proposal**: Your final small group project will be an engineering proposal designed to win a Office of Contracts and Grants award. Your proposal will seek to persuade a target audience that something needs to be done, and offer a specific solution to a problem your group has identified. Proposals will be focused on innovative responses to some of the economic, environmental, or social problems facing America today. The assessment of this final project will be on not only the technical efficacy of the

proposed course of action, but on your group's audience analysis, rhetorical strategy, document design, and the visual quality and effectiveness of the proposal graphics.

Individual Assignments:

Introductory Memo (300 words)	**50**
Job Packet (1000 words)	**50**
Technical Definition (900 words)	**100**
Instructions (1200 words)	**150**
Progress Report (600 words)	**50**
Reading Quizzes (10 x 20 points)	**(200)**
Peer Reviews (5 X 10)	**(50)**
Individual Assignments Total:	**(650)**

Group Assignments:

Formal Report (8 Pages)	**150**
Proposal (10 Pages)	**200**
Total Possible Points	**1,000**

Grading Scale:
A: 900-1000
B+: 875-899
B: 800-874
C+: 775-799
C: 700-774
D: 600-699
E: 0-599

Grades:

Here is the meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers (you should use these statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade):

A You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a B, but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors (papers with more than one or two errors cannot receive an A).
B You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs revision; however it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.
C You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
D You did what the assignment asked of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.
E An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work or don't come to class. However, if your work is shoddy and shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, you will receive a failing grade.

Revision of Assignments: During the course of the semester, you may rewrite any two individual assignments of your choosing (your new grade will replace the previous one.) In addition to the revised project, you must also write a one-page memo addressed to me in which you detail what, how, and why you've revised. Revised work is due two weeks from the day the assignment is first returned to the class and **you are responsible** for remembering when the deadline is.

Reading and Writing Schedule:

Week One: Introduction to Technical Communication
    01/06
    Introduction to course and technical communication,
    understanding the writing process and writing memos.
    01/08
    -Chapters One and Two: (pp. 1-24)
    -Chapter Sixteen: Memo Reports: (pp. 25-47)
ASSIGNMENT: Introductory Memo. Write a 1 page memo to introduce yourself to your instructor and peers. Make sure you include your specific major, your intended profession, and other interests, as well as whatever relevant biographical information we ay find useful. (**due 01/12**)

Week Two: Persuasion and Ethics
    01/13
    -Chapter Four: Being Persuasive (pp. 48-74)
    Introductory Memo Due
    01/15
    -Chapter Five: Weighing the Ethical Issues (pp. 75-95)
     - **Assignment:** Inquiry Letter, Cover Letter, Resume

Week Three: The Research Process
    01/20
    --Chapter Seven, Eight, and Nine: Research Processes and Sources (pp.114-147)
    01/22
    -Chapter Eighteen: Employment Correspondence (pp. 388-423)

Week Four: Letters and Employment Correspondence
    01/27
    -Chapter Seventeen: Workplace Letters (pp. 359-386)
    01/29
    -Chapter Eighteen: Employment Correspondence (pp. 388-423)
    -Assignment Due: Employment Package
    Assignment: Technical Definition

Week Five: Organizing for Audiences and Editing for Style
    02/03
    -Chapter Twenty: Technical Definitions (pp. 439-460)
    02/05
    -Chapter Twelve: Organizing For Users (pp.194-213)
    -Chapter Thirteen: Editing for Readable Style (pp. 215-251)

Week Six: Technical Definitions
    02/10
    Assignment: Technical Definition Peer Review
    02/12
    Assignment Due: Technical Definition
    Assignment: Instruction Manual

Week Seven: Instructions and Procedures
02/17
-Chapter Twenty Two: Instructions and Procedures (pp. 490-520)
02/19
-Chapter Twenty Two: Instructions and Procedures (pp. 490-520)
-Chapter Three: Delivering Usable Information (pp. 25-47)

Week Eight: Visual Elements, Document Design
02/24
-Chapter Fourteen: Designing Visual Information (pp. 252-296)
02/26
-Chapter Fifteen: Designing Pages and Documents (pp.297-323)
-Chapter Twelve: Organizing For Users (pp.194-213)

Week Nine: Instructions and Usability
03/03
-Chapter Three: Delivering Usable Information (pp. 25-47)
Assignment: Instruction Manual Peer Review
03/05
-Chapter Twenty Two: Instructions and Procedures (pp. 490-520)
Assignment Due: Instruction Manual

Week Ten: SPRING BREAK
Engineering Vacation Fun

Week Eleven: Usability Testing
03/17
-Chapter Six: Working in Teams (pp. 96-111)
Assignment: Usability Testing Formal Report
03/19
-Chapter Twenty Four: Formal Analytical Reports (pp. 560-596)

Week Twelve: Preparing the Usability Report
03/24
-Chapter Twenty Five: Front and Back Matter (pp. 597-607)
03/26
-Chapter Twenty Four: Formal Reports (pp. 560-596)
Assignment: Formal Reports Peer Review

Week Thirteen: Proposals
03/31
- Formal Reports Due
Assignment: **Proposal**
-04/02
-Chapter Twenty Three: Proposals (pp. 522-537)

<u>Week Fourteen: The Formal Proposal</u>
      04/07
      -Chapter Twenty Three: Proposals (pp. 522-537)
      04/09
      -Chapter Three: Delivering Usable Information (pp. 25-47)
      -Chapter Four: Being Persuasive (pp. 48-74)
      Assignment: <u>Progress Report</u>

<u>Week Fifteen: Researching Proposals</u>
      04/14
      -Chapter Eleven: Summarizing/Abstracting Information (pp. 173-189)
      -Chapter Fifteen: Designing Pages and Documents (pp.297-323)
      04/16
      -**Assignment Due:** Progress Reports
      -**Assignment:** Proposals Peer Review

<u>Week Sixteen: Designing and Testing Proposals</u>
      04/21
      Final Proposals Due

COURSE POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Academic Honesty:
As a University of Florida student, your performance is governed by the UF Student Honor Code, (http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html). The Honor Code requires Florida students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all defined in detail at the above site.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

6. Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007 <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very seriously, and I will treat instances of plagiarism as not just dishonesty, but also as a failure to comply with the scholarly requirements of this course. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own.

You **commit plagiarism** if you use (without crediting the source):

- Any part of another person's essay, speech, or ideas

- Any part of an article in a magazine, journal, newspaper; any part of a book, encyclopedia, CD-ROM, online WWW page, etc.

- Any idea from another person or writer, even if you express that idea in your own words.

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

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 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.

Students with Physical Disabilities:
The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

General Education Learning Outcomes:
ENC 3254 (passed with a grade of D or better) satisfies the university's General Education Requirement for Composition (C).

ENC 3254 also satisfies 6000 words (E6) of the University Writing Requirement. However, you must turn in all assigned papers and you must pass this course with a grade of C or better to receive the E6 credit.

To fulfill the Composition (C) requirement, ENC 3254 offers instruction in methods of writing, conventions of standard written English, reading and comprehension skills, and ways of making expository and argumentative prose accessible to readers in varied situations.

Classroom Disruptions:
Our class is as discussion-based as possible, and we will always respect each other's views. Because of the discussion nature of the class, I require that you turn your cell phones and pagers off. If you forget to turn it off and your phone rings, do not answer it. If your phone or beeper should ring during class, you will lose participation points. If you have a personal emergency and must keep your phone on one day, please discuss it with me before class.

Late Work:
You are responsible for getting assignments in on their due dates. **Papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date.** Late papers will not be accepted.

Readings:
Reading Assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the date on which they are due. You should have completed these readings before coming to class that day.

Lecture Quizzes:

Quizzes on the readings will be given randomly during the semester. They are designed to make sure you do all the readings assigned for that day. **Quizzes can not be made up, and the only excused absence is a doctor's note for the day missed.**

Conferences:

I encourage you to stop by during my office hours if you have questions about your progress in the course, work we are doing, or if you have any other concerns. If my office hours do not work for you, please contact me and we can schedule a better time. Conferences on assignments can improve the quality of your final draft.

Attendance and Participation:

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 frequent absences will affect your progress and success dramatically. Instruction during class is often spontaneous, so it is impossible to offer a recap of what transpired.   Learning to write is process and experience based. This is not a course where you can "catch up" on what happens during class. **If you fall behind, you will stay behind.**

According to the rules of the University Writing Program, **you cannot pass the course with more than six absences.** Portfolios will not be accepted for any student who has 6 or more absences. Since this is a participatory workshop class centered on aggressive learning, any lesser number of absences, excused or unexcused will affect your grade. If you arrive more than 15 minutes after class starts, you will be counted as absent.

Participation is a crucial part of the class and your grade. As you may have noticed, a large percentage of your grade is based on collaborative work. If you are not willing to engage in collaborative projects, you do not want to take this course, as non-participation is not an option. This is a deliberate aspect of the course since so much of professional writing is collaborative.