

ENC 3246: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION FOR ENGINEERS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Professional communication is the practice of conveying technical information to various audiences with different goals and levels of expertise. In this class students learn how to research, organize, and present technical information in effectively written documents, work in collaboration with other professionals, and use various technologies to support their communication efforts.

This course is designed to help students master a variety of communication strategies and genres of writing relevant to engineering, including everyday acts of communication, such as email, memos, letters, technical descriptions, and instructions. The course culminates with an academic research report and professional proposal.

Students analyze writing situations in the professional engineering workplace and develop strategies for addressing audiences, organizing information, using appropriate style, and presenting the work. The objective of this class is to learn to respond in writing to complex rhetorical situations, preparing students for the professional communities they will join.

OUTCOMES

In ENC 3246, students will learn to

- plan, draft, revise, and edit documents for use in professional settings
- adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts
- synthesize and report on the professional and technical literature in the field
- write in a clear, coherent, and direct style appropriate for applicable professions
- understand and employ the various forms of professional writing, including proposals, progress reports, research and lab reports, and professional correspondence
- avoid plagiarism

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mike Markel. *Technical Communication*, e-book --10th edition, Bedford/St. Martins, 2012

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND GROUP PROJECTS

The assignments below include two group projects. For the group projects, planning and research will be collaborative, while the written work must be completed independently by each student.

Each major assignment will begin with a **Planning Email** written to your instructor in correct, effective, professional style. Planning Emails are graded; they cannot be revised or made up due to absences, unless the absence is excused per UWP absences policy.

Infographic Analysis

Images convey decisions about ethics and audience just as much as text. For this assignment, students will analyze two graphics on the same topic in terms of ethical choices and assumptions about audience.

Technical Description to Various Audiences

Focusing on a current technical innovation, students will write a detailed description of a device or process for various audiences, and present the device or the implementation of the procedure. The report will include at least one visual aid and cite at least six sources, using an appropriate manuscript form.

Instructions

Students will write instructions for a device, process, or task. The instructions will contain descriptions and specifications, warnings, maintenance and troubleshooting advice, and any other information the user is likely to need to use the device, complete the process, or accomplish the task. The assignment will be assessed on the quality and clarity of the instructions, on the functionality of the instructional visuals, on the effectiveness of the design, and on the rhetorical style of the steps, sequencing, and transitions.

Job Application Packet (Cover Letter, Résumé, Intro Post)

In this multi-part assignment, students will first identify an internship or job they hope to secure. Next, students will research the field, construct a profile for the ideal candidate for this position, followed by an analysis of their own qualifications. Then, students will write a letter of application and a résumé for this particular position. Congrats – you got the position! For the final step, students will write an Introductory Message Board post to their new colleagues.

Introductory Message Board Post

Using a standard message board format and an effective professional style, students will post a message to the class introducing themselves, their career goals, their areas of specialization, and their understanding of a current issue in their field.

Group Project #1: Formal Research or Lab Report

Derived from the scientific method, the research report is the most common type of report written in academia. It is the form taken by lab reports and other documents that are based on original data collected by the researcher or research team. Working in a small group, students will establish a research question, devise a method of gathering original data, and collect the data. Individually, students will write a research report that presents and analyzes the data collected as a group.

Group Project #2: Proposal

The capstone project will be a proposal for the UF campus or local community. The proposal will seek to persuade a target audience that a significant problem exists and offer a feasible solution. Drawing on all of the skills developed over the semester, students will analyze the rhetorical situation and employ communication strategies designed to persuade the audience to act on the plan. This project will also include a prospectus and a progress report.

Prospectus

This is a brief report to the project supervisor emphasizing the problem statement driving the proposal, a possible feasible solution, and a tentative schedule for completion.

Progress Report

Students will write an individual progress report on proposal work. This will track activities, problems, and progress for both the individual's tasks, and the group's overall task. The focus will be on schedules, setbacks, problems solved, and the dates and stages of the progress.

Grading

Grading for this course will be rigorous. Do not rely on the instructor for copy-editing, even on drafts. To receive a passing grade, each paper must reach the minimum assigned word count.

Assignment Values

Major Writing Assignments	Points	Words
Infographic Analysis	25	200
Technical Definition	100	1000
Instructions	100	800
Annotated Bibliography	50	400
Job Application (résumé, letter, intro msg)	75	800
Research Report	150	1200
Proposal	175	1200
Prospectus	50	200
Progress Report	25	600
Other Required Elements		
Planning Emails (5 x 20 points)	100	
Peer Reviews (5 X 10 points)	50	
Reading Quizzes (5 x 10 points)	50	
Activities (5 x10 points)	50	
Total Possible Points	1,000	6400

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

At the discretion of the instructor, minor assignments (homework and class activities) may be dropped from or added to the schedule. If assignments are dropped, the final grade will be calculated as a percentage of the remaining points.

Revision of Assignments

During the course of the semester, you may rewrite any one individual assignment of your choosing (your new grade will replace the previous one). Revised work is due two weeks from the day the assignment is first returned to the class and students are responsible for knowing the deadline.

Course Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Participation

Unlike some classes, Professional Communication is skills-based. Because we develop skills by practicing, attendance and participation is vital--the more we write, the better writers we become. Consequently, frequent absences will affect students' success in the course. Because writing skills are gained by experience, instruction is often based on in-class activities, which are difficult or impossible to replicate outside of class.

Attendance is required. **The policy of the University Writing Program is that if students miss more than six periods during the term, they will fail the entire course.** The UWP exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. For absences due to illness or injury, your instructor may require a signed doctor's note. Likewise, absences due to university-sponsored events may require notes/forwarded official e-mails.

Since this class is based on active learning, any lesser number of absences, excused or unexcused, will affect your grade because of missed workshops or activities that are graded. Repeated tardiness will also hurt your grade. Arriving more than 15 minutes after class starts will count as an absence.

Since so much of professional writing is collaborative, participation is a crucial part of the class. Students are expected to work with their peers in a professional manner designed to support the success of the groups.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Florida student, your performance is governed by the UF Student Honor Code, (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>). The Honor Code requires Florida students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all defined in detail at the above site.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.
(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8, October, 2013)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very seriously, and treats instances of plagiarism as dishonesty and as a failure to comply with the scholarly requirements of this course. You commit plagiarism

when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own.

Important tip: There should never be a time when you copy and paste something from the Internet and don't provide the exact location and citation information for the source.

If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, he or she will be awarded a failing grade on the assignment. Additionally, instructors may impose a course grade penalty and report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. Each student's work may be tested for its originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute proof of plagiarism. Other forms of academic dishonesty will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty. Examples include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations.

General Education Learning Outcomes: (C) and (WR)

Composition Credit: Students must pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C). To earn general education Composition credit, students will

- Demonstrate forms of effective writing (focusing on analyses, arguments, and proposals);
- Learn different writing styles, approaches, and formats and successfully adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts; effectively revise and edit their own writing and the writing of others;
- Organize complex arguments in writing, using thesis statements, claims, and evidence;
- Employ logic in arguments and analyze their own writing and the writing of others for errors in logic;
- Write clearly and concisely consistent with the conventions of standard written English;
- Use thesis sentences, claims, evidence, and logic in arguments.

University Writing Requirement: The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades now have two components. To receive University Writing Requirement (WR) credit (E6), a student must earn a course grade of C or higher **and** assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling at least 6000 words. Thus, to earn WR-E6 credit, **students must complete all the major writing assignments.**

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Requirement, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

Classroom Conduct

Much of this class is discussion-based, so it is vital that we show respect for each other's views. Students are required to turn cell to silent ring or vibration. Ringing phones and text messaging are an unprofessional disruption. Students who are texting during class may be asked to leave and counted absent for that day.

Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

Due Dates, Make-up Policy, and In-Class Work

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline. Late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse. If illness or injury prevents a student from turning in a paper on time, the student should consult with the instructor to turn in the work as soon as is feasible given the situation.

Readings

Reading assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the day they are due. Students should have completed these readings **before** coming to class that day.

Lecture and Reading Quizzes

Quizzes on the readings will be given randomly during the semester. Quizzes cannot be made up, and students are only excused from a quiz with a doctor's note on letterhead or written verification of participation in a university-sponsored event for the day missed.

Conferences and Writing Studio

Students are encouraged to use the instructor's office hours if there are questions about progress in the course, work underway, or any other course-related concerns. If there is a conflict with the posted office hours, please contact the instructor to schedule a better time. Having conferences on assignments is often the best way to improve the quality of final drafts. The [Writing Studio](#) also offers one-on-one assistance on writing projects and is available to students of all levels.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

COURSE MODULES

The following is a general outline of the topics covered in this course by module. Readings are listed in the Learning Modules portion of the course website, and assignment due dates are listed in the website calendar.

Module 1: Form, Function, Audience

Module 7: Formal Research and Lab Reports

Module 2: Ethical Communication and the Use of Graphics

Module 8: Working Collaboratively and Running Meetings

Module 3: Evidence-Based Technical Descriptions

Module 9: Progress and Status Reports

Module 4: Document Design and Instructions

Module 10: Proposals

Module 5: Job Applications

Module 6: Research for Professional Reports