

# ENGLISH 3351 – ADVANCED TECHNICAL WRITING T/TR

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## Office hours:

W 8 am – 2 pm  
T/TH 12:30 pm – 2 pm  
And by appointment

## CLASS POLICIES

### Required Text

*Technical Communication Today* 6th Edition by Richard Johnson-Sheehan

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

### Course Description

Introduction to the patterns of writing used in reports and letters for business, industry, and technology.

**It is essential that you follow the course schedule very carefully as well as regularly check the Blackboard site for our course and your ASU e-mail.** All assignments, including tests, are due by class time on the due date listed on the course schedule.

### Goals of the course

Students in this class will:

1. Analyze the communication situation fully and accurately: needs, audiences, uses, and constraints.
2. Gather, interpret, and document information logically, efficiently, and ethically
3. Develop professional work and teamwork habits
4. Design usable, clear, persuasive, accessible documents
5. Select the appropriate media for presenting information
6. Organize information using reader-based principles
7. Use graphics effectively
8. Develop an effective, clear writing style

I will assume that each student enrolling in this class is already reasonably proficient in basic writing skills, including punctuation, grammar, and sentence-construction. Elements of effective business writing style will be taught; basic composition will not. If you lack these skills, you may seek assistance at the Writing Center, located in the library, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

I will also assume that you are computer literate; assignments will require you to use a broad array of computer skills. Please note that I cannot troubleshoot your technology problems for you, nor do I guarantee that I will accommodate them. Part of the requirements for this course is that you have reliable computer access and a word processing program that will allow you to save documents in Microsoft Word format. If you routinely cannot turn in assignments or complete tests as directed online for any reason, please drop the course and register for the face to face version.

## Requirements and Grading

**Homework Activities** – There are very few homework activities. However, these activities will be completed on your own and turned in on Blackboard by the due date indicated on the course schedule. Each activity will be graded, so do use all of the time provided to do a thorough job.

**Major 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.***

- **Format** – Turn in only ONE file with the assignment components listed in the order stated on the assignment page. Failure to submit the components as one file or submitting a file with the components out of order will result in a 10 point deduction.
- **APS** - All major assignments also must include a typed Audience Profile Sheet (or APS). These are located under “course information” on Blackboard. Failure to include an APS with your assignment will result in a deduction of 10 points.
- **Safe Assign** - In addition, **all major assignments (but not homework) as well as the final exam** will be checked by Safe Assign automatically. If you have questions about your Safe Assign report, please come see me during office hours and I will be glad to help you.

- **Late Penalties** – Assignments (both major assignments and homework assignments) will be assessed a penalty of 10 points if turned in after the beginning of class on the due date and 10 more points for each additional day late. This includes weekends and holidays.
- **Grading** - Grades on all written work depend on all elements of writing, which include but are not limited to: content; form; accuracy in grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.; logic; and neatness. In addition to grading for content and development, I grade for errors in grammar, spelling, and formatting. **These errors will seriously impact your grade**, so I strongly suggest that you go over your assignments thoroughly to ensure that they are as perfect as possible.

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

| Weight      | Unit                                         | Deliverable                     |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 10%         | Unit 1: Communicating with Employers         | Traditional job letter & resume |
| 10%         | Unit 2: Preparing for Graduate School        | CV and statement of purpose     |
| 10%         | Unit 3: Writing for Other Cultures           | Pamphlet                        |
| 10%         | Unit 4: Documenting Procedures               | Set of instructions             |
| 5%          | Unit 5: Explaining Concepts                  | Technical description           |
| 5%          |                                              | Technical definition            |
| 15%         | Unit 6: Proposing Actions to Decision-Makers | Formal proposal                 |
| 5%          | Homework Activities                          |                                 |
| 15%         | Tests                                        |                                 |
| 15%         | Final Exam                                   |                                 |
| <b>100%</b> | <b>Total Percent</b>                         |                                 |

**Tests** – Tests will cover your reading in the text and the class lecture. You are responsible for knowing the material, whether it was covered in class lecture or is only in the book. No notes, books, or computers slides or web sites may be used during a test unless you are directed otherwise. Tests must be completed individually - no talking will be permitted during a test. If any outside resources are used or if you are caught talking during a test, you will automatically earn a zero on the test.

If you miss a test you must have a documented emergency or a university-approved absence to be permitted to make up the test. I will decide what constitutes an emergency on an individual basis. If I permit you to make up a test, you must make it up within 1 week of the test or you will receive a zero.

## Classroom Decorum

We will conduct this class as though it were a typical workplace. Please speak, attend, and behave accordingly. Please do not come to class unprepared; if you do, I reserve the right to ask you to leave and to charge you with an absence. Also, any student who falls asleep will be awakened and asked to leave the class. If these actions would embarrass you, please come to class prepared and alert. Also, chewing gum, eating, drinking, talking disruptively, habitually forgetting the textbook, and doing coursework for other classes are prohibited. Turn off all electronic communications equipment; if it makes noise, turn it off before coming to class.

**Food and drink are NOT allowed in the lab.** If you bring food or drink I will ask you to put it away or throw it out. That means *do not* set your drink on the tables or desks, and *do not* bring it out to drink while at your computer station. Finally, following University tobacco-use policy, no tobacco products of any kind, including chew or dip, are to be used in the classroom.

## Attendance Policy

**Come to class.** You benefit by attending regularly and developing professional work habits. You will only be considered present if you sign the attendance sheet. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet every day at the beginning of class. If you do not sign the attendance sheet, you will be counted as absent whether you attended class or not.

Because of the nature of the course material and the fast-paced nature of the course, missing classes can cause you to fall behind in your work. For this reason, I strongly recommend that you only miss class when it is unavoidable, as in the case of an emergency.

If you miss class, please follow these steps:

1. If you must miss class, you should first consult the syllabus to see what you have missed. Do not e-mail me and ask – this is what the syllabus is for.
2. Review the assigned chapters and the associated PowerPoint notes.
3. Complete the activities on your own.
4. If you still have questions at that point, feel free to email me.

**Policy on leaving early.** You are not permitted to leave early unless you have received permission from me personally. If you leave early without permission, I will charge you with an absence, no matter how much of the class you have attended that day.

**You are allowed 3 unexcused absences. After this number, you will be docked 1 percentage point from your final grade for each additional absence. After 6 unexcused absences, you will automatically receive a grade of F. Please note that these deductions do not show up on Blackboard; however, they will be counted into your final grade.**

**You are responsible for keeping track of your own absences - it is not my responsibility to remind you that you are losing points. Documentation will be required in order to excuse an absence and whether an absence will be counted as excused or not is solely up to my discretion as an instructor (unless it is a university excused absence).**

**Arrive on time.** Any student who misses class or arrives more than 20 minutes after the beginning of class will be considered absent. I reserve the right to dock points from those who are habitually late as ½ point for each instance after you receive a warning in writing or via e-mail.

**Workshop/critique days.** Your attendance is required on a workshop or critique day. Failure to come on that day or coming with an incomplete draft will result not only in an absence (you will be asked to leave if you come unprepared) but will also result in a 10 point deduction from that assignment. As always, documentation will be required to excuse an absence and it is up to me whether to accept that documentation (unless it is a University-approved absence).

## Academic Honesty

I will be checking each paper for plagiarism and for the appropriate use of sources using Safe Assign. 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 Safe Assign 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 or for a previous section of 3351 (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 Disabilities or 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](mailto:dallas.swafford@angelo.edu)  
University Center, Room 112

# TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

*This schedule may be subject to change.*

*All assignments will be due before class time on the assigned due date.*

## **Week 1 – Tuesday, August 27**

1. Introductions and course policies
2. Read course policies under “Course Information” on Blackboard.
3. Lecture - Chapter 1: Technical Communication in the Entrepreneurial Workplace.
4. Read Chapters 1 and 5.

## **Thursday, August 29**

1. Lecture - Communicating in the Technical Workplace.
2. Introduce Job Materials Assignment
3. Read Chapter 2
4. **Homework** – Finish draft of job materials for draft workshop on Tuesday.

## **Week 2 – Tuesday, September 3**

1. Lecture – Profiling Your Readers.
2. View Audience Profile Sheet (APS) under “Course information” on Blackboard.
3. Draft workshop of job materials assignment. You must have a complete cover letter and resume to be considered present.
4. **Homework** - Work on Job Materials Assignment.
5. **Homework** - Read Chapter 6.

## **Thursday, September 5**

1. **Job Materials Assignment due**
2. Lecture - E-Mails, Letters, and Memos.
3. Activity TBA.
4. Homework - Study for test 1 over chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6.

## **Week 3 – Tuesday, September 10**

**Test 1.**

## **Thursday, September 12**

1. Lecture - the C.V and Statement of Intent.
2. Introduce the C.V and Statement of Intent Assignment
3. **Homework** - Complete the “Graduate School Assignment” homework under “Assignments” on Blackboard.
4. **Homework** - Work on C.V. and Statement of Purpose Assignment

#### **Week 4 – Tuesday, September 17**

1. Graduate school homework memo due on Blackboard before class.
2. **Homework** - Complete C.V. and Statement of Purpose Assignment draft for workshop on Thursday.

#### **Thursday, September 19**

1. CV and Statement of Purpose peer review workshop – you MUST have a completed draft to participate and to be counted present.
2. **Homework** – Finish CV and Statement of Purpose Assignment.

#### **Week 5 –Tuesday, September 24**

1. **CV and statement of Purpose Assignment due**
2. Lecture – Intercultural Technical Writing.
3. Introduce Writing for Other Cultures Assignment.
4. **Homework** – Finish research memo.

#### **Thursday, September 26**

1. Finish discussion of Hall and Hofstede dimensions.
2. Work on culture guides in class

#### **Week 6 – Tuesday, October 1**

1. **Research memo for culture assignment due**
2. **Homework** – Finish draft of guide for Writing for Other Cultures Assignment for workshop on Thursday.

#### **Thursday, October 3**

1. Writing for Other Cultures Workshop - you MUST have a completed draft to participate and to be counted present.
2. Lecture - Chapter 4: Ethics in the Technical Workplace.
3. Activity TBA.
4. Read Chapter 8.

#### **Week 7 – Tuesday, October 8**

1. **Writing for Other Cultures Assignment due.**
2. Lecture - Chapter 8: Instructions and Documentation.
3. Introduce Instructions Assignment under “Assignments” on Blackboard.
4. **Homework** – Work on Instructions Assignment.

#### **Thursday, October 10**

1. Lecture - Usability.
2. Work on Instructions Assignment in class.
3. **Homework** - Finish draft of Instructions for workshop on Thursday.

### **Week 8 – Tuesday, October 15**

1. Instructions workshop and usability testing - you **MUST** have a completed draft and all of the materials necessary to follow the instructions to participate and to be counted present.
2. **Homework** – Revise instruction draft and complete final draft.
3. **Homework** - Read Chapter 17

### **Thursday, October 17**

1. **Instructions Assignment due.**
2. Lecture - Chapters 17: Designing and Using Documents and Interfaces
3. Activity TBA.
4. **Homework** – Read Chapter 18.

### **Week 9 – Tuesday, October 22**

1. **Lecture** - Chapter 18: Creating and Using Graphics.
2. Microsoft Paint Workshop
3. **Homework** – Study for Test 2 over Chapters 4, 8, 17, 18, and the lectures on Culture and Usability.

### **Thursday, October 24**

1. **Test 2**
2. **Homework** - Read chapter 7.

### **Week 10 – Tuesday, October 29**

**No class – I will be out of town at a meeting.**

### **Thursday, October 31**

1. Lecture - Chapter 7: Technical Descriptions and Specifications.
2. Introduce Technical Definition Assignment under “Assignments” on Blackboard.
3. Activity TBA.
4. **Homework** - Work on Technical Definition Assignment.

### **Week 11 – Tuesday, November 5**

1. **Technical Definition Assignment due.**
2. Read Technical Description Assignment under “Assignments” on Blackboard.
3. Work on Technical Descriptions in class.
4. **Homework** - Work on Technical Description Assignment.
5. **Homework** - Read Chapter 9.

### **Thursday, November 7**

1. **Technical Description Assignment due.**
2. Lecture - Chapter 9: Proposals
3. Introduce Proposal assignment under “Assignments” on Blackboard.
4. Activity TBA.
5. **Homework** – Read chapter 12

### **Week 12 – Tuesday, November 12**

1. Lecture - Chapter 12: Researching in the Technical Workplace.
2. Work on Proposal in class.
3. **Homework** – Study for Test 3 over Chapters 7, 9, and 12.

### **Thursday, November 14**

1. **Test 3**
2. **Homework** – Read Chapters 10 and 11.

### **Week 13 – Tuesday, November 19**

1. Lecture - Chapter 10: Brief Reports and Chapter 11: Formal Reports.
2. Work on proposals in class.
3. Homework – Finish draft of proposal for workshop on Thursday.
4. Homework – Read Chapter 20.

### **Week 14 – Thursday, November 21**

1. Lecture - Chapter 20: Presenting and Pitching Ideas.
2. Proposal workshop - you **MUST** have a completed draft to participate and to be counted present.
3. Homework – Revise proposal and prepare a final draft.

### **Tuesday, November 26**

#### **Proposals due**

### **Week 15 – Tuesday, December 3**

1. Course evaluations.
2. Discuss final exams.
3. **Homework** – Study for Test 4 over Chapters 10, 11, and 20.

### **Thursday, December 5**

#### **Test 4**

### **Final Exam**

#### **Tuesday, December 10**

**10:30 am – 12:30 pm**