

Fall 2025

Writing in the Workplace

Communication 313 007

“If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.”
~Attributed to Albert Einstein

“The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said.”
~Attributed to Peter Drucker

Instructor: Andres Crespo

Meeting days/times: Monday/Thursday 11:30 – 12:50 pm

Meeting Location: FMH, Room 407

Email: acrespo@njit.edu

Office: Cullimore Hall 419

Office Hours: M/TH 12:55 – 2:25 pm

COURSE OVERVIEW

(Prerequisite: HSS 101) An advanced writing course. Combines current theory with actual practice to prepare students as technical writers. Analyze complex communication situations and design appropriate responses through tasks that involve problem-solving, rhetorical theory, document design, oral presentations, writing teams, audience awareness, ethical considerations, and gender equity issues.

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COURSE GOALS

- ❖ Identify, research, negotiate, and compose various forms of technical and professional communication to produce a set of documents demonstrating your ability to adapt your writing according to changes in audience, purpose, and context.
- ❖ Develop an awareness of your own writing processes, becoming a more reflective writer with the meta-language to explain your communication choices.
- ❖ Learn and apply methods of textual and rhetorical analysis to identify patterns in communication genres within technical disciplines and professional settings.
- ❖ Draw on and apply research on how people read and use documents.
- ❖ Visualize data and appropriately caption visuals; discriminate between methodologies for creating accessible visuals and other multimodal artifacts to support a communication endeavor; develop data storytelling skills to support visualizations.
- ❖ Develop and apply an understanding of how visual design contributes to effectiveness in a given rhetorical situation or genre.
- ❖ Plan, devise, formulate, design, and report information via professional presentations or short talks for a variety of diverse technical and user needs.
- ❖ Perform, collect, analyze, evaluate, and integrate research that includes database searches, primary sources, and original (primary) research.
- ❖ Develop and apply strategies for making complex information accessible to non-expert audiences in both oral and written communication contexts.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Evaluate the impact of systemic barriers in businesses and organizations, identifying areas of inequity and proposing ethical improvements through strategic technical writing and inclusive documentation practices.

There is NO midterm/final exam.

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TEXTBOOK

Last, S. (2019). *Technical Writing Essentials*. University of Victoria. <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/technicalwriting/>

FINAL GRADES

A = 94 – 100 B+ = 87 – 93 B = 81 – 86 C+ = 76 – 80 C = 70 – 75 D = 65 – 69 F = 0 – 64

ASSIGNMENTS

	Assignment Name and Description	
1	<i>Resume</i> – prepare a functional or chronological resume. If you use your current resume, revise it accordingly.	5%
2	<i>Analyzing Professional Writing</i> – Find ONE professional document from the wild (the internet), then briefly describe its purpose and intended audience, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and reflect on what you took away from this exercise.	5%
3	<i>Career-Focused Proposal (drafts included)</i> – In a summary proposal, <i>persuade</i> decision-makers to support and/or fund an initiative related to your career interests and academic path (see Canvas prompt for requirements).	20%
4	<i>Major Project Draft</i> – You can choose to write instructions (i.e., a guide, instructions, procedures) or a technical report. The more finished it is, the more valuable the peer feedback.	15%

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	Assignment Name and Description	
5	<i>Oral Presentations</i> – Choose any technical topic and present it to a wider audience. DO NOT READ FROM SLIDES!	10%
6	<i>Major Project Final Draft</i> – Revise your Major Project paper and upload it to Canvas.	20%
7	<i>Class Participation</i> – Weekly discussions and short writing assignments.	25%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Homework	Class Activity	Week	Homework	Class Activity
9/2	Review Syllabus Resume due 9/7	Intros Week 1 Discussion	9/7	Chapter 1: What is Technical Communication?	Week 2 Discussion Audience Activity
9/14	Chapter 2: Professional Style Analyzing Professional Writing due 2/21	Week 3 Discussion Liebeck v. McDonald's case study	9/21	Chapter 3: Document Design Chapter 8: Oral & Visual Presentations	Week 4 Discussion In-class interview

<p>9/28</p>	<p>Chapter 4: Teamwork and Communication</p> <p>Proposal Draft due 10/5</p>	<p>Week 5 Discussion OP I</p>	<p>10/5</p>	<p>Chapter 5: Conducting Research</p>	<p>Week 6 Discussion OP I Continued IR Peer Review</p>
<p>10/12</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Common Document Types</p> <p>Proposal Final Draft due 10/19</p>	<p>Week 7 Discussion OP I Continued</p>	<p>10/19</p>	<p>Chapter 7 (depending on Major Project topic)</p>	<p>Week 8 Discussion</p>
<p>10/26</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Week 9 Discussion OP II</p>	<p>11/2</p>	<p>What about emails?</p> <p>Major Project Draft due 11/9</p>	<p>Week 10 Discussion OP II Continued Reverse-engineer a technical document group exercise</p>
<p>11/9</p>		<p>OP II Continued Major Project Peer Review</p>	<p>11/16</p>	<p>TBD</p> <p>Major Project Final Draft due 11/30</p>	<p>OP II Continued</p>

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11/23	TBD	11/30	TBD	Week 13 Discussion
12/7	Final conferences			

AI CHATBOTS

When using AI chatbots for assistance (e.g., research, brainstorming, etc.), you must quote any borrowed material and include a disclaimer at the end, documenting how the tool aided you in the writing process. Prompting chatbots to generate and/or paraphrase all, half, or most of the content will count as plagiarism.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

To receive a grade, you must submit assignments on Canvas (emailed and/or Canvas comment-box attachments DO NOT count). Late assignments receive a 10% late penalty for each day they are late; after 3 days, I do not accept the assignment. However, documented emergencies, accommodations, and unprecedented personal circumstances are exceptions to this rule, once the Dean of Students approves them.

PLAGIARISM

Assignments may have a plagiarism rate of up to 20%, unless they come from citations.

ATTENDANCE

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Unexcused Absences: You may have up to four unexcused absences. Anything beyond that would be grounds for failure.

Excused Absences: If you are absent at any point in the semester for a legitimate reason*, you need to first contact the Dean of Students (<https://www.njit.edu/dos/contact.php>). Once they approve your excusal, I will receive an official emailed response.

EXPECTATIONS FOR INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIVENESS

The best way to contact me is by email; you can expect a response within 48 hours. Assignments are graded within 10 to 12 days unless the work is submitted late.

NJIT UNIVERSITY CODE OF 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: [NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#).

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”

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

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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 accommodation, and/or contact Student Disability Services at 973-596-3420.

THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center (G17 Central King) is available for 45-minute individual and group appointments with professional writing tutors both onsite and online. This resource is intended to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors can help with planning assignments, improving your writing, refining an essay or multimedia project, or other communication-based needs. To make an appointment, please visit <https://njit.mywconline.com>