

**Course Syllabus**  
**Technical Writing COM 313.014 Spring 2024**

NJ Institute of Technology  
COM 313.008  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00 – 5:20  
Office Phone: (973) 596-6305

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Classroom: CKB 315  
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**OFFICE HOURS Spring 2024**

Mon 11:35- 12:35    Tues 2:30-3:30    Wed 2:30 – 3:30    Th 2:30-3:30  
and by appointment; contact me face to face or by email to set up an appointment.

**Prerequisite:** completion of HUM 102 with a C or higher.

**Required Textbook:** The Essentials of Technical Communication, 5th Edition by Tebeaux, Elizabeth and Sam Dragga. Oxford University Press ISBN: 9780197539200

You will need this book to do well in the class. You can buy the book or the electronic e-book, or rent it. We will use it for discussion and for exercises.

Note: the 4<sup>th</sup> edition has much the same content but different page numbers. Editions 1, 2 and 3 are so different you can't use them.

**Course Outline:**

Technical Writing is an advanced writing course which combines current theory with actual practice to prepare students for professional writing. Students analyze complex communication situations and design appropriate responses through tasks that involve problem solving, rhetorical theory, document design, oral presentations, writing teams, audience awareness, and ethical considerations, so that their professional communication is clear and concise, with appropriate level of reader awareness.

You can submit your assignments by paper copy in class, by email, or put a paper copy under my door, Cullimore 424. Please use Word documents for ease of making comments.

You can download Microsoft Office for free at Instructional Resources at NJIT. Look for downloads. Don't download the entire Office suite; it will clog your computer.

**Chat and other AI Programs**

If you use Chat GPT or other AI programs, cite them as you would any source you use in an assignment. The academic world is still evolving about how to use AI so there may be modifications.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

<b>By the end of this course, students will:</b>	Job Application	Info-graphic	Ethics	2 Presentations	Sentence Writing, Style, Tone	Peer Review	Writing Instructions	Summaries	Proposal
<b>Write and revise various types of professional technical communications to produce a set of technical documents demonstrating your ability to write clearly and accurately in a</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

<b>concise professional style.</b>									
<b>Read and interpret material on technology and explain the ideas, issues, and problems involved in writing about technology and in workplace writing.</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Demonstrate information literacy: the ability to formulate appropriate questions, find, select, assess, analyze information sources, both print and electronic, from the open web and/or the NJIT Library, and to synthesize, credit, and integrate those sources in your own work.</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Develop collaborative work habits, including those necessary for effective cooperation with other students and instructors.</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>Identify your own strengths and weaknesses in writing.</b>	<b>X</b>								

By the end of the course, you will be able to recognize and incorporate the elements of good writing and document design, able to write appropriately for various audiences, and have the elements of professional style in your writing.

You will be able to write in the correct formats a job application, professional memos and emails, short reports on various topics, compare ethics at NJIT and other universities, a proposal to improve NJIT (this one will be modified because of limited campus access), or a long report, concise summaries that are not merely condensations.

### Course Requirements

There will be some writing weekly, both some short in-class assignments, and some homework. You can start many homework assignments in class. You will also give at least 2 presentations, usually 6-8 minutes. There will also be some short grammar lessons, as needed. The big assignment is a proposal or a report, 8 pages minimum, not including the cover sheet, the table of contents or the works cited section/page.

You may revise assignments that receive a letter grade once to improve the grade, provided the rewrite is handed in within a reasonable time, usually a week after receiving the corrected first draft. To raise the grade, the revision must be substantially your work, not correcting for example grammar errors the teacher has flagged.

### Your Evaluation:

You will receive a letter grade for this class based on

- Participation. This means not only attendance during class and punctuality but also the class activities such as taking part in discussions or other activities. 10%
- In-class analysis and in-class writing assignments. 20%
- Improvement in word choice and grammar, and addressing your writing issues, as noted in

homework and in-class assignments 15%

- Homework assignments. 40%
- Presentations. 10%
- Improvement in professional writing including top errors that make a writer appear not professional. 5%

The scale for converting the number grades in Canvas is based on the standards given by Canvas, but will be modified by factors not in Canvas such as participation and progress in language. If you want to know your status in class, ask the instructor.

Your instructor will keep a separate grade sheet for activities that may not get a grade in Canvas, for example short discussions in class or in-class writings.

## **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 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”

Students and the professor will be expected to follow the NJIT Academic Integrity Code. As for written work and for any quizzes or tests, papers copied from another source without proper documentation, or using unauthorized help, may fail the assignment, and for a major project such as a proposal, failing the course and being sent to a dean who will decide the case. Failing a class for cheating may result in an FX grade which can only be removed by completing an ethics workshop. For more information see the NJIT Academic Integrity Code. <[www.njit.edu/academics/integrity.php](http://www.njit.edu/academics/integrity.php)>

## **Methods of Instruction**

The class will use in-class writing tasks, lectures, group and individual review and revision.

## **SCHEDULE COM 313 SPRING 2024**

COM 313 Technical Writing SPRING 2024

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Schedule subject to change

All page numbers are from our book *The Essentials of Technical Communication*, unless otherwise noted.

Week Date Assignments, Tasks, Projects.

1. 1/16&18 These assignments will also continue on 1/23 and 24

Introductions. Introduce yourself. Format will be sent to you. Writing samples. Assignment: find and discuss an employer in your field you would like to work for. This assignment will continue on Jan 23.

Discuss resumes, cover letters, follow up letter assignment.

Outcome: you will know the formats of a cover letter/letter of application, a resume, and the basics of what to include. Also, when are cover letters more important than resumes? Vice versa?

Discuss cover letter format and what to include, P 336- 340

Two types of resumes and formats, P 340-347.

Power words, P 337.

P 344, why focus the objective?

Follow up letter P 347-348

Discuss letters in class. To know: the difference between a *profile* and an *objective*.

In class assignment: P 354, # 1 # 2, #3 #6. These can be done in groups.

- Homework 1 for next week: read Ch 1 and 2, be prepared to discuss them and to start the exercises at the end of the chapters.
- Homework 2: Write a standard resume, requirements to be posted on Canvas.
- Homework 3: Prepare a short talk on the company in the cover letter and resume you are applying to, or a company in your field that you would consider applying to. Requirements are on Canvas.

Due by class on Wednesday 1/26:

Completion of or a good start on your resume and your cover letter/ application letter for peer review and possible use in the

**NJIT SPRING 2024 Career Fair**

**Career Fair**

**Tuesday, February 13th, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM.**

**In-person Register via Handshake**

**See the NJIT HR page for more information.**

After doing the resume, you will have a good grasp of what should be included in one.

2. 1/23&25 Thurs. A.1 Discuss resumes

A.2 Presentations on your slides about employers from last week.

B. Review punctuation rules. See appendix in back of text book; come with questions.

C. Discuss Ch 1 and 2, Especially P 4-8. Look at Case Studies, P 9-12

CH 2. Writing for your Readers.

P 19, the 6 Cs for composing your writing.

Read, discuss P 20-25 Case 2-1 and 2-2, Discuss P 26 Revising.

In class/homework: Do in class: P 29-30

As homework, P 13 # 1,

Homework: cover letter and follow up letter for your job application

Homework: read, be prepared to discuss Ch 5, Designing Documents.

After doing the resume, cover letter and follow up letter, you will have a good grasp of what should be included in a job application.

You will know what readers expect in professional writing.

Due: 1/30& 2/1 full job application, cover letter, resume, follow up letter

### 3. 1/30-2/1 Review of 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of Resumes

In-class activity: What makes a good document? Ch 5 with some Ch 8, and handouts.

Short report on interest rates, connection with geometric, exponential, if any, financial literacy and other topics.

Assignment, start in class, to be completed as homework, write a short report according to the directions on Canvas. This can be done individually or in groups.

After doing the short report, you will have a good grasp of the formats and what to include in a short professional report.

► For week 2/6 Read Ch 6, Designing Illustrations.

### 4. 2/6 & 8 Handout, graphs and charts. Discuss Ch 6.

Objective: to be able choose and make a graph or chart

Discuss chapter. P 133-136 Discuss infographics.

Discuss P 136-137 Ethical illustrations.

In-class P 143-144 Ex 4.

Due 2/8: your short report

Next Week: Homework Assignment: Due 2/13 Design an infographic according to the directions on Canvas. Your infographic can be either an informative brochure or other infographic. Requirements given in class and will be posted. This assignment can be done individually or in groups.

Short conferences.

After doing the infographic, you will have a good grasp of the elements needed for the purpose of the graphic or brochure.

► *Advance preparation: Topics for Presentation 1 and requirements given.*

*Topic: A project at work or school Due Date: 2/20 & 22*

► For next week: Read Chapter 3, Ethics. We'll discuss the issues in the chapter.

Bring any stories you have from other classes or work or the headlines.

### 5. 2/13 & 15 Ethics

Outcome: to reinforce the seriousness of integrity in the workplace and NJIT

Discuss ethics with Ch. 3 as the springboard, and acceptable summarizing and paraphrasing, ethical situations.

► Activity: Start during class, finish as homework on NJIT's code of academic integrity compared to other universities. Assignment will be given shortly before class.

In class, discuss and do some of three exercises, P 50-53.

After doing the assignments, you will have an expanded grasp of what professional ethics comprise.

DUE: ► Presentations Next Week!

## 6. 2/20 & 22 PRESENTATIONS.

Objective: to make a good presentation. This includes content and delivery: good voice, stand straight, look at the audience and present, not read.

After doing the presentations, you will be able to give a professional presentation.

► After Presentations: Go over specifications for the Proposal/Report assignment and their due dates.

This is the single most important assignment for the class. We'll do this in modules, so that you will know if you are on the right track. Due dates and specs are on Canvas.

Objective: to know the format of a proposal or a formal report

Homework for 2/27 Read, discuss Ch 4, Achieving a Readable Style

## 7. 2/27 & 2/29 Style and Tone. Discuss the sentences and how to improve your sentences.

Also: P 149 Discuss the 6 Cs P 150- 152 Discuss tone

P 76-78 Exercises

Review of principles and 10 questions.

Look at cases P 145-153, 7-1 - 7-6

P 156 Letter requesting information P 162 unfavorable letter P 163 instructions

Conferences

► In-class homework Ex P 165-166 #1 or #2.

After doing discussing and completing the assignments, you will be better able to write professional sentences in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, and maintain audience awareness throughout a document.

## 8. 3/5 Monday MIDTERM: an in-class writing, with some vocabulary, grammar and tone sections. 60-75 minutes

Wednesday 3/7 AFTER midterm activities: to be announced.

► Homework for 3/19: read Ch 10, Instructions

► Assignment for 3/19: read Ch 5, Designing Documents

Conferences

March 10- 17 SPRING BREAK! NO CLASSES, BUT USE YOUR TIME PRODUCTIVELY

## 9. 3/19 & 21 Discuss instructions. Assignment: design a creation, write instructions.

After doing this assignment, you will be able to write clear instructions appropriate to the audience level.

► Homework: Read Ch 9, Proposals

## 10. 3/26 & 28 Review Ch 4 Readable Style, 5, Designing Documents.

Discuss Ch 9, Proposals. Review the requirements for your proposal.

Handouts/posted: read, watch, write short reports on articles or videos, discuss which are good and why.

In class/Homework: P 266, # 1, #2, 3

Conferences.

## 11. 4/2 & 4/4 Summaries. Activities to be given in class

12. 4/9, 11, 16 PRESENTATIONS on your proposal. Presentations on your proposals, one third of the class on each day.

LAST DAY: Written form of Proposals or Reports Due! You may not get feedback if you submit a first draft now. Work for 352.

13, 14. 4/18 & 23 Complete presentations. Catch up. Sum up: what makes good professional writing. Work for 352.

Other activities to be announced.

14. Thursday 4/25, FINAL WRITING!

60 minutes of writing on a topic, grammar, tone, audience awareness vocabulary too.

Last Day to hand in APPROVED ONLY Late Work!

OUR LAST DAY! NO exam for us during EXAM period