English 6346 – Foundations in Technical and Business Writing

Instructor: Dr. Nicole Dilts
Office: 0136A
E-Mail: ndilts@angelo.edu

Office hours:
Onsite and via Skype: 8 -11 am Tuesday and Thursday

Course Policies

Required Texts

- Articles available on Blackboard under “Course Readings.”

Each student must have his/her own copy of the textbook. I will not grant any assignment extensions for failure to purchase or rent the text.

Course Description

Introduction to graduate studies in technical communication. A study of the theories, workplace practices, and genres of technical and business writers.

Goals of the course

Students in this class will:

1. Analyze the communication situation fully and accurately including needs, audiences, uses, and constraints
2. Gather, interpret, and document information logically, efficiently, and ethically
3. Design usable, clear, persuasive, accessible documents
4. Select the appropriate genre and media for presenting information
5. Organize information using reader-based principles
6. Develop and use graphics effectively
7. Develop an effective, clear writing style that is appropriate for workplace writing
Requirements and Grading

Attendance – This is an online course and there is no prescribed meeting time. However, to be counted in for attendance for the week, you must submit a detailed response (at least 250 words, can be more) to the week’s discussion prompt under the “Discussions” link on Blackboard by **8 pm on Thursday**, as well as post comments to at least other students’ responses by **8 pm on Friday**. A solid paragraph would be appreciated for your responses to other students. Questions will be posted Monday morning.

Assignments - Except as otherwise specified, all assignments must be typed with one-inch margins on top, right, and bottom, and they must be cited using MLA or APA format. **Please use Times Roman or Times New Roman 12 point font and single-spaced or 1.0 spaced text (not 1.15 or double spaced) using block paragraphs with no indentions. All text, except for headings must be left-justified. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the loss of points.**

Late Assignments – Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements were made with me before the due date.

Grading - Grades on all written work depend on all elements of writing, which include but are not limited to: content; form; approach to the audience; organization; accuracy in grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.; logic; and neatness.

Blackboard works on a weighted system, and the approximate item weights are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Assignment 1: Exploring audience in technical and business writing</td>
<td>Memo analysis of technical or business website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Assignment 2: Ethics and legal considerations</td>
<td>Case study analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Assignment 3: Document design, graphics, and organization</td>
<td>Short user manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Unit 4: Research and reports in technical and business writing</td>
<td>Final report</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Percent</strong></td>
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Academic Honesty

I will be checking each paper for plagiarism and for the appropriate use of sources using SafeAssign. Make sure that you are citing all sources appropriately and correctly. Failure to do so will result in a loss in points or disciplinary action. I will not grade an assignment until you have submitted a draft to turnitin.com and I will consider that assignment late until you have turned it in online, even if you gave me a paper hardcopy in class.
Keep in mind that plagiarism also consists of recycling old papers or materials completed for another class (i.e. self-plagiarism) as well as taking a file begun by another person and revising it. These documents should be yours alone and completed for this course during this semester.

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is available on the web at http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf. Students in this class who are determined to have violated the policies explained in the code will face a disciplinary process that, at minimum, will result in failing the assignment, and may also include receiving a failing grade in the course, as well as being referred to the English Department Chair for possible further action.

**Students with Special Needs**

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA) and subsequent legislation.

The Office of Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting:

Dallas Swafford  
Director of Student Disability Services  
Office of Student Affairs  
325-942-2047  
dallas.swafford@angelo.edu  
University Center, Room 112
Tentative Schedule

This schedule may be subject to change.

All assignments will be due by 8 pm CST on Friday. All readings should be completed BEFORE you post your response to the class discussion for the week.

Week 1 – Friday January 19
1. Watch Introduction and Course Policies Video Lecture
2. Watch video lecture “Overview of technical writing and the importance of audience.”
3. Read course policies under “Course Information” on Blackboard.

Week 2 – Friday, January 26
4. Read Chapters 1 and 5 in Markel.
5. Read Hower article “How to Piece Together Your Audience.”
6. Read Assignment 1 description and begin work.
7. Respond to discussion questions for week 2 by Thursday, January 25 at 8 pm.

Week 3 – Friday, February 2
1. Watch video lecture “Ethics and business correspondence.”
2. Read Chapters 2 and 14 in Markel.
3. Read Beeson article: “Ethos and Error.”
5. Respond to discussion questions for week 3 by Thursday, February 1 at 8 pm.

Week 4 – Friday, February 9
Assignment 1 due by 8 pm on Friday, February 9.

Week 5 – Friday, February 16
1. Watch video lecture – “Style in technical and business documents.”
2. Read Chapters 9 and 10 in Markel.
3. Read Assignment 2 description and begin work.

Week 6 – Friday, February 23
1. Read Sun: “A Study of Theories of Style in Technical Communication.”
2. Respond to discussion questions for week 6 by 8 pm on Thursday, February 22.

Week 7 – Friday, March 2
Assignment 2 due by 8 pm on Friday, March 2.
Week 8 – Friday, March 9
1. Watch video lecture - Introduction to instructions
2. Read Chapter 20 in Markel.
3. Read Mohammed and Swales: "Factors Affecting the Successful Reading of Technical Instructions."
4. **Respond to discussion questions for week 7 by Thursday, March 1 at 8 pm.**
5. Read description of Assignment 3 and begin work.

March 12-16 Spring Break

Week 9 – Friday, March 23
2. Read chapters 11 and 12 in Markel.

Week 10 – Friday, March 30
1. Read Ward: “The Ethics of Exigence.”
3. **Respond to discussion questions for week 10 by Thursday, March 29 at 8 pm.**

Week 11 – Friday, April 6
Assignment 3 due by 8 pm on Friday, April 6.

Week 12 – Friday, April 13
1. Watch video lecture – “Proposals and Reports.”
1. Read chapters 16, 17, and 19 in Markel.
2. **Respond to discussion questions for week 12 by 8 pm on Thursday, April 12.**

Week 13 – Friday, April 20
1. Read description of Assignment 4 and begin work.

Week 14 – Friday, April 27
1. Watch video lecture – culture
2. Read Tebeaux: “Designing Written Business Communication Along the Shifting Cultural Continuum.”
3. **Respond to discussion questions for week 14 by Thursday, April 26 at 8 pm.**

Week 15 – Friday, May 4
Assignment 4 due by 8 pm on Friday, May 4.

**Final Exam**

Will be available on Blackboard on Monday, May 7 and will be due by 8pm on Friday, May 11.