

# ENC 3254: Professional Communication

**Class:** ENC3254, Section 9725

**Room:** MCCA (McCarthy Hall A) Room 1142

**Meeting Times:** MWF 4 (10:40-11:30)

**Instructor:** Phil Bratta (philbratta@ufl.edu)

**Office:** 302 Tigert Hall

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 12:00-2:00 or by appointment

## Course Description

Professional communication is the practice of conveying technical information to multiple audiences who may have very different goals and varying technical needs for that information. In this class you not only learn how to research, organize, and present technical information, but also how to write effectively, work in collaboration with other professionals, and use various technologies to support your communication efforts.

This course is designed to help students master a variety of communication strategies and genres of writing relevant specific professional disciplines. We will focus primarily on the composition and design of larger documents such as proposals, instructions, and formal reports using collaborative writing; however, we will also compose and design smaller documents such as memos, letters, resumes, and informal reports--as well as construct formal presentations.

We will practice analyzing writing situations in the technical workplace; then we will use the strategies for audience-analysis, organization, style, and page layout to develop documents that address those rhetorical situations. The objective of this class is to help you learn how to write, revise, and edit technical documents for the professional community you will join.

## Required Texts

John Lannon. *Technical Communication*, 12th ed. Boston: Longman (2011).

## Assignments

The assignments below include two group projects. For the group projects, a portion of the written work must be completed by each student; students will be graded individually on their portions of the project, and the group will earn a separate grade for the collaboration.

### ***Introductory E-mail Message***

Using a standard e-mail format and an effective professional style, you will send a message to the

class listserv introducing yourself, your career goals, your areas of specialization, and your writing experiences.

### ***Job Application Packet (Cover Letter, Resume, Follow-Up Letter)***

In this multi-part assignment you will first identify an internship or job you hope to have. Next, you will research the field and construct a profile for the ideal candidate for this position. Finally, you will write a cover letter and a resume for this particular job, as well as a follow-up letter thanking your prospective employer for your interview which restates your interest.

### ***Technical Definition***

You will first select an item from a list of technical terms and then identify an audience and a purpose for the term using a profile sheet. You will first write a sentence definition of the term, then an expanded definition for a first-year student in your professional field. Next, you will write an expanded definition for a lay person. You will also detail the four expansion strategies you use for both versions, including at least one visual and one rough diagram. You must cite and document at least four outside sources, using APA style, for both expanded versions.

### ***Social Awareness/Solutions Reflection***

As part of becoming a socially, politically and globally aware engineer, you will write a reflection paper about your participation in an art activist project entitled One Million Bones and what solutions engineers and the engineering field can make toward creating a more conscious and just society. The first part of this paper will require you to reflect on what OMB means for our society, history and future, as well as assess what are some of the engineering issues for the total project. The second part of this paper will require you to reflect and write about a current engineering issue in your field and what the political and social implications are in a global context.

### ***Instruction Manual***

You will construct an instruction manual for a product, process, or task. The actual technical instructions will be for a “thing” any and all students at UF would find useful. The manual will contain descriptions and specifications, product warnings, maintenance and troubleshooting advice, and any other information the user is likely to need to complete the task, use the product, or fulfill the process. The manual will be assessed on the quality and readability of the instructions, on the functionality of the instructional visuals, on the effectiveness of the design, and on the rhetorical style of the steps, sequencing, and transitions.

### ***Feasibility Report***

Working in a small group, you will produce a feasibility report responding to a case study chosen by your group. The report will include a methodology, an empirical research or data section, a discussion of the facts, and recommendations. It will explain your research process, discuss the alternative responses you have discovered, present your criteria and methodology, discuss your evaluation techniques, and provide conclusions you deem useful, appropriate, and relevant. The report will be based on your own research and analysis and will follow the formal guidelines presented in the text.

### ***Progress Report***

During the process of writing the proposal, you will write an individual progress report. This will track activities, problems, and progress for both your individual assigned tasks, and the group's overall task. The focus will be on schedules, setbacks, problems solved, and the dates and stages of your progress.

### ***Proposal***

Your final small group project will be a technical proposal for the campus or for an academic unit within UF. Your proposal will seek to persuade a target audience that something needs to be done, and offer a specific solution to a problem your group has identified. The assessment of this final project will be on the proposed course of action, your audience analysis, your rhetorical strategy, your document design, and the visual quality and effectiveness of your graphics. Also, your group will need to present the project to your peers.

### **Grading**

Grading for this course will be rigorous. Do not rely on the instructor for copy-editing, even on drafts.

To receive a passing grade, each paper must reach the minimum assigned word count.

### ***Assignment Values***

<b>Individual Assignments</b>	<b>Value</b>
Introductory E-Mail (300 words)	50
Job Application Packet (800 words)	100
Annotated Bibliography (400 words)	50
Technical Definition (1000 words)	100
Social Awareness/Solutions Reflection (500 words)	50
Instruction Manual (800 words)	100
Progress Report (500 words)	50
Reading Quizzes (5 x 10 points)	50
Peer Reviews (5 X 10)	50
Activities (5 x10)	50
Participation	50
Attendance	75
<b>Group Assignments</b>	
Formal or Feasibility Report (1000 words per student) (Individual: 100, Group: 100)	200
Proposal (1000 words per student)	300

(Individual: 125, Group: 125, Presentation: 50)

Total Possible Points

1,275

### ***Grading Scale***

A	4.0	93-100%	1185-1275	C	2.0	73-76%	930-980
A-	3.67	90-92%	1147-1184	C-	1.67	70-72%	892-929
B+	3.33	87-89%	1109-1146	D+	1.33	67-69%	854-891
B	3.0	83-86%	1058-1108	D	1.0	63-66%	803-853
B-	2.67	80-82%	1020-1057	D-	0.67	60-62%	765-802
C+	2.33	77-79%	981-1019	E	0.00	0-59%	0-764

## **Course Policies and Procedures**

### ***Attendance and Participation***

Unlike some of your classes, this course is skills-based. In other words, practice makes all the difference to writing; the more you write, the better you become. Consequently, the effects of this course are cumulative, and frequent absences will affect your progress and success dramatically. Instruction during class is often spontaneous, so it is impossible to offer a recap of what transpired. Writing is process and experience based. This is not a course where you can “catch up” on what happens during class. If you fall behind, you will stay behind.

Attendance is required. **The policy of the University Writing Program is that if you miss more than six periods during the term, you will fail the entire course.** The UWP exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. A valid, signed doctor’s note, with the reason illness or injury prevented you from attending class, may also be submitted, and will be accepted.

Repeated tardiness will also affect your attendance. Three (3) tardies count as one (1) absence. If you arrive more than 10 minutes after class starts, you will be counted as absent. Your first three (3) absences do not affect your grade; however, for the next three absences after these first three “freebies”, you will lose twenty-five points (25) for each absence (maximum seventy-five points). Your seventh absence means you will fail the entire course.

Participation is a crucial part of the class and your grade. As you may have noticed, many points of your grade are based on collaborative work. If you are not willing to engage in collaborative projects, you don’t want to take this course, as non-participation is not an option. This is a deliberate aspect of the course since so much of professional writing is collaborative.

### ***Academic Honesty***

As a University of Florida student, your performance is governed by the UF Student Honor Code, (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>). The Honor Code requires Florida

students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all defined in detail at the above site.

### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8 July 2011)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very seriously, and treats instances of plagiarism as dishonesty and as a failure to comply with the scholarly requirements of this course. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own.

***Important tip:*** There should never be a time when you copy and paste something from the Internet and don't provide the exact location and citation information for the source.

If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, he or she will be awarded a failing grade on the assignment. Additionally, University policy suggests that, as a MINIMUM, instructors should impose a course grade penalty and report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. Each student's work may be tested for its originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute PROOF of plagiarism. Other forms of academic dishonesty will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty. Examples include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations to include in your assignments.

### ***General Education Learning Outcomes***

Students must pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C). Earning general education composition credit, students will

- Demonstrate forms of effective writing (focusing on analyses, arguments, and proposals)
- Learn different writing styles, approaches, and formats and successfully adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts; effectively revise and edit their own writing and the writing of others
- Organize complex arguments in writing, using thesis statements, claims, and evidence
- Employ logic in arguments and analyze their own writing and the writing of others for errors in logic
- Write clearly and concisely consistent with the conventions of standard written English
- Use thesis sentences, claims, evidence, and logic in arguments

The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. To receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6), papers must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Requirement, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

**Assessment Rubric**

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

	paper's argument or points.	
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### ***Classroom Disruptions***

Much of this class is as discussion-based, so it is vital that we always respect each other's views. Students are required to turn cell phones and pagers off. Ringing phones and text messaging is a disruption of the class, which may result in your being asked to leave the classroom and being counted absent. If you have a personal emergency and must keep your phone on one day, please discuss it with the instructor before class.

### ***Late Work***

Students are responsible for submitting assignments by their due dates. **Papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date.** Late papers will not be accepted.

### ***Readings***

Reading assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the date on which they are due. Students should have completed these readings before coming to class that day.

### ***Lecture and Reading Quizzes***

Quizzes on the readings will be given randomly during the semester. Quizzes can not be made up, and the only excused absence is a doctor's note or written verification of participation in a university-sponsored event for the day missed.

### ***Conferences***

Students are encouraged to use the instructor's office hours if there are questions about progress in the course, work underway, or any other course-related concerns. If there is a conflict with the posted office hours, please contact the instructor to schedule a better time. Having conferences on assignments is frequently the best way to improve the quality of final drafts.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.