



ENGL201 Introduction to Technical Writing

3 Credits

Professor Kevin Kennedy (He/Him/His)

Schedule a time to chat with me: <https://bit.ly/3KaOTzG>

Syllabus

“Technical writing is a continuous process of learning, carefully gathering, sifting, organizing, and assessing, all while trying to craft something that makes sense for a user.”

Contents

Syllabus	1
The Big Picture:	1
Final Grades/What We’ll Be Doing:	2
What Class Will Look Like:	3
Academic Honesty:	3
Email:	3
Writing Studio:	4
Special Needs and Inclusion:.....	4
Final Suggestions for Success:.....	4
Schedule:.....	5

The Big Picture:

This class is meant to teach you many of the basics of writing for any kind of business. We will focus on different modes of communication you will encounter (email, social media, etc.) as well as different styles of writing you will use in most career fields (resume, CV, manuals, etc.).

Learning Goals:

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Communicate effectively and work collaboratively
- Identify, analyze, and target readers/listeners
- Articulate your communication purpose and employ appropriate rhetorical strategies in the service of that purpose
- Demonstrate facility with ideas and language
- Analyze and synthesize information in sophisticated and complex rhetorical/logical structures
- Devise and employ effective document design
- Know and be able to modify conventional formats such as manuals, technical reports, and other standard professional documents
- Conduct relevant, digital, and innovative research, both primary and secondary
- Understand and implement appropriate strategies for gathering information
- Integrate the ideas and language of various sources
- Document sources and research professionally

Required Texts:

All required texts will be provided via Blackboard, though you will need your BSU login credentials to access many of them.

Final Grades/What We'll Be Doing:

Final grades for this course will be project-based, with class participation tabulated as a part of each individual project. As such, grades will be composed as follows:

Introductory Unit (first week): 10%

You're Hired! Project: 40%

Introductory Readings/Tasks: 10%

Rough Draft/Peer Review: 10%

Final Project: 20%

Cover Letter: 10%

Resume/CV: 10%

How to Make a Final Project: 40%

Introductory Readings/Tasks: 10%

Rough Draft/Peer Review: 10%

Final Project: 20%

Written Instructions: 10%

Video: 10%

While this might seem intimidating, each of the larger projects will be made of multiple weeks' worth of work, so your grade will be based not only on the final product you produce, but also the work you put in along the way.

What Class Will Look Like:

This class is totally **asynchronous**, meaning that we don't have a scheduled time to meet each week. I am, however, going to encourage you to book times to meet with me to talk about your projects, and you can use the link below (and on Blackboard) to schedule a time to meet and chat **at any time, about anything**. Each week will be set up as a module on Blackboard, with some material due by **midnight on Wednesday** and other material due **by midnight on Sunday**.

After each assignment, I'll say whether you should STOP and wait for feedback (if, for example, rough drafts are due) or PAUSE before moving on. If you're feeling ambitious and want to get ahead, you can continue on to the next week's work after a PAUSE.

For our large projects, I would take an hour in an in-person course to design the project and rubric together. Since that's not as possible here, I'm going to give you all the foundation of each assignment, and ask you to come up with what success means together.

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to abide by the academic policy of Bridgewater State University. Plagiarism, the presentation of someone else's words or ideas as one's own, is a violation of the academic community and of Bridgewater State University. According to the BSU Student Handbook, "A violation may result in a reduced grade, suspension or dismissal from the university." See the Student Handbook for more detailed information. In this course, we will be looking at the texts of others, and critiquing their work, so its important to make sure you're always clear on what words are yours, and which are not.

Email:

You should check your email daily, and if you email me you should expect a response within one business day. Each semester, I receive **so many** emails that look something like this:

- What did I miss in class?
- I can't be in class. What's the homework?
- I'm really, really sick so is it okay I miss class?

Before you send an email like this **CHECK THE SYLLABUS AND BLACKBOARD and check in with a classmate (see above)**. 90% of these emails can be answered by checking the syllabus or Blackboard for our schedule, and most of the rest could be answered by just checking in with a classmate. As such, I will not answer these emails until my next scheduled office hour.

Some acceptable topics to email about:

- I'd like to discuss my assignment with you. Could I ask you to read this, or can we schedule a time?

- I liked our discussion about _____ this week, and I'd like to talk more about it. Could you recommend me additional reading?
- I found this source that I'd like to use in class. Could you take a look?

Writing Studio:

BSU has an amazing writing studio as part of the Academic Achievement Center, filled with people (both students, grad students, staff, and faculty) who are both knowledgeable and helpful for your writing. They can help you brainstorm ideas, organize your thoughts, or focus on parts of your writing. To find out more, or book an appointment online, [visit their website](#).

Special Needs and Inclusion:

Many people have additional academic needs. From needing extra time on tests to having difficulty with notes, such needs are commonplace and acceptable within the classroom. If you have any special needs in the classroom please speak with me as soon as possible and contact the Office of Disability Resources to set up an appointment so that they might arrange accommodations for you.

Final Suggestions for Success:

1. **We're all human, and the world is a weird place this year.** If you're struggling, please reach out early! I'm online during my weekly office hours and our scheduled class meeting time on Wednesday and Friday, and I can schedule something else if that doesn't work.
2. **Be respectful and try to be kind, we're all in the same boat.** Treat your classmates with respect. You might disagree with something they or I say in class but border your comments with a respect for the time we're all putting in to making our writing and ourselves better.
3. **Make your writing your own!** Coming into this class, you may or may not know what kind of work you're looking to do after college but try to make the assignments your own. Pick topics that appeal to you. When the work feels less boring, it tends to be less boring to read as well!
4. **Keep an eye out for material and be ready for things to change!** I love to find new material to look at, whether it's something from a newspaper, website, textbook, or other, and I'd love to incorporate what you find as well! If you come across something you'd like to discuss, email me and bring it in.
5. **Blackboard will always have the most updated version of our schedule.** Given the statement above, and the fact that things happen (weather, illness, internet outages, etc), know that the schedule in this syllabus can, and probably will, change. As such, all dates listed on Blackboard should be treated as the correct ones.

Schedule:

“In fiction, the language and the senses it evokes are important, whereas in technical writing, the content, and the information it conveys, are important.”

Please see Blackboard for Readings and Assignments.

Week One (7/11-7/17): Introductions/What is Technical Writing? For Wednesday: Complete initial readings and introductory discussion. Respond to assignment-customization post. For Sunday, complete readings/responses on resumes/cover letters.

Week Two (7/18-7/24): You’re Hired Project. For Wednesday: **Complete rough draft of cover letter and resume and post to Blackboard. Make an appointment to meet with me (if at all possible) before the end of the week.** For Sunday, **upload final drafts of your project.**

Week Three (7/25-7/31): How to Make a Final Project. For Wednesday: Complete initial postings. For Sunday: **post rough outline of video and draft of manual to Blackboard. Make an appointment to meet with me next week (if possible).**

Week Four (8/1-8/7): How to Make a Final Project: Meet with me to discuss manual and **submit final draft by Sunday, 8/7!**