Professional and Technical Writing Section 01

ENGL 107

Fall 2023   4 Unit(s)   08/21/2023 to 12/06/2023   Modified 08/18/2023

🖥 Course Description and Requisites

Survey of professional and technical writing. Students learn how to write and design persuasive documents that get real things done in the real world. Projects include resumes, instructions (video and print), presentations, user manuals, and augmented reality apps. Includes learning digital tools used to author and publish writing in the current tech landscape such as DITA, Augmented Reality (AR), SnagIt, Adobe Premiere, and Madcap Flare.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 2 or A3 equivalent.

Letter Graded

✳ Classroom Protocols

In-class exercises

On most days that we discuss readings, there will be short, in-class writing assignments to practice various writing techniques and strategies. These may be group-based, or individually based. I attempt to cater these exercises to issues that I'm seeing in your work.

These will generally be graded for completion. Each exercise won't be worth many points, but they will add up. You generally have until the end of the day to finish these.

Grading class participation

I expect everyone to participate in class. This means you are awake and engaged, having done the readings and the homework, are actively participating in discussion and are working constructively when we break into small groups. A participation grade allows me to reward those students who are actively engaged in each class, while being able to account for students who are routinely late, absent, sleepy, or engaged in non-class related activity during our brief time together. An "A" means always engaged. A "B" means mostly engaged. A "C" is sometimes engaged.

Late work

I don't accept it. Part of being a writer is, though the Earth itself may be aflame, you meet your deadlines. All of them. I understand your life is complicated, with many responsibilities pulling you in multiple directions. If you are unable to attend on a day that an assignment is due, it is up to you to make sure that you get me your work before the beginning of that class. If there is something unavoidable in your schedule/life, you may request an extension with 48-hours' notice; otherwise, no extensions will be granted.

Acting with academic integrity

In both your academic and professional careers, you are expected to act with integrity. You are in this class for more than a grade, you are here to emerge with actual skills—skills which are not developed through cheating. Though it most likely will not be an issue, any plagiarism will earn you an automatic "F" in my class. This includes recycling work from students from previous semesters. Just do your own work. If you are ever in a position where you feel the need to cheat, please let me know and we can work it out.

Final Exam

Your group will present its final project in the final examination schedule. You will be graded as to how well you articulate your group's work in light of all the work we've done this semester.

Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:
- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)
Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature
Department Office: FO 102
Department Website: [www.sjsu.edu/english (https://www.sjsu.edu/english)](https://www.sjsu.edu/english)
Department email: [english@sjsu.edu (mailto:english@sjsu.edu)](mailto:english@sjsu.edu)
Department phone number: 408-924-4425

📶 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

• Engage in best practices when working remotely both individually and as teams.

• Apply rhetorical analysis methods to documents as a means of assessing their usability.

• Write across a number of technical genres using a rhetorical model that looks at message, audience, and purpose as a means of starting any technical writing project.

• Use a number of strategies to explain technical topics to non-expert audiences.

• Develop and deploy user testing methods for determining document usefulness.

• Use research strategies to understand technical topics to the level that they can be communicated to non-experts with authority.

• Have a realistic pathway to employment through work on job-finding strategies, resumes/cover letters, and job interviewing techniques.

📖 Course Materials

No Book. Content is all on Canvas.

☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

Major Assignment #1: JOB APPLICATION MATERIALS

For this assignment, you will research and find a job ad to apply to, and then create an appropriate resume and introductory email using the job ad as a guide.

Major Assignment #2: PROPOSAL ADAPTATION

For this project, you will be writing a proposal, adapting information that I will be providing you to the proposal genre. You may also choose your own proposal topic.

Major Assignment #3: PRESENTATION OF TECHNICAL MATERIAL TO A NONEXPERT AUDIENCE

You will create a short video that explains a technical topic or process to the class, along with a one-sheet handout that summarizes the technology.

Major Assignment #4: DEVELOPER GUIDE

Using a Word template, you will properly format a developer guide for programmers at Facebook and Twitter to implement an app.

Major Assignment #5: COMPUTER TUTORIAL

Using screen-capturing software, you will produce a short computer tutorial that explains how to do a moderately difficult computer task in both print and video formats. You will also user test your instructions and write a user testing report.

Major Assignment #6: PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW MEMO

In this assignment, you will find and interview a local professional about their use of technical communication in the workplace. After completing this interview, you will submit your interview questions, as well as a two-page memo that summarizes your findings.

Final Project: TECHNICAL MANUAL AND WEBSITE (GROUP ASSIGNMENT)

For the final project in this class, you will work in groups of three or four to produce a user manual that accompanies a phone app for iPhone or Android. The manual should describe major features, explain basic tasks, and include other sections of user manuals as appropriate to the project. We will be learning and using WordPress to create an online version of your manual. You will present your manual in the finals slot to a panel of local tech professionals who will ask questions and assess your work.

Major Group Assignment: PROJECT X

It's a secret, man!

✔ Grading Information

Breakdown
Criteria

Type	Weight	Topic	Notes
Major Assignment #1	10%		
Major Assignment #2	10%		
Major Assignment #3	10%		
Major Assignment #4	10%		
Major Assignment #5	15%		
Major Assignment #6	10%		
Major Assignment #7	15%		
Major Assignment #8	5%		
Homework, Quizzes, In-Class Assignments	15%		

🏛 University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.