NJIT

New Jersey Institute of Technology
COM 313
Technical Writing

Professor: Kyle Mednick
Email: kyle.mednick@njit.edu
Office hours: Mondays: 3:45 pm - 5:45 pm
or by appointment
Office location: Cullimore 315

Meeting Days: Mondays
Meeting Time: 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm
Meeting Location: CKB 214

"I began to realize how important it was to be an enthusiast in life. If you are interested in something, no matter what it is, go at it full speed ahead. Embrace it with both arms, hug it, love it, and above all become passionate about it. Lukewarm is no good. Hot is no good either. White hot and passionate is the only thing to be." ~Roald Dahl

Course Description
This is an advanced writing course combining theory with practice to prepare students as technical writers. Students will analyze complex communication situations and design appropriate responses through tasks that involve problem solving, rhetorical theory, document design, oral presentations, ethical considerations and gender equity issues.

Technical writing describes the process of turning complex knowledge into usable forms to be shared with colleagues and peers, or less-expert audiences, like community stakeholders. To be effective technical writers, we must learn to do so across genres and media, and with a keen sense of audience, purpose, contexts, and constraints. In this course, you will sharpen your abilities to communicate information effectively, ethically, and authentically to people with different expectations and readers with specific needs.

Learning Objectives
- Learn and apply methods of textual and rhetorical analysis to identify patterns in professional and technical writing genres, as well as describe the impact of those patterns on readers.
- Understand genres as recurring rhetorical situations, shaped by discourse communities and historical/cultural contexts.
- Develop and apply an understanding of how a document's organization, labels, formatting, and overall design strategies contribute to its effectiveness.
- Develop and apply strategies for making complex information accessible to non-expert audiences in both oral and written communication contexts.
- Improve your writing and develop a polished and professional prose style that varies appropriately according to audience, purpose, and context.

- Draw on and apply research on how people read and use documents.
- Increase your skill in writing collaboratively with others.
- Practice being a more reflective writer, aware of and able to articulate your own writing decisions.

Course Materials
This course makes use of books and resources found on http://library.njit.edu
and other PDF and word document files and resources provided by the instructor as well as Open Educational Resources (available for free on the Web).

Course Grading
Final course grades will follow NJIT's scale, which does not include A+ or any minuses.

All major assignments will earn a letter grade which will correspond to the following numerical guide.

A 100-90   B+ 87-89   B 80-86   C+ 77-79   C 70-76   D 60-69   F 60-0

The final course grade will be calculated using the following categories. On Canvas, you can view the assignments and their weighted values.

Category	Weight
Participation / In-Class Activities	25%
Project 1: Job Application Package	15%
Project 2: Proposal	20%
Project 3: Tech Topic Presentation	20%
Project 4: Final Project	20%

Participation
Attendance and participation are critical to your success in this class. Participation is required for all in-class activities, including drafting, revising, discussions, peer support and discussion board writings. Students need to attend AND participate in class with regularity in all class activities including reading, writing, critical thinking, discussing, interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, asking questions and responding to one another. We will also politely do peer and class reviews. Level of engagement with the material is often correlated with success on assignments.

Attendance
Given that this course is weekly, we only meet 14 times. It is critical that you attend all class sessions. Missing three or more classes will result in an instructor report to the student's advisor. See university attendance policy here.

Students who expect to miss class for religious observances or other excusable reasons should contact their instructor about these dates at the beginning of the semester (per university policy). Whenever possible, seek absence verification from the DOS. I will **ONLY** excuse absences upon receipt of absence verification from the DOS.

All assignments must be submitted on Canvas (which automatically assesses for plagiarism, AI generation and grammar assistants using Turnitin). Please follow the specific instructions for each assignment.

NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity
Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at:
http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

All aspects of your coursework are covered by the Code on Academic Integrity. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.

AI Usage
In this course, we will adhere to the following regarding AI usage.

Artificial intelligence usage is not permitted in this course. The expectation of this course is for students to work through the course without assistance from any type of artificial intelligence to better develop their own skills in this content area. As such, artificial intelligence usage is not permitted throughout this course.

Turnitin will be used to evaluate all sorts of academic integrity violations. This tool detects unauthorized use of quotes and repurposed text (including borrowing of papers). Turnitin flags AI-generated text and use of grammar assistants that actually rewrite entire sentences. **None of these tools are acceptable** in student writing. Students in violation of the rules of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean of Students who will follow up with a meeting and a final determination of grade and status in the course.

Accessibility Needs
Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services at 973-596-5417.

The Writing Center
The Writing Center (Central King Building G17) is available for help. This resource is free and intended to help you improve your writing and communication skills with tutors who help with planning assignments, improving your writing, refining an essay or multimedia project, for classes, personal statements, etc. For more information or to make an appointment, please visit https://www.njit.edu/writingcenter/.

Center for Counseling and Psychological Services
The NJIT Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS) is committed to assisting students in the achievement of their academic goals as well as benefiting from their personal experiences on campus. For more, visit: https://www.njit.edu/counseling/

COM 313
Course schedule

Week & Topic	Major Assignment Due Dates
Week 1: Monday 1/27 Introductions Syllabus & Course Overview Rhetorical Analysis Technical Writing Intro Activities	In Class: ● Rhetorical Appeals Videos & Discussion ● Ads with Appeals Activity ● Finding Real Sources Due Before Next Class: ● Upload your current resume (located under Week 1 in Canvas)
Week 2: Monday 2/3 Resume writing Writing for your audience / Genre Writing and designing usable documents	In Class: ● In-Class Reading & Discussion ● Intro to Project 1 ● Resume Info & Workshop ● Genre ● Elements of Design Due Before Next Class: ● Submit ● Read "Genre" by Gross et. al & forum post ● Work on Project 1
Week 3: Monday 2/10 Reader-oriented design for job market materials	In Class: ● Due Before Next Class: ● Finalize and submit Project 1 Project 1 is Due BEFORE CLASS , 2/17 by 11:59 PM
Week 4: Monday 2/17 Intro to memos & editing linguistic choices	
Week 5: Monday 2/24 Data Visualization & Research Questions	

Week 6: Monday 3/3 Conducting Primary Research	
Week 7: Monday 3/10 **CLASS WILL <u>NOT</u> MEET IN-PERSON** Watch recorded lecture & post forum response Continue working on Project 2	Project 2 is Due by SUNDAY, 3/16 by 11:59 PM
Week 8: NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK	**NO CLASS: Spring Break** 3/16 - 3/22
Week 9: Monday 3/24 The importance of brevity in communication: emails, executive summaries, data reports	Submit Project 3 Presentation materials before class 3/31
Week 10: Monday 3/31 Project 3 Presentations	
Week 11: Monday 4/7 Framing arguments for specific audiences	
Week 12: Monday 4/14 How to write instructional texts	
Week 13: Monday 4/21 Writing in specific professions (will be more detailed as I learn about your career interests)	
Week 14: Monday 4/28 Writing in specific professions (will be more detailed as I learn about your career interests)	
Week 15: Monday 5/5 Writing Workshop & Course Conclusion	Project 4 is Due MONDAY, 5/5 by 11:59 pm

NEED HELP?
KNOW WHO TO CALL

Please note following important numbers that will come in handy in case of emergency:

EXTERNAL RESOURCES	AVAILABILITY	CONTACT NUMBER
Suicide Prevention	24 hrs/ 7 days a week	(973) 623-2323 (University Hospital-Newark)
Drug/ Alcohol Addiction	24 hrs/ 7 days a week	(877) 630-8262
Crime Victim Compensation Office	Monday – Friday 8 AM – 8 PM	(877) 658-2221
Rape Care Center	24 hrs/ 7 days a week	(877) 733-2273 (Essex County)
Sexual Assault Hotline	24 hrs/ 7 days a week	(800) 656-HOPE (National)
Psychiatric Emergency	24 hrs/ 7 days a week	(973) 924-7416 (Newark Beth Israel Hospital)
NJIT RESOURCES	**AVAILABILITY**	**CONTACT NUMBER**
NJIT Public Safety	24 hrs/ 7 days a week	(973) 596-3111 (Emergency) (973) 596-3120 (Non-Emergency)
Dean of Students (TITLE IX – Sexual Misconduct Report/Response)	Monday – Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM	(973) 596-3466
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)	Monday – Friday 8:30 AM - 5 PM	(973) 596-3414
Student Health Services (SHS)	Monday – Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM	(973) 596-3621