Spring 2000   2000

Spring 1-15-2000

ENG 3005-001: Technical Report Writing

R L. Beebe
Eastern Illinois University

3005-001

Technical Report Writing

English 3005 Spring 2000

Course Description & Policies

see <u>course schedule</u>

R. L. Beebe
rlbeebe@eiu.edu
315F Coleman Hall 581-5013
Office Hours: M, 9-11; T, 2-3; W, 9-10
& by appointment

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▶ <u>Course Goals</u>

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Texts & Materials

- Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Writing A Reader-Centered Approach*. 4th ed. Fort Worth, Texas. Harcourt Brace, 1999.
- Hilligoss, Susan. *Visual Communication: A Writer's Guide*. New York, NY: Longman, 2000.
- A good collegiate dictionary
- An e-mail account (if you don't already have one, you should contact User Services in the Student Services Building to activate an account)
- 2 computer disks (3.5" high-density). You should also purchase a carrying case for them.
- Drafts of work in progress

Goals

The main goal of this course is simple: to help you develop your writing and communication skills so you can use them as functional and persuasive tools in your chosen career. Learning to understand <u>how</u> the meanings of "functional" and "persuasive" can differ from document to document--often quite dramatically-- will be a significant part of our discussions. Therefore, each writing project will not only stress the broader concerns of writing (such as, clarity of purpose, development of ideas, invention and sentence strategies), but will also introduce you to strategies of document design, audience

to web publishing and the many complexities and possibilities for technical writing therein.

> **Some Tips on How to Succeed in this Course:**
>
> 1. Check the course WebCT site daily for updates, for messages from classmates, and for other resources and tips that I will be posting throughout the semester.
>
> 2. Follow instructions carefully and explicitly.
>
> 3. Turn in your work on time.
>
> 4. Do your share of the work in group assignments.
>
> 5. Revise your work.

Course Format

The majority of this course (approximately 70%) will take place in an online environment. Together with the assignments, the online medium will serve as a good introduction to the dynamics and technologies of writing in the contemporary workplace.

For the first few class meetings (and periodically throughout the semester), we will meet in Coleman Hall 302/303. You are <u>required</u> to attend these class meetings. Three absences (excused or unexcused) from these meetings will lower your final grade by one letter grade. Four or more absences will result in an F for the course.

Even though we will not be regularly meeting in a "traditional" classroom, the course is designed so that you will be expected to converse with me and other classmates frequently (sometimes daily) via email, the course bulletin board, or the course chat rooms.

I also expect you to meet with me during my office hours so we can discuss your progress through a writing project or any other writing concerns you may have. In short, the online environment of this course should not reduce, but enhance the time we spend working together to improve your writing.

Requirements

To pass the course, each student must satisfactorily complete all seven major writing projects in sequence, as well as complete the Web Portfolio. Failure to complete and submit a major writing project will result in a failing grade for the semester. Your final grade will be determined according to the following breakdown of points:

Writing Projects

1. Letter of Inquiry & Report on Writing in the Professions [R]	10%
2. Summary of Reports (Group)	5%
3. Design Web Page (Resume/Web Portfolio) [R]	5%
4. Informational Page [R]	10%
5. Proposal	15%
6. Evaluation of Proposals	5%
7. Web Project (Group)	20%
8. Web Portfolio	10%

Additional Requirements

1. Brief writing assignments	10%
2. Participation in class, in online discussions, quality of peer reviews	10%

Evaluation

Each time we begin a new project (or just prior to a peer review session), I will spell out explicitly the grading criteria for each particular project. Usually, the criteria will emphasize particular concepts that we have been discussing in the writing project. However, superior papers are always those that express purpose clearly, that are well-designed (in respect to format and overall look), and that are stylistically polished.

Since we will be following the idea of "writing as a process"--the idea that good writing comes from a continual rethinking of form, content, and audience--it is important that you begin the writing for each project as quickly as possible, so that you can identify weaknesses and smooth them out before the final draft is due.

I will also evaluate the brief writing assignments and most of your peer reviews. For all of these kinds of documents, I will assign a either a "plus" (superior), a "check" (average), or a "minus" (below average). Your score on these assignments will count toward 10% of your final grade.   If you receive mostly pluses on these assignments, then you will earn the full 10%.   If you receive mostly checks, then you will earn 5% - 7% of the 10%. And if you receive mostly minuses (or have three or more incompletes), then you will receive 0% for this portion of your final grade.

Attendance Policy

You need to attend every scheduled class session. Problems and difficulties always arise over the course of 15 weeks, so I usually allow three absences--excused or unexcused. After the third absence, I will lower your final grade <u>one letter grade for each absence</u>. Four or more absences will result in a failing grade. Quizzes or in-class writing assignments cannot be made up.

Submitting Your Work

You may submit an assignment <u>on time</u> in any one of three ways:

1. Submitting it in class on the due date (if we are meeting as a class on that day).

2. Turning it in to me (or in my mailbox, CH 308) by 4:30 p.m. on the day it is due.

3. Sending it to me via an e-mail attachment on the day it is due.

You may, of course, turn in the assignment before the scheduled due date.

Plagiarism

I abide by the English Department's policy on plagiarism which is as follows:

> Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (<u>Random House Dictionary of the English Language</u>) —has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay <u>and</u> a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If you are not clear about what plagiarism is or are not sure how to handle source material for any particular writing project, please speak with me about your concerns.

Late Assignments

A late assignment must be accompanied by a persuasive cover memo that explains why it is late. The work on the cover memo will be considered part of the assignment-thus part of the grade. I will not grade the assignment if the cover memo is missing, and you will receive an "F" for the assignment. If you turn in a paper late, I reserve the right to downgrade the paper one letter grade for each calendar day the paper is late.   Late papers may not be revised.

Please talk to me <u>in advance</u> of the due date if you have some kind of difficulty in completing the paper.

Revisions

An [R] next to an assignment (see "Requirements" section above) means you can revise the assignment for a higher grade if you (1) speak with me about the revision and (2) turn in the revision (with the original) within one week of the date you received the original assignment back. I will not accept any revision without having discussed it with you in an individual conference. No exceptions to this policy.

Conferences

If you are having any problems with a paper, I encourage you to come by and see me during my office hours or make an appointment (581-5013) for a more convenient time. I will be more than happy to talk any number of times about a single paper or particular writing problem.

Format for Projects

Your final drafts should conform to the following guidelines, unless of course a particular project demands unique or alternative formatting. As discussed above, you may submit the final draft to me via an e-mail attachment; however, the following guidelines should still be followed. I will not accept any final drafts submitted in the body of an email message.

- All of your papers must be typed. With the exception of memos and business letters-something we will talk about in class-all of your work should be double-spaced.
- Use at least a "near letter quality" printer for your final copies.
- 1"- to 1.25"-inch margin at top, bottom, and sides.
- You do not need a cover page; instead, type "Beebe Engl. 3005/ Jane Doe" (and the date) on the top of your first page.
- Number your pages, beginning with page 2.
- Paper clip or staple your pages together and do not use a plastic report cover.
- Proofread! It is perfectly acceptable to correct your errors in pen (black ink preferably), but keep this to a minimum.
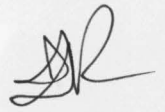- Overall design should be efficient and striking.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

3005-001

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English 3005   Spring 2000

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5. Translation of Specialized Research [R]	15%
6. Proposal [R]	5%
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