



New Jersey Institute of Technology
COM 313
Writing in the Workplace

Professor: Kyle Mednick

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Office hours: Thursday: 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
or by appointment

Office location: Cullimore 315

Meeting Days: Wednesdays

Meeting Time: 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm

Meeting Location: FMH 205

"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

- 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.
- Increase your skill in writing collaboratively with others.
- 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.

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

Category	Weight
Quizzes / Assignments / In-Class Activities / Participation	25%
Job Application Assignment Components	5%
Policy OR Funding Proposal	20%
Technical Topic Oral Presentation	15%
Interdisciplinary Team Recommendation Report & Poster Session	25%
Final Portfolio	10%

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).

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: Wednesday 9/3 Introductions Syllabus & Course Overview Rhetorical Analysis Technical Writing Intro Activities	In Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Course Overview • Rhetorical Appeals Videos & Discussion • Ads with Appeals Activity • Finding Real Sources Due Before Next Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 10 and take the quiz • Upload your current resume (located under Week 1 in Canvas)
Week 2: Wednesday 9/10 Resume writing Writing for your audience / Genre Writing and designing usable documents	In Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Reading & Discussion • Resume / Cover Letter Assignment Intro • Resume & Cover Letter Info • Genre • Elements of Design Due Before Next Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 9 and take the quiz • Submit Resume & Cover Letter
Week 3: Wednesday 9/17 Reader-oriented design for job market materials Communicating effectively in the workplace	In Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LinkedIn • Emailing & Email Signatures • Elevator Pitch • Memo Writing Due Before Next Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 8 and take the quiz • Submit LinkedIn Profile (as a link)
Week 4: Wednesday 9/24 Intro to Proposals & Data Visualization	In Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concise Writing • Intro Proposal Project • Data Visualization • Researching for Proposals Due Before Next Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 5 and take the quiz

<p>Week 5: Wednesday 10/1</p> <p>Researching as a Professional</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Library Session (at 6:30 pm - meeting in class first) ● Primary Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducting research & methods of analyzing data ● Secondary Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requirements for Proposal ○ Info & Research Demo ● Writing the Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formatting & Outlining <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 11 and take quiz ● Conduct your primary research
<p>Week 6: Wednesday 10/8</p> <p>Intro to Technical Oral Presentation</p> <p>Designing Successful Presentations</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intro to Technical Topic Oral Presentation ● Designing Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Journal / Discussion / Info / Activity ● Rubric Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Group activity ○ Rubric Review ● Making a Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slide Drafting Activity & Info <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Come to next class with a draft slide deck for in-class workshop & practice ● Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 15 and take the quiz
<p>Week 7: Wednesday 10/15</p> <p>Professional Presentations</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation Skills Activity ● Image Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activity & Info ● Workshop & Practice <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 6 and take the quiz ● DUE: Technical Presentation due BEFORE CLASS 10/22
<p>Week 8: Wednesday 10/22</p> <p>Presentations</p> <p>Writing Technical Instructions</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentations Day 1 ● Google Form for Interdisciplinary Team Preparation ● Writing technical instructions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activity <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 13 and take the quiz ● DUE: Proposal due BEFORE CLASS 10/29

<p>Week 9: Wednesday 10/29</p> <p>Finish Presentations Recommendation Reports</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations Day 2 • Intro to Final Project • Interdisciplinary Teams • Team Collaboration • Intro Recommendation Reports <p>Due Before Next Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with your interdisciplinary teams on final project • Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 3 and take the quiz
<p>Week 10: Wednesday 11/5</p> <p>Teamwork & Planning Writing Recommendation Reports</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork & Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Creating a time and work log ◦ Workshop • Writing Recommendation Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Activity & Info <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 7 and take the quiz
<p>Week 11: Wednesday 11/12</p> <p>Poster Design & Graphics</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Activity & Info • Incorporating Graphics & Considering Audience • Team Workshop <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Markel & Selber (2025) Chapter 14 and take the quiz
<p>Week 12: Wednesday 11/19</p> <p>Team Presentation Information Final Portfolio Workshop</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster Session Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Info & Activity • Intro to Final Portfolio <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster Session is NEXT CLASS! Materials must be ready!
<p>Week 13: Wednesday 11/26 NO CLASS</p>	<p>Friday Classes Meet on 11/26</p>
<p>Week 14: Wednesday 12/3</p> <p>Poster Session</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster Session (in Lobby of Central Ave Building-TBD) <p>Due Before Next Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE: Final Portfolio due BEFORE CLASS 12/10

<p>Week 15: Wednesday 12/10</p> <p>Portfolio Talks</p> <p>Course Conclusion</p>	<p>In Class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Evaluations• Portfolio Talks• Parting Thoughts & Semester Reflections
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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