

# ENGLISH 2311 – Introduction to Technical Writing

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## Office hours:

W 8 am – 11 am  
T/TR 8 am – 9:30 am

## CLASS POLICIES

### Course Description

ENGL 2311: Introduction to Technical and Business Writing is intensive study of and practice in writing within professional settings. The course focuses on the types of documents necessary to make decisions and take action on the job such as proposals, reports, handbooks, e-mail messages, and letters. Students also practice individual and collaborative processes involved in the creation of ethical and efficient documents.

**Course Prerequisite:** English 1301T, 1301, or equivalent credit.

### Course Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will

- Understand the differences and similarities between academic and technical/professional writing;
- Gain a deeper understanding of how individuals within their selected professional field use writing and communication to do their work;
- Recognize, analyze, and accommodate diverse audiences;
- Produce documents appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre;
- Analyze the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication;
- Locate, evaluate, and incorporate pertinent information;
- Develop verbal, visual, and multimedia materials as necessary, in individual and/or collaborative projects, as appropriate;
- Edit for appropriate style, including attention to word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling; and
- Design and test documents for easy reading and navigation.

### Required Materials

- Access to Blackboard off campus
- Ability to download and read PDFs
- Access to Microsoft Word outside of class
- A zip drive or storage device for course materials—**bring this to class with you every time.**
- A notebook for notes/group work/in-class writing
- A writing implement

### Computer Requirements

#### **Access to Blackboard**

I will rely heavily on Blackboard tools to teach this class. You can access Blackboard at **blackboard.angelo.edu**. To log in, you'll need your Rampart ID and password. All the writing assignments will be posted in Blackboard in PDF format. I will also post the syllabus, writing assignment prompts and rubrics, daily homework instructions, in-class materials and instructions, and additional resources (videos, handouts, etc.) in our course Blackboard site. Moreover, you will submit **some** homework and most writing assignment responses through Blackboard. In order to make sure

everyone is familiar with our course's Blackboard site layout, I will provide a brief tutorial illustrating how to navigate it the first week of class. Be sure you routinely check Blackboard for detailed homework instruction, for some learning materials that were used/discussed in class, and for digital copies of writing assignment prompts and rubrics.

### **Microsoft Word or Word-Compatible Software**

All typed work (writing assignments and homework) needs to be composed and submitted in Microsoft Word. Because of the amount of document design you will need to do in this course, you must purchase or have access to MS Word when you are not in class. **Using Google docs will not be sufficient.** The [ASU Bookstore](#) offers a rentable MS Word option. If you have questions or concerns about this requirement, please ask me.

## 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. **All major assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course.**

**Formatting** - Please use Times Roman or Times New Roman 12 point font in MLA paper format. All text, except for headings must be left-justified. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the loss of 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 or email me and I will be glad to help you.
- **Late Assignments** – **I DO NOT accept late assignments.**
- **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:

<b>Weight</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
15%	Professional Profile
20%	Resume and cover letter
20%	Research Report
30%	Guide to Writing
15%	Daily Assignments
<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Percent</b>

## 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 2311 (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

## Title IX

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at:

**Michelle Boone, J.D.**

*Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator*  
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210  
325-942-2022  
[michelle.boone@angelo.edu](mailto:michelle.boone@angelo.edu)

**You may also file a report online 24/7 at [www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form).**

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the *University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.*

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).

## Religious Holy Day

“Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

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*This schedule may be subject to change. All readings homework assignments may be found on the "Weekly Modules" Page.*

*All assignments will be due on the stated day by the end of the day*

### **Week 1: January 25 – January 29**

**Topics:**

1. Syllabus
2. Professional writing and discourse communities
3. Professional Profile assignment

**Readings on Blackboard:**

1. " The Keys to Successful Communication: Purpose, Audience, and Tone" in Workplace Communications: The Basics
2. " Technical Communication in the Entrepreneurial Workplace " in Technical Communication Strategies for Today
3. Ann Johns "Discourse Communities and Communities of Practice "
4. The "Discourse Communities Excerpt"
5. Read Dr. Huffman's Defining Discourse Community Handout

**Respond** to questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

### **Week 2: February 1 –February 5**

**Topics:**

1. Interviewing
2. Selecting an interviewee

**Read:**

1. Profiles
2. Marlen Esparza: Going the Distance
3. Merriam Interviewing

**Respond** to questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

### **Week 3: February 8 –February 12**

**Topics:**

1. The interview pitch
2. Choosing an angle for the profile

**Read:**

1. "Email Chapter"
2. "Drawn to a Larger Scale"
3. "Defying the Odds: Victor Cruz"

**Respond:**

1. Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page
2. Interview pitch

#### **Week 4: February 15 –February19**

**Topics:**

1. Professions within your field
2. Finding jobs in your field
3. Resumes

**Read:** “Starting Your Career: Resumes “

**Respond** to questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

#### **Week 5: February 22 –February 26**

**Topics:**

1. Cover letters
2. Professional Portfolios
3. Resumes and cover letter checklists

**Read:**

1. Starting Your Career: Letters and Interviews
2. Professional profiles

**Respond:**

1. Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page
2. Completed profile

#### **Week 6: March 1 – March 5**

**Topics:** Drafting the resume and cover letter

**Respond:** Resume and cover letter

#### **Week 7: March 8 – March 12**

**Topics:**

1. Research Report
2. Selecting a topic for the research report

**Read:**

1. Guide to writing examples
2. “Thinking critically about the research process”

**Respond:** Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

#### **Week 8: March 14 – March 19**

**Topics:**

1. Locating and scrutinizing sources
2. Finding evidence

**Read:**

1. Huffman-Musgrove Interview
2. “Chapter 26: Finding Sources and Collecting Evidence” in *Writing Today*

**Respond:** Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

### Week 9: March 22 – March 26

**Topics:**

1. Outlining the research report
2. Integrating sources

**Read:** Materials on summarizing, plagiarizing, and quoting

**Respond:**

1. Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page
2. Research report due

### Week 10: March 29 – April 2

**Topics:**

1. Starting the guide to writing
2. Developing a topic for the guide

**Read:**

1. “Chapter 4: Reading Critically, Thinking Analytically” in *Writing Today*.
2. Sample Guides for Writing

**Respond:**

1. Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

### Week 11: April 5 – April 9

**Topics:**

1. Outline of guide
2. Narrowing the focus of your guide
3. Emails, letters, and memos

**Read:** “Emails, Letters, and Memos”

**Respond:** Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

### Week 12: April 12 – April 16

**Topics:**

1. Locating additional research
2. Creating a table of contents
3. Organizing information

**Read:**

1. “Developing Paragraphs and Sections” in *Writing Today*
2. “As a Result: Connecting the Parts”

**Respond:**

2. Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page
3. Table of contents and first 5 paragraphs

### Week 13: April 19 – April 23

**Topics:** Designing the Guide for writing

**Read:** “Designing”

**Respond:**

1. Questions listed on the Weekly Modules Page

**Week 14: April 26 – April 30**

**Rough draft of the guide for writing**

**Week 15: May 3 – May 7**

**Guide for Writing due November 20. This is your final.**