

# WRTG 3310: technical writing.

fall 2015 >> 11266 >> Thompson 105 >> MWF 10-10:50am

## course description.

### from the Undergraduate Bulletin:

A workshop course in professional and technical writing. Students work on several writing projects, both in groups and as individuals. Some sections will use writing internships with state agencies and businesses to give students the opportunity to write in the workplace and examine the issues of professional communication.

### from me:

Welcome to WRTG 3310, a course that focuses on the theory and practice of professional and technical communication (PTC). This semester, we will apply rhetorical problem-solving principles to a range of situations and genres in order to give you a broad overview of the challenges and goals of technical writing.

My hope is that this course will help you learn (or perhaps improve) how to...

1. analyze audiences and situations
2. design and produce clear, usable texts
3. conduct basic usability testing
4. work collaboratively
5. develop effective oral presentations

## texts & materials.

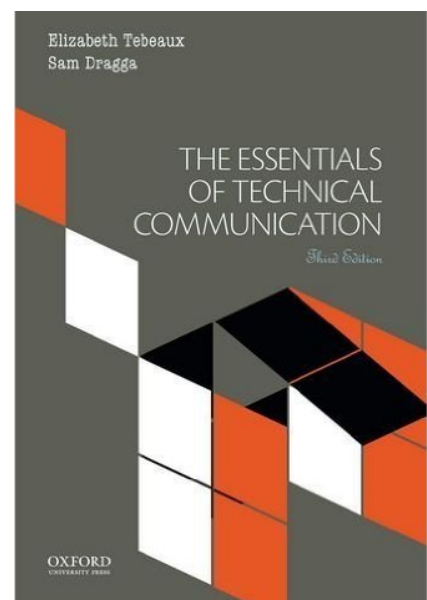
Tebeaux, Elizabeth, and Sam Dragga. *The Essentials of Technical Communication*. 3rd ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford UP, 2014. Print. ISBN-13: 978-0199379996

NOTE: Additional readings will be posted as PDFs through Google Classroom.

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hours >> M & W 1-3pm  
          T 11am-12pm  
          & by appt.  
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 @ahhitt



## assignments.

### project 1: what is tech writing? (30%)

We'll begin by mapping the field of professional and technical communication through three mini-projects: a user profile that introduces you to me and to each other (**5%, due 8/24**) a memo that briefly analyzes an organization's diversity or ethics statement (**10%, due 9/2**), and a set of technical descriptions that require you to produce an informal report on a familiar topic for a specialized audience and a translation of that content for a general audience (**15%, due 9/16**).

### project 2: instructions & usability. (25%)

After addressing how to make accessible content, we will focus on writing that is clear and usable. For this project, you will first analyze the design of an instruction set (**5%, due 9/23**). Next, you will design your own instructions, creating a PDF that includes both written text and images. Finally, we will do in-class usability testing of your instructions, and you will write a usability report identifying what revisions would make your instructions more usable. The instructions and usability report will be submitted together (**20%, due 10/16**).

### project 3: group feasibility study. (25%)

You will work collaboratively in order to address a real-world workplace problem. Your team will research a local issue and client, determine three feasible solutions, and make a recommendation based on your research and the needs of the client. You will submit a proposal (**5%, due 10/26**) and formal report (**20%, due 11/20**), the results of which you will present to the class.

### project 4: digital portfolio. (10%)

Finally, you will create a portfolio to showcase your best work this semester. You will write a reflection on why you selected the work you chose (and what work you omitted) and include an updated user profile. (**due 12/7**)

### ongoing project: participation. (10%)

Not everyone is a talk-in-class-every-day person, and participation isn't limited to that. You are expected to show up and participate in all class sessions, peer reviews, presentations, and out-of-class meetings. If you miss class, please notify me **prior** to class ([ahitt@uca.edu](mailto:ahitt@uca.edu)) and submit the work assigned for that day.

NOTE: All projects must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course.

## grading policy.

Because this is a professional writing course, your work will be assessed as if you were submitting it to your immediate manager (me, in this case). Final semester grades will be assessed using the following point scale:

A	90-100%	Your work is impressive. The final product has excellent content, clean text, and excellent document design. Additionally, your work is thorough, coherent, well supported, and organized in a useful fashion. It demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
B	80-89%	Your work is satisfactory. The final product meets the standards of writing and demonstrates a step forward in your learning process. It is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and you have demonstrated a solid understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
C	70-79%	Your work is okay. The final product may have clear but undeveloped ideas. It likely contains some errors in logic, mechanics, or grammar.
D	60-69%	Your work needs substantial revision. The final product may have incomplete information, lack clear organization and design, and have serious grammar or mechanical issues.
F	59% and below	Your work is unacceptable. Your final product does not fit the assignment parameters, is underdeveloped, or is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible. There is no sense of audience, purpose, or rationale.

I will provide written feedback on each major assignment that you submit. Please read that feedback carefully prior to emailing me about your grade. **I will not respond to grade inquiries the day I return an assignment.** If you have questions about my feedback, please email me to set up a meeting or stop by my office hours.

## course policies.

**Accessibility.** I am committed to creating a professional learning environment that is inclusive to different learning and composing styles. Accessibility is a collaborative effort, and if we can do something to make the classroom more accessible, please let me know at any point throughout the semester.

**Late Work.** Deadlines are crucial in professional contexts. They are similarly important in this course, where project planning and time management are part of the skill set you should be developing. Written assignments are due by the beginning of class or at the time specified for online submission. Major assignments are reduced by one letter grade per business day. In-class work cannot be made up.

NOTE: If you have an emergency or require an extension, I'm happy to work with you as long as you notify me before the project is due.

**Professionalism & Respect.** You are expected to behave professionally in your contributions to discussions, feedback given to your peers, interactions with the instructor, and the work you do on class assignments. You will occasionally work in groups, and—as we all know—collaborating with others can be difficult. You are expected to conduct yourself professionally, to complete work on time, and to contribute to the success of your team. **You do not have to agree with someone to treat them and their ideas respectfully.**

**Technology.** Computers and networked applications are a part of writing culture, and any professional writing course must address current technologies. We will be meeting in a computer lab, but you are welcome to bring a laptop, tablet, or smartphone to class for taking notes and completing in-class writing exercises if you prefer. We will use Google Classroom to submit all work and to access calendars, readings, assignment prompts, and course notes.

You will be expected to check your e-mail daily and to respond promptly (just as you will expect me to do). All email messages to me regarding this class should include "3310" in the subject line and should be respectful and professional.

### File Format

pdf

### File Naming

3310\_LastName\_Project#-  
Deliverable#

example (for project 1, user  
profile): 3310\_Hitt\_1-1

## UCA policies.

**Academic Integrity.** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy. (<http://uca.edu/integrity/>)

**Writing Department.** If a student in a Writing Department course turns in a paper that includes an extended passage that has been a.) written for him or her by someone else for pay or as a favor, or b.) copied from a print or electronic source written by another author, even if some of the words have been changed, that student will immediately be dropped from the course, receiving a WF grade.

The Writing Center has developed a useful handout for how to avoid plagiarism: <http://uca.edu/writingcenter/files/2012/06/TS-AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf>

**Accommodations.** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Support Services, 450-3613. (<http://uca.edu/disability/eligibility-for-services/>)

**Attendance.** If a student in the Department of Writing misses two weeks' worth of classes—i.e., six classes of a MWF course, four classes of a TTH or MW course, or two classes of a one night a week course—and/or a student in a MWF or TTH class misses a week's worth of classes consecutively without contacting the instructor, the instructor may drop the student from the course.

**Building Emergency Plan.** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for Thompson Hall will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

In the event of an evacuation order, classes that meet in Thompson 105 will exit through the east door and reconvene at the Harding Centennial Plaza fountain to await further instructions from campus police.

In the event of a shelter in place order, classes that meet in Thompson 105 will lock doors and stay away from windows.

In the event of a tornado, classes that meet in Thompson 105 will shelter in first floor stairwells, restrooms, or kitchen.

**Disruptive Behavior.** Any student whose behavior regularly interferes with the instructor's ability to conduct class and foster student learning (or who severely impedes the conduct of class) may be dropped from the class. Students dropped for disruptive behavior will receive a grade of WF, and a record of this disciplinary action will remain on the student's university file.

**Student Evaluations.** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction (11/9/2015) through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button in the top right.

**Title IX Disclosure.** If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to "student-on-student" or "employee-on-student"), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs, and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on the specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>.

**Upper-Division Core Communication.** This course is designated [C] which means it satisfies your **Communication** component of the Upper Division Core. Communication courses promote effective communication: the ability to develop and present ideas logically and effectively in order to enhance communication and collaboration with diverse individuals and groups. For more information, go to <http://uca.edu/core>.