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American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

School: Arts and Humanities
Course Number: ENGL220
Course Name: Technical Communication
Credit Hours: 3
Length of Course: 8 weeks Prerequisite: ENGL101

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Instructor Information

Instructor:

Email: During the course please use only the **Messages** tool in the classroom to contact me.

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Course Description (Catalog)

This course will focus on the kinds of communication typically found in the workplace, and will include the major concepts of technical writing: audience analysis, ethics, collaboration, graphics and design, concepts common to all types of technical communication. In this

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course, the student will prepare letters, memos, instructions, proposals, and written and oral reports. Because the Internet has become an important tool in the workplace, it will also cover the basics of using the Internet as research tool.

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Course Scope

ENGL220 introduces students to several different forms of technical writing while challenging them to engage regularly with the field on a scholarly level. Major concepts include collaboration, audience, document design, persuasion, mobile technologies, and revision.

In this course, students will compose product proposals, instructions, labels, and a final web-based product manual. These assignments are designed to build on one another and culminate in the product manual, which should stand as a piece worthy of inclusion in a student's professional portfolio by term's end.

Weekly course readings are derived from relevant technical writing journals in the AMU / APUS Trefry Library. Students will be challenged to hone their academic research skills each week as they identify articles relevant to that week's writing objectives and report on them to their peers.

Weekly class discussion forums are set up to operate as technical writing work groups in companies and organizations do, and should offer students a place to brainstorm and refine ideas for their larger assignments.

You'll be amazed at what you'll accomplish in this class in just 8 weeks' time!

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Course Objectives

After completing this course you will be able to:

1. Analyze the audience and purpose of documents to determine the most suitable means of communication in that situation.

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2. Plan, write, create, evaluate, and present effective technical communication materials, including examples of common

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- workplace genre (letters, memos, instructions, proposals, reports, and job application materials).
3. Employ organizational strategies and persuasive techniques adapted to a specific audience and situation.
 4. Apply traditional and online research skills to the tasks of technical writing.
 5. Critique and revise the writing of oneself and others as assigned.
 6. Collaborate with colleagues to synthesize technical communication ideas and concepts.

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7. Analyze the information design and visual design of printed and electronic documents.
8. Describe theories of technical communication.
9. Evaluate the ethical basis of decisions about communications in the workplace.

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Course Delivery Method

This course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments are due by Sunday evening of the week as noted and include Forum questions (accomplished in groups through a threaded forum), examination, and individual assignments submitted for review by the Faculty Member). Assigned faculty will support the students throughout this eight-week course.

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Course Materials

Required Texts:

All required class readings will be available in the APUS Trefry Library.

Submitting Assignments

Use the assignment links to submit work for grading. Name your files according to the following convention: *LastnameA_Assignmenttitle*. (For example, HarlowR_Essay2.)

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I will grade and return work within 5 days of submission. If you must turn in late work, notify me by email when you have submitted it. If you have any questions, email me **immediately**.

See late policy in the syllabus section of our class!

Evaluation Procedures

Please see the [student handbook](#) to find the University's grading scale and other course policies.

If you are like most students, you have two goals in taking this course: you want to improve your technical communication skills, and you want to get a high grade. My editing of your papers is critical to both of these goals. For you to improve your skills, you must write frequently and have your documents edited. As the semester progresses and you write more and study the annotations on your documents, you should see improvement in your writing.

Writing teachers agree that most writers make the same kinds of errors in their writing over and over; an excellent writer might have only a few characteristic errors, while a poor writer might have many. If you can identify writing errors that you make repeatedly and learn how to avoid them, your writing will improve significantly. Thus, you should keep a log of all the comments made on your papers and check for these errors when you revise your next paper before submitting it.

My job as an instructor is to give you clear and informed commentary on your writing. I will not comment on every problem in your writing, because part of the learning process is for you to learn to identify and correct problems yourself. But I will comment in detail on portions of each assignment.

One aspect of grading that frustrates students is that the evaluation of writing is a subjective process. That is, one qualified instructor will focus on several aspects of your writing, while another equally qualified instructor will focus on different aspects. There simply is no single "right" way to comment on writing, just as there is no single

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“right” way to comment on painting or music. However, instructors strive to offer a clear and unbiased judgment about your document.

Grade Instrument	Percent of Grade
Assignment 1	10
Assignment 2	10
Assignment 3	10
Assignment 4	10
Assignment 5	10
Assignment 6	10
Forum 1	5
Forum 2	5
Forum 3	5
Forum 4	5
Forum 5	5
Forum 6	5
Forum 7	5
Forum 8	5
Total	100

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Course Outline

8 Week Course

Week	Topics	Learning Objectives	Deliverables

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Week 1	Introductions; Technical Writing Today; Company Choices	Objective 5, 6, 8	Forum 1 Assignment 1: Website Analysis and Selection
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Week 2	Audience and Purpose; Product Proposals	Objective 1, 3, 5, 6	Forum 2 Assignment 2: Product Proposal
Week 3	Visual Design; Labels	Objective 2, 4, 6, 8	Forum 3 Assignment 3: The Product Label
Week 4	Instruction Manuals	Objective 2, 5, 6, 9	Forum 4
Week 5	Readability Formulas and Instruction Manuals	Objective 2, 6, 7	Forum 5 Assignment 4: The Instruction Manual
Week 6	White Papers	Objective 1, 2, 3, 6	Forum 6
Week 7	White Papers; Surveys	Objective 2, 6	Forum 7 Assignment 5: White Papers and the Customer Survey
Week 8	Final Reflections; Final Portfolios	Objective 2, 3, 6	Forum 8 Assignment 6: Website Final Portfolio and Cover Letter

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Policies

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference all University policies. In addition to other important policies, the Student Handbook will cover the:

[Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Extension Process and Policy](#)

[Disability Accommodations](#)

CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Studying online requires that you use a computer, an internet connection and desktop productivity software to complete your degree. To access the full functionality of our campus and classrooms you are expected to meet or exceed the requirements below. Some programs and classes may require additional software.

Basic Requirements

- Internet access □ Monitor and video card
- Email client and an email (350MHz or better) capable of address 1024x768 resolution
- Windows XP or higher or Mac □ Inkjet or laser jet printer

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OS X
Sound card and speakers and a microphone
20 GB of free hard disk space

2 GB of RAM
CD-ROM

Software Requirements

- The most recent version of Internet Explorer (IE 8) or Firefox (3.6.x)
- Microsoft Office 2003 or higher/
- Open Office / Mac Office 08
- Adobe Flash Player 9 or higher
- Windows Media Player 7 or higher
- Java 1.5.0 or higher
- QuickTime 7 or higher
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 8 or higher
- A current Anti-virus software regularly updated according to the software manufacturer. □ .docx conversion pack

American Public University System has entered into an agreement with CDWG to provide students and faculty discounted software from Adobe and Microsoft. Click the Help button from inside your classroom for additional information.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

All written submissions should be submitted in a font and page set-up that is readable and neat. It is recommended that students try to adhere to a consistent format, which is described below.

- MLA or APA format
- Typewritten in double-spaced format with a readable style and font and submitted inside the electronic classroom (unless classroom access is not possible and other arrangements have been approved by the professor).
- 11- or 12-point font, using Arial or Times New Roman.
- Uniform 1-inch page margins, with reasonable accommodation made for special situations and online submission variances.

CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE

Attention Please: Students will follow the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the American Psychological Association (APA)

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as the citation and reference style used in written work submitted as part of coursework to the University. Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow the citation style cited in:

- The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). (2001). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 6th ed. (2003).

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and may result in points deducted from your final course grade.

NETIQUETTE

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate--both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and "flaming." Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple. The Educator classroom may not fully support MIME or HTML encoded messages, which means that bold face, italics, underlining, and a variety of color-coding or other visual effects will not translate in your e-mail messages.

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- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoticons” to help alert your readers: ;-), :), ☺

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

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Academic Services

ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES

The Online Library Resource Center is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Center provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to librarian@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.
- **Tutor.com:** AMU and APU Civilian & Coast Guard students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. [Tutor.com](#) connects you with a professional tutor online 24/7 to

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provide help with assignments, studying, test prep, resume writing, and more. Tutor.com is tutoring the way it was meant to be. You get expert tutoring whenever you need help, and you work one-to-one with your tutor in your online classroom on your specific problem until it is done..

Request a Library Guide for your course
(<http://apus.libguides.com/index.php>)

The AMU/APU Library Guides provide access to collections of trusted sites on the Open Web and licensed resources on the Deep Web. These are specially tailored for academic research at APUS:

- Program Portals contain topical and methodological resources to help launch general research in the degree program. To locate, search by department name or navigate by school.
- Course Lib-Guides narrow the focus to relevant resources for the corresponding course. To locate, search by class code (e.g., SOCI111) or class name.

If a guide you need isn't available yet, let us know by emailing the APUS Library: librarian@apus.edu

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Turnitin.com

Faculty may require assignments be submitted to Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com will analyze a paper and report instances of potential plagiarism for the student to edit before submitting it for a grade. In some cases professors may require students to use Turnitin.com. Typically the course professor will establish a Turnitin.com access code for his/her classes. If the code has not been established, those who wish to use Turnitin.com may ask their professor to establish the code.

Selected Bibliography

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Anonymous. (2008, March 10). 66: PowerPoint rules. *Businessline*.

Bean, E. (2012, Sept. 23). Unique career trends: Technical writing. Retrieved from <http://onlinecareertips.com/2012/09/unique-careertrends-technical-writing/>

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Procurement, 16(1), 22.

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