

New Jersey Institute of Technology
COM 313
Writing in the Workplace

Dr. Crystal Hamai

crystal.hamai@njit.edu

Office: Cullimore 115H

Office hours: Monday 11:30-12:30; Wednesday 1:30-2:30 or by arrangement

See link in announcements to schedule an appointment during office hours.

Virtual (Zoom) conferences available by appointment. Email to schedule a Zoom conference.

Course Description

This is an advanced writing course combining theory with practice to prepare students as technical writers. Technical writing describes the process of turning complex knowledge into usable forms to be shared with colleagues and peers, community stakeholders, or less-expert audiences. To be effective technical writers, we must learn to do so across genres and media, and with a keen sense of audience expectations, as well as the purpose, contexts, and constraints of the rhetorical situation. 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. Students will analyze complex communication situations and design appropriate responses through tasks that involve problem-solving, rhetorical theory, document design, oral presentations, and ethical considerations.

Learning Objectives

During this course students will:

- Learn and apply methods of textual and rhetorical analysis to identify patterns in professional and technical writing situations.
- Understand written genres as recurring rhetorical situations, shaped by discourse communities and social contexts.
- Develop and apply an understanding of how document design contributes to a text's effectiveness in a given rhetorical situation
- 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.
- 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.
- Increase your skill in writing collaboratively with others.
- Develop an awareness of your own writing processes, becoming a more reflective writer with language to explain your choices.

No required text

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).

Assignments & Assessment

A student's final grade for the course will be divided into the following parts:

Participation **25%**

Includes attendance AND your consistently active presence in class, submission of all assignments on time and satisfactory completion of drafts, in-class mini-writing activities, and discussion boards

Job Experience and Preparation (Project #1) **20%**

Exploring the types of writing you will need in your field; resume preparation; interview skills; email and professional communication

Tech Talk presentation (Project #2) **15%**

Give a 3-4 minute presentation on a technical topic you are familiar with, including engaging visual elements.

Policy or Funding Proposal (Project #3) **20%**

Identify an existing problem in your field (or more generally) that can be addressed through policy, research, or funding activities. Write a researched proposal for addressing the problem.

Technical Instructions (Project #4) **20%**

Develop a "how to" guide for real-world users to accomplish a technical task or project. Present your project to the class. **This is a group project.**

There is no midterm or final exam in COM 313.

University grading scale:

All assignments and other required work will be graded using the following scale:

A = 90-100	B+ = 87-89	B = 80-86	C+ = 77-79	C = 70-76	D = 60-69	F = 0 – 59
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How to Succeed

Your level of success is determined in part by how much effort you put into the class. I expect you to be thoughtful in your work, ask questions when you are unsure, and show respect to everyone in the classroom. Be prepared to discuss ideas in class. PLEASE NOTE that all assignments must be submitted to pass the class. You cannot elect to "miss" a writing assignment. Any missed assignments will earn a zero.

Participation and Attendance

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. Additionally, there will be informal class writings (often in discussion boards and graded) as well as regular workshopping in which students apply the day's lesson to their writing in progress. We will also politely do peer and class reviews. Level of engagement with the material is often correlated with success on assignments. Classroom activities are designed to aid in students' developing a writing process of their own that can be applied to most writing tasks.

Attendance

You may miss up to one week of class (or two classes) without penalty. Every subsequent unexcused absence will result in the deduction of participation points. Unexcused absences may include occasional illness, family emergencies, transportation issues, work responsibilities, or other issues that come up in daily life. Refer to the [Dean of Students website regarding Absence Verification](#). Note that receiving verification from the Dean's office DOES NOT mean it is an excused absence. Excused absences are determined on a case by case basis. **More than six unexcused absences (three weeks of the course) can result in failure of the course.**

Regular participation in class activities and workshops (many are graded) is required to earn participation points. Not participating in the writing process will be met with further deductions. Activities and workshoping in class as part of the writing process cannot be made up, and not participating in these classes often leaves students disconnected from the practical skills needed for each genre.

Students who expect to miss class for religious observances should contact their instructor about these dates at the beginning of the semester (per university policy).

Late Work

Work submitted after the assignment due date will be considered late. Generally, no extensions will be given and the late policy will be in effect beginning the day following the submission due date. Work submitted within one week (7 days) of the assignment due date will incur a penalty of one full letter grade (10% of the grade). Work submitted 8-14 days after the due date will incur a penalty of two letter grades (20% of the grade). Work will not be accepted more than two weeks after the due date and will be marked zero. Students should contact their instructor in advance of due dates when having difficulty completing an assignment.

Revisions

Major assignments will be eligible for revision. To revise a paper, students must notify the instructor and complete a revision plan, as well as submit a summary of revisions. **No late work will be eligible for revision to improve the grade.**

Technology

Canvas is NJIT's learning management system. **All assignments must be submitted on Canvas** (which automatically assesses for plagiarism and AI-generated text using Turnitin as well as grammar or translation apps). Please follow the specific instructions for each assignment. All materials will be accessed through Canvas, and grades on assignments will be posted in Canvas. Participation on discussion boards or other short essays or responses are regularly completed on Canvas and will count toward students' participation grade.

Students use their NJIT email as the primary method of communication and maintain an appropriate tone. Include an appropriate subject line and name in all emails for more efficient correspondence.

Students should not use cell phones during class unless needed for a specific activity. Resist the distraction and focus on one thing at a time - classroom lessons, activities and discussion. Active

engagement in class leads to better outcomes in grading. Everyone should set phones to silent as a courtesy.

Laptops should only be used when we are drafting, researching, note taking or otherwise engaging in classroom activities requiring them. Students that practice professional, focused behavior now will be more prepared for the work world!

For technical assistance, including computing equipment or help with internet access, contact the office of the Dean of Students and Campus Life <https://www.njit.edu/dos/>

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: [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.”

All assignments submitted shall be considered "graded work" and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Code on Academic Integrity. Written and visual works are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.

Artificial Intelligence

This policy prohibits the use of AI in this course, except when exceptions are explicitly discussed and stated in assignments, including but not limited to narrow, general, or super generative AI, LLMs, or wordsmithing tools such as Grammarly and Quillbot. As per the guidelines from the NJIT University Code of Academic Integrity:

“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 evaluates all sorts of academic integrity violations. This tool detects unauthorized use of quotes and repurposed text (including borrowing and purchasing of papers). Turnitin flags AI-generated text and use of “grammar” assistants that actually rewrite entire sentences. Your similarity percentage appears on the submission page for each assignment. The AI percentage is available only to instructors. Ask your instructor if you have questions about AI use. 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 your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) at 973-596-5417.

Self Care

While the school year can be exhilarating, it can also become challenging for us all at times. I want you to know you are not alone. If there is a medical emergency, **call 911**. If you are on campus, tell the dispatcher you are calling from NJIT and they will route you to public safety.

If you are having an emotional crisis or need emotional support, reach out to the national mental health hotline by calling or texting **988**.

The [Center for Counseling and Psychological Services](http://njit.edu/counseling) (njit.edu/counseling) is a resource available on campus for students. The website has links for many different resources, including counseling services and 24/7 help lines. Even one or two sessions may help you to be able to come up with strategies to help you regain a feeling of control. To schedule a meeting with C-CAPS, contact (973) 596-3414 or email counseling@njit.edu.

Students can also access free mental health support such as therapy, coaching, self-guided content, and more. You can log into the [Mantra hub](http://hub.mantrahealth.com) (hub.mantrahealth.com) using your [@njit.edu](mailto:) email, or download the Mantra Health app.



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

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Course Schedule

Subject to change at instructor's discretion.

All assignments are due on Canvas at 11:59 pm unless otherwise instructed

Week 1	9/1-9/7	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions; review syllabus • (Re) introduce our online library and discuss research essay ideas 		
Week 2	9/8-9/14	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and designing professional documents • Review Project #1 		
Week 3	9/15-9/21	Due: Project #1 Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing for the job market • Draft due in class on Wednesday 9/17 for peer review • Introduce Project #2 		
Week 4	9/22-9/28	Due: Project #1 Final
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying a problem in your field • Revision and other writing strategies 		
Week 5	9/29-10/5	
Thursday Oct 2 Wellness Day – no classes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research strategies • Reading technical documents • Introduce Project #3 		
Week 6	10/6-10/12	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public speaking skills • Preparing a presentation 		
Week 7	10/13-10/19	Due: Project #2 Presentations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations on technical topics • Introduce Project #4; groups assigned 		
Week 8	10/20-10/26	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing for an audience • Genre writing 		
Week 9	10/27-11/2	Due: Project #3 Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual elements to professional writing • Draft due in class 10/29 		
Week 10	11/3-11/9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshopping writing 		
Week 11	11/10-11/16	Due: Project 3 Final
Monday November 10 last day to Withdraw		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication 		
Week 12	11/17-11/23	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a workflow • The art of design 		

Week 13	11/24-11/30	Due: Project 4 Progress Report
Thanksgiving change of designation of days: Tues follows a Thursday schedule; Wednesday follows a Friday schedule; No Classes Thursday/Friday		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a progress report 		
Week 14	12/1-12/7	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating across cultures 		
Week 15	12/8-12/11	Due: Final Group Presentations
Thursday Dec 11 last day of classes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final presentations 		

Summary of Due Dates for major assignments: (assignments due at 11:59 on Canvas unless otherwise indicated)

Project #1 Draft	9/16
Project #1 Final	9/24
Project #2 Presentations	10/13; 10/15 (see Canvas for sign up)
Project #3 Draft	10/28
Project #3 Final	11/12
Project #4 Progress Report	11/24
Project #4 Group Presentations	12/8; 12/10;