JTC 300: Professional & Technical Communication

Department of Journalism & Media Communication | Colorado State University
Section 419 Online| Summer 2019 |Instructor: Hayley Blackburn
Email: Hayley.Blackburn@colostate.edu | Instagram | LinkedIn

Contents

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PHILOSOPHY

I value student self-efficacy and skill applicability in my classrooms. The assignments, activities, and grading scheme reflect a combination of education theory and my own experiences in the workplace and classroom. I provide the resources to help you succeed while leaving enough space for you to engage in critical and creative thinking. Completing the basic requirements outlined on assignments earns a "C" grade. If you complete everything well, as expected of you, that may be worth a "B." The "A" level work leverages course concepts (e.g., headings, graphics, style) to improve the document, reflects your writing and editing skills, and demonstrates effort and creativity. You must exceed expectations to merit an "A."

In short, my role involves crafting activities and facilitating a learning environment through feedback; *your role involves taking advantage of the opportunities to grow, refine, and practice your skills.* You have the control over your learning in this course.

Table 1: Integrate these values into your Learning Philosophy

Value	Definition	Application in Class
Creativity	The use of original ideas	Enhance documents with class concepts; Do not settle for the template
Self-Efficacy	The belief in your abilities to achieve your goals	Find and use various resources to foster your own learning outcomes
Agency	The capacity to make choices	Decide how to solve your problems and increase your learning

COURSE OBJECTIVES

JTC 300 is a gtPathways Course: The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved JTC 300 for inclusion in the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the GT-CO3 category. For transferring students, successful completion with a minimum C- grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in this GT Pathways category. For more information on the GT Pathways program, go to http://highered.colorado.gov/academics/transfers/gtpathways/curriculum.html

Key Points from SLOs

- Gain communication competency: write and express ideas across a variety of genres and styles.
- Communication competency develops over time: the skills are cumulative and continuously applied

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Advanced Writing Courses (GT-CO3)

Table 2: Standardized Outcomes and Content Areas

SLO Outcome	Underlying Skills
Employ Rhetorical Knowledge	Exhibit a thorough understanding of audience, purpose, genre, and context that is responsive to the situation.
	Develop sophisticated strategies for critical analysis of disciplinary or specialized discourse.
	Learn more sophisticated ways to communicate knowledge to appropriate audiences.
	Apply reflective strategies to the synthesis, communication, and creation of knowledge.
Develop Content	
	Create and develop ideas within the context of the situation and the assigned task(s).
	Hone recursive strategies for generating ideas, revising, editing, and proofreading for disciplinary or specialized discourse.
	Critique one's own and others' work, including the work of professional writers and/or scholars.
Extend Critical Thinking	
	Reflect on the implications and consequences of context.
	Incorporate alternate, divergent or contradictory perspectives or ideas within one's own position.
	Explain the consequences of conclusions and contexts.
Apply Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	
	Tailor the organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices to particular forms and/or fields.
	Select and adapt genre conventions including structure, paragraphing, tone, mechanics, syntax, and style for disciplinary or specialized discourse.
Use Sources and Evidence	
	Select, evaluate, and synthesize appropriate sources and evidence.
	Use discipline-appropriate criteria to evaluate sources and evidence.
Control Syntax and Mechanics	
	Demonstrate proficiency with conventions, including spellings, grammar, mechanics, and word choice appropriate to the writing task.
	Use specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation appropriately in more extensive or in-depth writing objects.

Core Learning Outcomes

- Employ Rhetorical Knowledge
- Develop Specialized Content
- Apply Genre Conventions
- Use Sources and Evidence
- Control Syntax and Mechanics

Skills to Practice

- Develop strategies for critical analysis and discourse
- Learn to communicate to various audiences
- Extend Critical and Creative Thinking in Contexts
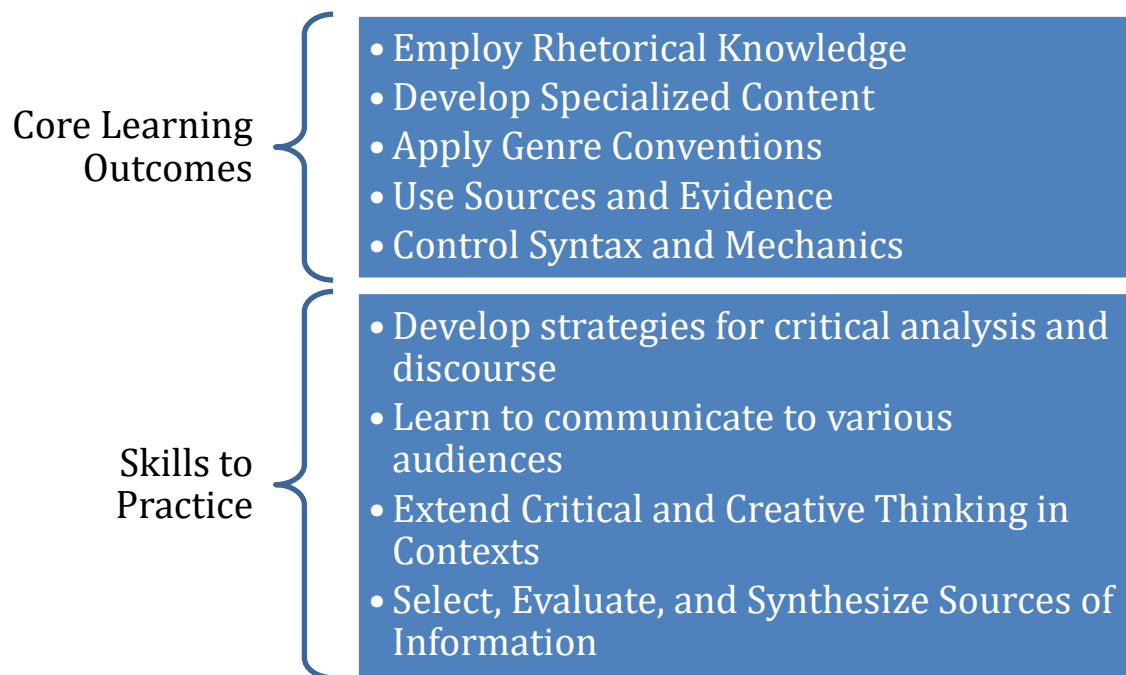- Select, Evaluate, and Synthesize Sources of Information

Figure 1: Maximize your learning environment by practicing these skills during every assignment and activity.

MATERIALS

The course uses text and digital resources to achieve the learning objectives. All the materials you need will be hosted through the Canvas platform (organized by week/unit and "Links" modules).

Textbook: Tebeaux, E. & Dragga, S. (2018). *The Essentials of Technical Communication(4th Edition).* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Trello offers a free web and a mobile app to increase productivity as a digital to-do list. I will maintain several lists on class board. Many companies use Trello to organize and collaborate among teams.

Additionally, I created a **LinkedIn Group** to build a community across semesters. I will post tips, articles, videos, and other professional development materials to the group. Use this space to post appropriate, relevant, and helpful articles, reflections, videos, and other content to the group. Take advantage and build a community of support.

Lastly, follow the class account on **Instagram** for updates, tips, and memes. Online courses inherently lack interaction, so please comment with questions and engage. I will post Stories with quick reflections and key notes from the week.

- CSU Writing Center | www.writingcenter.colostate.edu | Eddy Hall Room 23
- Grammarly Free Writing Assistant | www.grammarly.com | Download for Chrome, Word (Mac and PC)
- Communication Café for Presentations | www.echorivera.com
- Melonie Dodaro | www.linkedin.com/in/meloniedodaro/ | LinkedIn Expert
- Heather Lloyd-Martin | www.seocopywriting.com | SEO and Online Content Strategy

EXPECTATIONS

The course moves quickly. You are still expected to turn in high-quality, useful documents. The core of technical writing rests with informative, purposeful content; strive to be efficient in your drafting to accomplish both goals (quick creation and useful documents).

Key Points from Expectations

- Use document design and strong communication principles to correspond professionally
- Integrate various resources (calendars, Trello, bullet journals, etc.) to meet deadlines/due dates
- Save your final documents as .PDF to upload
- Late assignments receive ZEROS

Conduct and Values

Professionalism & Respect:
> Given that this is a professional communication course, be courteous and specific when sending an email. Additionally, students will maintain respectful digital interactions with one another at all times. Learning environments are strengthened by active respectful community members.

Accountability:
> You know what you need: be it assistance, clarification, additional resources, and more. Stay accountable to your learning and ask, persuasively, for what you need and why.

Assignment Submissions

Unless noted otherwise, documents must be submitted as a .pdf. *Portable Document Format* remains the most accessible format and preserves your design elements. (Click "Save As" and select .pdf in the format drop down).

If I cannot open your document due to an incorrect file format, you will receive a zero. Imagine the frustration of your clients, bosses, and teammates when they cannot open your work. Your credibility and your value decrease every time a professional contact must ask you to "resend" documents. The preferred file format may change in every workplace; this "workplace" uses .pdf for assignment submissions.

You are expected to hand in all assignments on time. **Late assignments will be given a zero (zero points): even if it was only 5 minutes past.** *I understand that emergencies may arise; contact me as soon as possible when circumstances arise.* If you are nearing a deadline, focus your attention on the required elements and turn in your draft.

Academic Dishonesty

The Department of Journalism and Media Communication maintains a strict policy about academic dishonesty. You are expected to write your own papers and to take your own exams. Ignorance of university academic misconduct rules is not an acceptable excuse. If you are caught plagiarizing a paper, plagiarizing a draft of a paper, or cheating on an exam, you will receive an F on the paper/exam or in the course, at the instructor's discretion.

GRADING

The grading section covers the format for feedback and my expectations of you.

Key Points from Grading

- Grades are evaluated in a comprehensive way—I assess how well you met the objectives through the content, considered the audience throughout the document, and integrated creative thinking into your design.
- Select the **green "View Feedback"** link to maximize your individualized learning environment.
- Missing any of the required elements results in a D or less on your assignment.

Comprehensive Grading

The grading scheme follows a comprehensive format, which considers the effectiveness of the whole document in meeting the objectives rather than assigning point values per section. Imagine that your boss asks you to complete a project with a few essential items that must be included. You can choose to amaze them as the best employee, to satisfy them as a solid member of the team, or disappoint them as an underperformer, depending on how you demonstrate your skills.

The expectations for every assignment are framed as a performance evaluation. The evaluation includes three components: text comments/color-coding, a general comment, and a score. The text comments will provide the most specific revisions and feedback. The quantitative score correlates with a workplace performance evaluation, see Table 1: Expectations.

Table 1: Expectations

Very Effective *Minimal Improvements*	Effective *Minor Errors*	Solid Foundation *Errors*	Less Effective *Significant Errors*	Requires Extensive Revisions *Unacceptable Errors*
Full Points	A	B	C	D and Below
Work that demonstrates creative and critical thinking to achieve the objectives in innovate and highly useful ways.	Strong work that demonstrates competency in the objectives with some creative and critical elements.	Work that fulfills the objectives but does not demonstrate additional creative or critical elements.	Lesser work that fulfills some of the required objectives.	Poor work that does not fulfill the objectives.
This type of work is worth a big promotion, ASAP	*This type of work is worth a raise. You have amazed your boss.*	*This type of work is doing what you are paid to do: nothing more. You have satisfied your boss.*	*This type of work indicates a need for additional training. You have disappointed your boss.*	*This type of work would warrant termination. You neglected the few essential items asked for in the project.*

"A" level work—being the best employee ever—meets the assignment objectives with critical and creative elements (editing, design, and style) that go beyond expectations. "B" level work meets the basic expectations—you are a solid member of the team. "C" level work is below basic expectations—you need additional resources and training to contribute to the team.

All of you hold the potential to earn an "A" by integrating the course concepts for macro and micro-editing into your unique documents. You need to consider how the format and paragraph styles will help your reader navigate the information. Lastly, grammar is important. Too many mistakes with spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure will affect your grade. **I recommend Grammarly to help you proofread and edit your work.** The app will explain your error and help you improve your micro-editing. Grammarly includes a free version that works with Google Chrome, Word, and many other applications.

This structure for grading rewards creativity, critical thinking, and effort while encouraging growth compared to point-based rubrics. Writing is a nuanced discipline with boundless ways to present ideas effectively, so this grading style provides more flexibility and fewer limitations on you. **But, there are specific issues that harm your credibility and effectiveness as a writer such as cluttered design, disorganized themes, minimal formatting, and other pitfalls we will cover throughout the course.**

Color Codes for Feedback

I highlight portions of your writing to visually point you to bright spots (awesome elements to continue) and growth areas in your writing. See Table 3—codes will be posted to the comments as well.

Table 3: Color coding for your documents

Green	Bright Spots
Red	Error (grammar, mechanics)
Yellow	Notes/Growth Areas
Orange	Variable per Document
Blue	Clarity Concerns
Purple	Use of Support/Data/Citations

To Earn High Scores on Your Assignments

1. Create documents inspired by the instructions to meet the objectives.
2. Take time to draft, revise, and polish your work.
3. Submit your assignments on time.

Grading Scale

Final Grades will be assigned using the University approved plus/minus percentage systems. Grades will automatically be calculated via Canvas and its export tool.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR SUMMER 2019

NOTE:
In the summer session of JTC 300 students will complete 1-2 units per week. Assignments are represented in **Bold** (due on Saturdays at 1 pm). Activities are due on Wednesdays at Midnight: you must respond to TWO associates in the activity discussions with feedback and critique.

Week & Units	Lesson	Reading	Assignment(s)
1: June 17 Unit 1 Unit 2	-Foundations of Writing -Revision and Editing	-Syllabus -Chapters 1 & 4 -Appendix A & B	*-Personal Brand/Goals (Due before moving on to Unit 9)* -Activity: Ethics & Audience **-Analysis Paper**
	-Audience Analysis -Ethics in Communication	-Chapter 2 -Chapter 3	
2: June 24 Unit 3 Unit 4	-Document Design -Infographics	-Chapters 5 -Chapter 6	-Activity: Infographics & SEO **-Professional Email**
	-Letters, Memos, & Emails	-Chapter 7	
3: July 1 Unit 5 Unit 6	-Definitions	-On Canvas: Markel & Selber (2019) Chapter 14	-Activity: Definitions & Instructions **-Training Materials**
	-Instructional Writing -Switch Method for Change	-Chapter 10 -Switch Materials	
4: July 8 Unit 7 Unit 8	-Proposals & Formal Reports -Choosing a Topic	-Chapters 8 & 9 -Feasibility e-chapter -Appendix C	*-Midterm Exam (Due Monday)* -Activity: Topic Brainstorming **-Pre-Proposal Memo**
	-Argumentation & Evidence -Researching Your Subject	-Appendix B (review) -On Canvas: Markel & Selber (2019) Chapter 5	
5: July 15 Unit 9 Unit 10	-Getting the Job	-Chapter 12	-Activity: Position Description & Cultural Analysis **-Resume and Cover Letter**
	-Intercultural Communication	-On Canvas: Dobrin et al.	
6: July 22 Unit 11 Unit 12	-After the Job	-On Canvas:	**-Paper in Progress** -Peer Edit (*send copy of your memo to partner)
	-Document Revision (Again because it is important!)	-None	
7: July 29 Unit 13	-Oral Presentations	-Chapter 11	-Activity: Outlines **-Oral Presentation**
8: Aug. 5 Unit 14	-Course Wrap-Up	-None	*-Final Exam (Mon. Midnight)* *-Final Draft of Proposal (Wed. Midnight)* -Course Evaluation Survey

ASSIGNMENT VALUES AND DUE DATES

JTC 300 Assignments, Point Value, and Due Date		
Assignment	**Point Value**	**Due Date**
Weekly Activities -6 discussion posts worth 25 points each *Activity Product = 15 points *Commenting on a classmates' post = 10 points	150	Wednesdays at Midnight
Analysis Paper	50	June 22 @ 1pm
Professional Email	25	June 29 @ 1pm
Training Poster	50	July 6 @ 1pm
Midterm Exam	125	July 8 @ Midnight
Project Pre-Proposal Memo	50	July 13 @1 pm
Resume & Cover Letter Resume = 25 points | Cover Letter = 25 points	50	July 20 @ 1pm
Paper-in-Progress (Literature Review/Background)	50	July 27 @ 1pm
Peer Edit (of Cover Letters and Resumes)	25	July 24 @Midnight
Multimedia Presentation	50	Aug. 3 @ 1pm
Final Exam	125	Aug. 5 @ Midnight
Final Draft of Proposal	100	Aug. 7 @ Midnight
Total Points	**850**	-----