TECM 5185
Principles of Technical Communication
8-Week Asynchronous Online Course

Instructor

Dr. Erin Friess

Location

This section of 5185 is *asynchronous*, which means we do NOT meet on a designated day and time each week. Course content can be accessed through Canvas (https://unt.instructure.com).

Office Hours

Mondays 10am-noon via Zoom (703.827.6646)

If you'd like to schedule an appointment, email me your availability.

E-mail Address

Erin.friess@unt.edu

Textbooks

You do not need to purchase texts for this course. Readings will be available on Canvas.

Course Description

This Technical and Professional Communication course serves as an introduction to the field of technical communication. We explore the hallmarks of technical communication, genres of technical communication, and the types of careers people with degrees in professional and technical communication pursue.

Course Structure

This course takes place 100% online. I will open up a new module each week on Sunday at 11:59pm. Work will be due on Sundays at 11:59pm unless otherwise noted. Every week, we will investigate three things: a hallmark of technical communication, a genre of technical communication, and technical communication career.

This is an 8-week class in which we cover a similar amount of material as we do in the traditional 15-week version of that class. That means that you are going to have a lot to do each week. You should expect to spend at least 12 hours a week working on material for this class. This will fluctuate by the week and based upon your familiarity with the subject matter. Our goal in this class is to get you a solid understanding of the field of technical communication along with some skills that will be helpful in future courses and in your career. And, unfortunately, that takes time.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to (numbered in order of presentation):

- Identify six hallmarks of technical communication.

- Evaluate four possible careers in technical communication.
- Describe how you intend to become part of the technical communication professional community.
- Identify six genres of communication common to technical communication.
- Demonstrate your understanding of three genres of technical communication by producing outstanding examples of those genres.

Assignments

Informal Assignments, 30%	These are small opportunities to succeed and will likely you less than an hour to complete the assignment (some will be MUCH shorter). Consider these to be homework or daily assignments.
Introduction Presentation, 10%	In this major assignment, you will create a presentation in which you introduce yourself to the class and post it to a class discussion board.
Job Analysis and Materials, 20%	In this major assignment, you will analyze the jobs in the field of technical communication and develop materials that will allow you to apply for jobs quickly
Instructional Design, 20%	In this major assignment, you will develop an instructional guide through iFixit and publish your guide to their website.
Usability Report, 20%	In this major assignment, you will conduct a usability study and report.

Grading

- A: 90-100% (Outstanding, excellent work. The student performs well above the minimum criteria.)
- B: 80-89% (Good, impressive work. The student performs above the minimum criteria.)
- C: 70-79% (Solid, college-level work. The student meets the criteria of the assignment.)
- D: 60-69% (Below average work. The student fails to meet the minimum criteria.)
- F: 59 and below (Sub-par work. The student fails to complete the assignment.)

Late Work

I will not accept late informal assignments in this course. Informal assignments turned in after the deadline will receive a grade of zero

unless the student university approved excuse and provides documentation with 48 hours of the missed deadline.

I will accept late assignment for the major assignments at a 10% reduction of the grade per day the assignment is late up to 3 days, including weekends. For example, if the Case Study is due on Friday at midnight and you turn it in on Sunday at noon, I will deduct 20% off the final grade you earned on the project.

Online Learning, Attendance, and Communication

This course has been developed to promote asynchronous learning. The instructor and students do NOT meet on a designated day and time each week.

For each lesson, there is a timeframe to complete all activities and assignments, and you may work at your own pace within that timeframe. However, you must adhere to the deadlines outlined on the calendar. You should log into the course daily to check for updates, review lessons, and participate in activities.

You can expect meaningful feedback on written assignments within 7–14 days of the deadline. Questions about grades or other individual issues should be emailed to the instructor, not posted on the discussion forum.

NOTE: When corresponding with your instructor and classmates, please use appropriate language and etiquette.

Technology Requirements

To successfully complete this course, you should have access to a reliable internet source. You should also have these technical skills:

- Microsoft Office Suite: You are welcome to use alternatives to these products.
- Microphone: A microphone on your headphones or internal to your computer is good enough.
- Camera: Later in the semester, you will be making a guide that requires photographs. The camera on your cell phone is likely good enough if you have purchased it within the last 4 years. You may need to have a flashlight for better lighting. A point-and-shoot camera could be helpful if you have an older cell phone.
- Webcam (optional): We won't be having synchronous classes, but the webcam could be useful conversations with me or for your introduction presentation assignment, depending on how you want to do it.

Remember that your password is the only thing protecting you from pranks or more serious harm.

- Don't share your password with anyone.
- Change your password if you think someone else might know it.
- Always log out when you are finished using Canvas.

The following information has been provided to assist you with the technological aspect of the course.

- UNT Help Desk
- Hardware and software necessary to use Bb Learn
- Browser requirements
- Computer and Internet Literacy

Netiquette Guide

When communicating online, you should

- Treat others with the same respect you would show in a face-to-face classroom.
- Err on the side of being too formal rather than too informal. You should take your cue for the right level from how your professor interacts with you and other students.
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as it can easily be misunderstood.
- Be careful with personal information (both your own and other people's).

Email Policies

- Please read my email policies carefully. Email professionalism is a skill that correlates with the most successful workplace communicators.
- I want you to be successful in this course, and I am looking forward to our interactions. To help make our interactions respectful, polite, and courteous, follow these guidelines when emailing me:
- I respond to email within 48 hours of receiving it. I only respond to email during business hours (8am-5pm) on Monday–Friday.
- You must have a valid UNT email address, and you must check this account regularly. I often use email to send class updates and advisories.
- I send my responses to the account where your email originated. Do not email me from one account, for example, and ask me to reply to another. You are responsible for managing your email accounts.

- Check the syllabus or assignment schedule before you send your email as I will not respond to requests for information contained in the course materials or texts.
- I do not discuss major assignment grades over email. Instead, please schedule an appointment with me. When contacting me, provide three possible dates/times when you are available to meet via Zoom.
- Do not SPAM me or your team members. I define *spamming* as sending multiple emails before the recipient has had an appropriate amount of time to respond. Think carefully before sending multiple emails (in *any* situation).
- Your email should address me by name. My name is Dr. Boettger (pronounced Bet-ger), so you can address me as Dr. Boettger.
- Your email should include a short, informative subject line (e.g., TECM 4180: Question about Student Interview Assignment). Do not leave the subject line blank.
- Keep email concise. If your question is short or direct, a one-sentence email (plus a greeting and a signature) is just fine and also preferred.

Academic Integrity

I follow UNT's academic integrity and dishonesty policies. UNT defines six acts of academic dishonesty (see UNT Policy 06.003). All acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to UNT's Academic Integrity Office.

Below is a brief description of these act and the related 2700 penalty for committing each act. Submission of your first major assignment certifies that you understand these policies and procedures.

Cheating

Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves cheating.

Plagiarism

The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves plagiarism.

Forgery

Altering a score, grade, or official academic university record or forging the signature of an instructor or other student. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of forgery.

Fabrication

Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves fabrication.

Facilitating academic dishonesty	Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves facilitating academic dishonesty.
Sabotage	Acting to prevent others from completing their work or willfully disrupting the academic work of others. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of sabotage.

Drop Dates

Please be aware of the below deadlines as well as the changes in grading policies.

Accommodations (Special Arrangements)

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course.

You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://disability.unt.edu/. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Federal Regulation for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website at http://www.ecfr.gov/. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

1. Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

2. Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone

you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. (See UNT Policy 16.005)

UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate. She can be reached through email at renee.mcnamara@unt.edu or by calling 940-565-2648.

Information on Returning to Campus

Please visit this link to read about the University of North Texas' plans and policies for on campus safety pertaining to COVID-19.

This section of 4180 is *asynchronous*, which means we do NOT meet on a designated day and time each week. I cannot meet with you face-to-face; however, I will be available to you during my office hours and by email. We can also schedule one-on-one Zoom meeting for times that are convenient to your schedule. I'm here to help you be successful this semester, so don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions.

Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule for 5185. The schedule is subject to change.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due by 11:59pm on Sundays.

Module (Date)	Hallmark Activities	Genre Activities	Career Activities
Module 1	**Rhetoric is the Foundation of Tech Comm** • Read: What is Rhetoric • Read: Ethos, Logos Pathos • Do: ELP in Advertising • Do: Respond to Your Group's ELP Posts • Do: Rhetoric in the Workplace	**Presentations** • Read: Best Practices for Presentations • Do: Evaluate a Presentation • Do: Conduct a Rhetorical Assessment for your Presentation • Do: Post Your Presentation to Your Group • Do: Respond to Your Group's Presentation Posts	**Overview** • Read: Career Readings on Canvas • Do: Comparing the View of the Field
Module 2	**Technical Communicators Learn about Their Audiences** • Read: Why Do Technical Communicators Care About Audience? • Read: Audience Analysis: How We Learn About Audience • Do: Preparing for Audience Analysis	**Proposals** • Read: Best Practices for Proposals • Do: Evaluate a Proposal • Do: Conduct an Audience Analysis • Do: Write a Pitch Proposal • Do: Post Your Pitch Proposal to Your Group • Do: Give Feedback on Pitch Proposals	**Proposal Writers** • Do: Proposal Writing as a Career
Module 3	**Technical Communicators Write in Ways that Respect Their Audiences**	**Memos and Emails** • Read: Best Practices for Memos	**Technical Writer**

Module (Date)	Hallmark Activities	Genre Activities	Career Activities
	▪ Read: Technical Communicators Make Appropriate Language Choices ▪ Read: Technical Communicators are Excellent Writers ▪ Read: Technical Communicators Understand the Principles of Design ▪ Do: Evaluate Writing for Audience Respect	▪ Read: Best Practices for Emails ▪ Do: Evaluate Writing in an Email ▪ Read: Delivering Bad News ▪ Do: Write an Informational/Bad News Email ▪ Do: Post Your Bad News Email to Your Group ▪ Do: Give Feedback on Bad News Emails	▪ Do: Technical Writing/Editing as a Career
Module 4	**Technical Communicators Work in Groups** ▪ Read: Best Practices of Teamwork ▪ Do: Experiences with Teamwork ▪ Read: Agile and Scrum Project Management	**Job Materials** ▪ Read: Best Practices for Resumes ▪ Do: Evaluate Standard and Graphic Resumes ▪ Read: Best Practices of Cover Letters ▪ Read: Best Practices of Portfolios ▪ Do: Job Analysis and Job Materials ▪ Read: Practicum Requirement for MA Students	**Job Materials** ▪ See Genre
Module 5	**Technical Communicators Conduct Research** ▪ Read: Secondary Research for Technical Communicators ▪ Do: Using Secondary Sources to Solve a Problem	**Instructions and Procedures** ▪ Read: Best Practices for Instructions ▪ Do: Evaluate a Set of Instructions ▪ Do: iFixit Project ▪ Read: iFixit Team Numbers	**Instructional Designer** ▪ Do: Technical Writing/Editing as a Career

Module (Date)	Hallmark Activities	Genre Activities	Career Activities
Module 6	**Technical Communicators Evaluate Artifacts for Usability and User Experience** ▪ Read: Secondary Research for Technical Communicators ▪ Do: Using Secondary Sources to Solve a Problem	**Reports** ▪ Read: Best Practices of Report Writing ▪ Read: Three Types of Reports ▪ Do: Evaluate and Revise a Report ▪ Do: Conduct a Usability Test and Write a Usability Report	**Usability and UX Evaluator** ▪ Do: Usability and UX Evaluator as a Career
Module 7	**Technical Communicators Face Ethical Issues** ▪ Ethics in Technical Communication: Challenger Case Study ▪ Do: Ethical Principles in Technical Communication	**Persuasive Writing** ▪ Do: Persuasive Writing	**Content Manager/Developer** ▪ Do: Content Manager/Developer as a Career
Module 8	**Wrap Up**	**Wrap Up** ▪ Do: iFixit Project ▪ Do: Conduct a Usability Test and Write a Usability Report	**Wrap Up** ▪ Do: Job Analysis and Job Materials