

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

Undergraduate Council
 New Course Course Change
 Core Category: WID Effective Fall 2013

or
 Graduate/Professional Studies Council
 New Course Course Change
 Effective Fall 2013

1. Department: ILT College: TECH
2. Faculty Contact Person: Dr. Jerry Evans Telephone: 713-743-9434 Email: jsevans2@central.uh.edu
3. Course Information on New/Revised course:
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
TELS / 3363 / Technical Communications
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.)
TELS / 3363 / TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS
 - SCH: 3.00 Level: JR CIP Code: 52.0501.00 16 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0
4. Justification for adding/changing course: To meet core curriculum requirements
5. Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course? Yes No
 If Yes, please complete:
 - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:
 / /
 - Course ID: Effective Date (currently active row):
6. Authorized Degree Program(s): TELSBS, CETEBS, MEETBS, EPETBS, ISTEBS, SCLTBS, CMTBS, CMTSMBS, BIOTECHBS, DIGMBS
 - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department? Yes No
 - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments? Yes No
 - Can the course be repeated for credit? Yes No (if yes, include in course description)
7. Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: lecture ONLY (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)
8. If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title
TELS / 3363 / Technical Communication
 - Course ID: 43741 Effective Date (currently active row): 8232004
9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: ENGL 1304 with grade of C or higher. Description (30 words max.):
 Procedures and techniques of preparing technical memoranda, oral and written reports, manuals, and other source documents that fit the pattern of industrial and institutional communications.
10. Dean's Signature _____ Date: 10/11/12
 Print/Type Name: Fred Lewellen, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

REQUEST FOR COURSES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

Originating Department or College: Information & Logistics Technology/College of Technology

Person Making Request: Dr. Jerry Evans

Telephone: 713-743-9434

Email: jsevans2@central.uh.edu

Dean's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Course Number and Title: TELS 3363 – Technical Communications

RECEIVED OCT 12 2012

Please attach in separate documents:

Completed CBM003 Add/Change Form with Catalog Description

Syllabus

List the student learning outcomes for the course (Statements of what students will know and be able to do as a result of taking this course. See appended hints for constructing these statements):

Students successfully completing the course will achieve the following learning outcomes:

- To recognize that all writing is contextual and to demonstrate technical writing skills through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.
- To evaluate and use the shared conventions, practices, standards, and constructs of business and technical writing forms.
- To associate and express through writing the issues and purposes of specific technical fields.
- To interpret and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency through written exposition and argument.
- To develop the ability to research and compose a documented proposal that conforms to the standards of the discipline and to formulate an identity in a particular discipline or profession.

Component Area for which the course is being proposed (check one):

***Note:** If you check the Component Area Option, you would need to also check a Foundational Component Area.

Communication

American History

Mathematics

Government/Political

Science

Language, Philosophy, & Culture

Social & Behavioral Science

Creative Arts

Component Area Option

Life & Physical Sciences

Competency areas addressed by the course (refer to appended chart for competencies that are required and optional in each component area):

Critical Thinking

Teamwork

Communication Skills

Social Responsibility

Empirical & Quantitative Skills

Personal Responsibility

Because we will be assessing student learning outcomes across multiple core courses, assessments assigned in your course must include assessments of the core competencies. For each competency checked above, indicated the specific course assignment(s) which, when completed by students, will provide evidence of the competency. Provide detailed information, such as copies of the paper or project assignment, copies of individual test items, etc. A single assignment may be used to provide data for multiple competencies.

Critical Thinking:

NOTE: These descriptions focus on how each assignment meets the Critical Thinking competency. A more general description of each assignment can be found in the course syllabus.

- **Introductory Letter (Critical Thinking):** Students will demonstrate the Critical Thinking competency by proving an understanding of the basic principles of technical communication and the ability to critically analyze a specific audience through the composition of a carefully targeted message. The assignment rubric will have sections on logical organization and awareness of audience that will be used to evaluate students on Critical Thinking.
- **Concision Exercises (Critical Thinking):** Students will begin this assignment by critiquing short passages for clarity, concision, and fluency. Following this critique, students will edit individual passages with the goal reducing the length of the passage, while still conveying all key information. This will be accomplished critically recognizing and eliminating redundancies, roundabout phrases, nominal phrases, and overuse of the passive voice. Students will be evaluated on the ability to recognize the key information in each passage and to improve the passage based on their critical analysis.
- **Revised Introductory Letter and Peer Review (Critical Thinking):** Working in peer review groups, students will critique and evaluate the Introductory Letters of their peer review partners. Following this written evaluation, students will review their own Introductory Letters and formulate a revision based on their own critical analysis of editing needs. The assignment rubric will have a revision analysis section that will be used to evaluate students on the Critical Thinking competency.
- **Job Résumé (Critical Thinking):** After comparing examples that represent current industry standards, students will critically analyze specific job ads for positions in their professional areas before completing a résumé based on this analysis. The assignment rubric will have sections on

logical organization, persuasion, and audience analysis that will be used to evaluate students on the Critical Thinking competency.

- **Job Cover Letter (Critical Thinking):** Each student will compose a one page cover letter, integrating the persuasive techniques discussed in the textbook and the lecture material. Above all, this assignment will emphasize that the ability of a writer to persuade is dependent upon that that writer's ability analyze and target a specific audience. The assignment rubric will have sections on persuasion and audience analysis that will be used to evaluate students on the Critical Thinking competency.
- **Final Exam (Critical Thinking):** The final exam consists of two essay questions in which students illustrate a comprehensive knowledge of the fundamentals of technical communication. In the second essay question, students are required to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a problematic technical document. In this essay, students discriminate between strong and weak methods of technical writing and offer concrete recommendations for revision. Students are evaluated primarily on their critical thinking skills in this exercise.

Communication Skills:

NOTE: These descriptions focus on how each assignment meets the Communication Skills competency. A more general description of each assignment can be found in the course syllabus.

- **Introductory Letter (Communication Skills):** Students will demonstrate the Communication competency by using information from lecture material and the introductory chapters of the course text book to compose a one page business letter of introduction. The assignment rubric will have sections on professional format and tone, use of detail, and mechanics to evaluate students on Communication Skills.
- **Technical Definitions Memo (Communication Skills):** Illustrating an understanding of technical definitions, students will compose a 1-2 page memo in which they provide a clear classification and differentiation of set of technical terms associated with their specific majors. Students will first analyze the specific audience for the memo and then develop technical definitions that demonstrate an understanding of the technical knowledge of their readers. The assignment rubric will have sections on clarity of definitions, format, mechanics, concision, and awareness of audience to evaluate students on the Communication Skills competency.
- **Technical Instructions Memo (Communication Skills):** Starting with a flawed set of technical instructions, students will formulate and compose a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the instructions based on information from the lecture and textbook material. Following this analysis, students will revise the instructions based of their interpretation of the usability of the original set. The assignment rubric will have sections on format, tone, detail,

clarity of instructions, and mechanics to evaluate students on the Communication Skills competency.

- **Group Research Project (Communication Skills):** Each group will begin by composing a Recommendation Report and accompanying Presentation, using research techniques to illustrate an understanding of the problem the group is attempting to solve. Following this, the class as a whole will analyze and vote on the presentations, and each group will be given a hypothetical budget based on the outcome of the vote. Based on this budget, each group will formulate a specific, real-world solution for the problem they are attempting to solve, and will create a detailed Project Plan explaining how the solution will be implemented and the budget allocated. In the final group assignment, each group will be asked to troubleshoot an unexpected problem in the project by doing additional research and writing a detailed Claim Letter. The assignment rubrics will have sections on format, tone, use of detail, clarity, concision, fluency and mechanics to evaluate students on Communication Skills.
- **Final Exam (Communication Skills):** In the first of two essay questions on this comprehensive exam, students are required to compose a one page recommendation letter, in which they demonstrate the capacity to apply a large range of evaluative and persuasive techniques. Students are evaluated on the ability to communicate the required information concisely, clearly, and fluently.

Empirical & Quantitative Skills:

Not applicable.

Teamwork:

NOTE: These descriptions focus on how each assignment meets the Teamwork competency. A more general description of each assignment can be found in the course syllabus.

- **Group Research Project (Teamwork):** Integrating the knowledge from the first half of the course, students will work in project teams to tackle a specific, real-world problem using technical communication techniques. This will be an extended six-week project, consisting of a series of assignments that build on one another. At the end of the project, students will be evaluated on both on the work submitted and their ability to work together as a team.
- **In-Class Worksheets (Teamwork):** To complete these worksheet assignments, students will work in groups, focusing on honing the skills necessary to complete the more formalized individual projects. Following the completion of the in-class worksheets, each team will be required to present their results to the class. Students are evaluated on their ability to work together and quickly create a concise and coherent presentation.

Social Responsibility:

NOTE: These descriptions focus on how each assignment meets the Social Responsibility competency. A more general description of each assignment can be found in the course syllabus.

- **Discussion Board Assignments 1-4 (Social Responsibility):** Students will complete several three hundred word discussion board assignments on the subject of business and personal ethics. In these assignments, students to show their ability to apply knowledge, debate issues and ideas, and provide rationale for the positions they take on complex ethical topics. Students are evaluated on their ability to support their positions and to converse intelligently with those who disagree with them.

Personal Responsibility:

NOTE: These descriptions focus on how each assignment meets the Personal Responsibility core competency. A more general description of each assignment can be found in the course syllabus.

- **Job Résumé (Personal Responsibility):** Working from a specific employment ad, each student will develop a targeted résumé, designed to persuade the specific employer in question. Students will be evaluated on their ability to analyze and persuasively frame their individual strengths and weaknesses, which will emphasize the Personal Responsibility competency.
- **Job Cover Letter (Personal Responsibility):** In composing this letter, students will analyze their employments strengths and develop a concise summary of their attributes. As in the résumé assignment, students will be evaluated on their ability to analyze and persuasively frame their individual strengths and weaknesses, emphasizing Personal Responsibility.
- **Group Research Project (Personal Responsibility):** In this extended group project, students will be expected to take an active role in the delegation and completion of all group assignments. At the end of the project, students will evaluate teammates and themselves based on the personal responsibility each team member took for the project.

Will the syllabus vary across multiple section of the course? Yes No

If yes, list the assignments that will be constant across sections:

All of the assignments are constant across all sections with the exception of the In-Class Worksheets, which are not completed by online sections. Instructors are also allowed to make minor changes to course projects, but the main requirements for these projects stay the same across all sections.

Inclusion in the core is contingent upon the course being offered and taught at least once every other academic year. Courses will be reviewed for renewal every 5 years.

The department understands that instructors will be expected to provide student work and to participate in university-wide assessments of student work. This could include, but may not be limited to, designing instruments such as rubrics, and scoring work by students in this or other courses. In addition, instructors of core courses may be asked to include brief assessment activities in their course.

Dept. Signature: _____

**TELS 3363 Technical Communications (Hybrid)
Policy Statement**

Instructor: Dr. Tracy Barnwell

Email: tbarnwell@uh.edu

Office: T2 399

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

TELS 3363 integrates several learning goals in order to create a dynamic environment in which students develop critical thinking skills and master technical writing forms. Students successfully completing the course will achieve the following learning outcomes:

- To recognize that all writing is contextual and to demonstrate technical writing skills through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.
- To evaluate and use the shared conventions, practices, standards, and constructs of business and technical writing forms.
- To associate and express through writing the issues and purposes of specific technical fields.
- To interpret and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency through written exposition and argument.
- To develop the ability to research and compose a documented proposal that conforms to the standards of the discipline and to formulate an identity in a particular discipline or profession.

REQUIRED TEXT

Lannon & Gurak, *Technical Communication* (12th Edition) & Tutoring Services Package

ISBN-10: 0205885780

ISBN-13: 9780205885787

OTHER MATERIALS

Students are required to bring a USB Jump Drive to class each day.

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

Students taking this course must have daily access to a fairly recent computer with an Internet connection. Students must also have access to Microsoft Word or to a word processor that can save and read files in Rich Text Format (.RTF). The word processor you use must also be able to view feedback comments made with the Word Comment function (all recent version of Microsoft Word should be able to do this). You may also need to be able to read files in PDF format, which means you will need to install the free Adobe Reader software onto your computer if it is not already installed. This software can be downloaded at <http://www.adobe.com/>.

PREREQUISITE

Students must have completed ENGL 1304 (or an equivalent course) with a C or higher.

REQUIRED COMPUTER SKILLS

Students taking this course should come into the course with a basic understanding of computers, web navigation, word processing, and email. No programming knowledge is necessary to take this class.

OBTAINING A COUGARNET ACCOUNT

Students must have CougarNet account to use the classroom computers. Students without a CougarNet login and password should go to 103 T2 to obtain an account before the second day of class.

OBTAINING A BLACKBOARD VISTA ACCOUNT

All students must obtain a Blackboard Vista account in order to access the course materials. Follow these steps to obtain an account:

- 1) Go to the Blackboard Vista web page at the address <http://www.uh.edu/webct/>
- 2) Click "Check User Name."
- 3) Input your PeopleSoft ID to find out your login name.
- 4) Your initial password is your birthdate as **mmddyxx!** where x is the first initial of your last name (exclamation point at end is required).

ACCESSING COURSE MATERIALS

The class schedule, course assignments, directions for submitting assignments, and individual student grades are available only to those students who have a Blackboard Vista account. Once you have obtained a Blackboard Vista account, you can access the course materials through the following steps:

- 1) Go to the Blackboard Vista web page at the address <http://www.uh.edu/webct/>
- 2) Click the Blackboard Vista button.
- 3) Fill in your Blackboard Vista ID and password, and click on the "OK" button.
- 4) Click on the link for the TELS 3363 class.

COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS

News for the course (assignment reminders, schedule changes, etc.) will be posted on the course homepage, so you should be sure to check there frequently.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

A detailed assignment schedule is posted at the bottom of the course homepage. This schedule is subject to change, so be sure to check frequently.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

If you need to reach me by email, I can be contacted either through the Blackboard Vista email page for the course or at tbarnwell@uh.edu. I typically reply to student email on Monday and Thursday mornings. While this means you may have to wait a day or two for a reply, I always consider the date and time that the original message was sent when reviewing time sensitive matters.

DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE

500 Total Course Points

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| • WRITING PROJECTS | 185 Points |
| Project 1: Policies Questions [10 pts.] | |
| Project 2: Introductory Letter [25 Pts.] | |
| Project 3: Revision Practice [25 Pts.] | |
| Project 4: Revised Intro Letter [25 Pts.] | |
| Project 5: Resume [25 Pts.] | |
| Project 6: Job Cover Letter [25 Pts.] | |
| Project 7: Technical Definitions [25 Pts.] | |
| Project 8: Technical Instructions [25 Pts.] | |
| • GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT | 90 Points |
| • 5 DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENTS | 75 Points |
| • FINAL EXAM | 75 Points |
| • PARTICIPATION | 75 Points |

HOW TO DOWNLOAD FEEDBACK COMMENTS ON PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

After submitting project assignments, you will receive a detailed grade breakdown and feedback comments. It is important to view these feedback comments in order to improve on future projects and revision assignments. To view feedback comments:

- 1) Click the "Assignments" link on "Course Tools" bar on the the course homepage.
- 2) Click the "Graded" tab.
- 3) Click the title of the appropriate assignment. This will take you to the graded assignment page.
- 4) Click and download the graded assignment from the Submission attachments area.
- 5) Comments have been made using the Microsoft "comment" function. To view your assignment feedback, first download the attached file, and open it in Microsoft Word.
- 6) Next go to the "View" menu, click the double arrow at the bottom of the menu to expand your selections, and select "Print Layout."
- 7) Comments should now appear in red out to the side of your work, but if these comments still aren't visible, go to the "View" menu and select "Markup."
- 8) To adjust the size of the page on the screen, use the "View" menu to select "Zoom."

WHERE TO FIND ASSIGNMENT GRADES

To view your current assignment grades, click the "My Grades" link on the course homepage. Keep in mind that this will show you a number grade for each graded assignment, but you will need to follow the instructions above to view a detailed grade breakdown and feedback comments.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR CURRENT ASSIGNMENT AVERAGE

To calculate a single assignment grade, divide your score by the total score possible. If, for instance, you received a 22 out of 25 on project 2, your grade would be $22/25$, which is .88 or 88% (B+). To calculate your current assignment average, divide the total points you have earned by the total points possible. For instance if you earned a total of 155 out of a possible 190 points, your current assignment average would be $155/190$, which works out to roughly .82 or 82% (B-).

OPTIONAL REVISIONS

NO ASSIGNMENT GRADES WILL BE DROPPED in this course. At the end of the semester, however, students will have the option to revise up to 3 course assignments for higher grades. Projects 3-7 and Discussion Assignments 1-3 will be eligible for revision. Students will NOT be able to revise Projects 1 & 2. **Late assignments will not be eligible for revision.**

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments must be submitted through the Blackboard Vista page for the class. Weekly assignments are typically posted on the course homepage on Mondays and are then due the following Tuesday (8 days later) at 3:00 pm. There are a few exceptions to this rule, however, so be sure to check the course homepage frequently.

All Project Assignments must be submitted in **RICH TEXT FORMAT** and each student should include his or her **last name** at the beginning of the file name. To save a file in Rich Text (or RTF) format, select the "Save As" option from the "File" menu or your word processor, and choose "Rich Text Format" under "File Type."

LATE WORK POLICY

If you turn in a project or discussion assignment late, you will receive no feedback. Additionally, the project will receive a grade deduction of 10% per day. Project or discussion assignments turned in more than a week late will receive 40% credit. Late group simulation project assignments will not be accepted.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

A teaching assistant will be responsible some of the grading in the class. If you have questions or concerns about your grade on a particular assignment, you may contact the TA directly by using the email address listed on the course homepage, or you may contact me at tbarnwell@uh.edu.

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

If you have trouble submitting an assignment because Blackboard Vista is down or your computer is misbehaving, here are the steps you should follow:

- 1) If at all possible, paste your assignment into an email with a short explanatory note, and send it to me through Blackboard Vista internal email or (if Blackboard Vista is down) to tbarnwell@uh.edu. This way I'll know you completed the assignment on time.
- 2) Once the technical issue is resolved (regardless of whether you were able to email me the assignment or not), resubmit the assignment the correct way through Blackboard Vista with a short note at the top explaining why the assignment was submitted late. Be sure to do this second step, or you may end up not getting credit for the assignment.
- 3) DON'T PANIC. Keep in mind that I am a reasonable and sympathetic human being with an acute understanding of all the trouble computers can cause. That said, please do not call me at home at 11:00 at night or send me a dozen frantic emails when your computer eats your homework or the Blackboard Vista sever goes down or some other predictably apocalyptic technical issue occurs. Once you have access to a working computer, just send me a calm, reasonable email explaining your situation, and we will work things out as soon as possible. Provided you have not overused/abused the "technical issues" excuse, I will almost certainly understand your plight.

A final comment on this issue—be sure to double-check that your assignments are actually submitted each time you turn something in, and if you have to submit an assignment five or ten minutes late, you don't need to send me an email to explain. Just submit the assignment as you usually would I won't count an assignment late if it's submitted only a few minutes after the deadline.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance in this course is mandatory. Students who miss more than two course meetings (either consecutively or non-consecutively) will either be dropped from the class or suffer a 5% final grade deduction per missed class day.

COLLABORATIVE WORK POLICY

While I certainly encourage students to discuss the readings and assignments with one another (either on the discussion board or in person), students are also required to complete all of the written work for the course on their own (with the notable exception of the Group Simulation Project). In other words, it's perfectly okay to discuss with your friends what you might say on an assignment before you complete it, but the actual words you turn in should be written independently (and thus should not be identical to the words that any other students turn in). I very much encourage collaborative brainstorming and studying, but I require students to do all of their own written work without help from others.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All incidents of Academic Dishonesty will be handled according to UH's official policy regarding plagiarism. Depending upon circumstances, plagiarism may be grounds for failure and/or suspension from the University. Keep all notes and rough drafts; you may be asked to produce them. See the University's [complete Academic Honesty Policy](#) for more information.

While I don't expect that there will be any problems with plagiarism in this class, students should be aware that I submit most assignments through www.turnitin.com. As long as you don't plagiarize, this policy won't affect you. Just keep in mind that all of your work for this class should be your own. When using information from an outside source (even an online source), be sure to cite it appropriately using APA format. If you have any questions about how to cite an outside source, consult with me before turning in your work. If you turn in work that isn't your own, disciplinary action will be taken. Students should consult the UH Student Handbook for the University's definition of plagiarism.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The Center for Students with Disabilities provides academic support services to all UH students who have any type of health impairment, learning disability, physical disability, or psychiatric disorder. Individuals wishing to find out more about these services should contact CSD in room 305 of the Student Service Center (or call 743-5400/ voice 749-1527 / TDD). Students requesting "reasonable and necessary" accommodations for this course (including testing modifications) should contact the instructor as soon as possible (but PRIOR to an exam, deadline, etc.).

BLACKBOARD VISTA SUPPORT

BLACKBOARD VISTA 24 Hour Support Phone Number: 713-743-1411

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

- **Introductory Letter:** Integrating information from lecture material and the introductory chapters of the course text book, students will compose a one page business letter demonstrating an understanding of the basic principles of technical communication and the ability to critically analyze a specific audience by composing a carefully targeted message.
- **Concision Exercises:** Implementing strategies from the lecture material and the chapters of the textbook focusing on editing and revision, students will critique short passages for clarity, concision, and fluency. Following this critique, students will edit individual passages with the goal reducing the length of a passage, yet still conveying all key information. This will be accomplished critically recognizing and eliminating redundancies, roundabout phrases, nominal phrases, and overuse of the passive voice.
- **Revised Introductory Letter and Peer Review:** Working in peer review groups, students will critique and evaluate the Introductory Letters of their peer review partners. Following this written evaluation, students will review their own Introductory Letters and formulate a revision based on their own critical analysis of editing needs.
- **Job Résumé :** After comparing examples that represent current industry standards, students will critically analyze specific job ads for positions in their professional areas. Working from a specific employment ad, each student will develop a targeted résumé, designed to persuade the specific employer in question.
- **Job Cover Letter:** Each student will compose a one page cover letter, integrating the persuasive techniques discussed in the textbook and the lecture material. In composing this letter, students will analyze their employments strengths and develop a concise summary of their attributes. Above all, this assignment will

emphasize that the ability of a writer to persuade is dependent upon that that writer's ability analyze and target a specific audience.

- **Technical Definitions Memo:** Illustrating an understanding of technical definitions, students will compose a 1-2 page memo in which they provide a clear classification and differentiation of set of technical terms associated with their specific majors. Students will first analyze the specific audience for the memo and then develop technical definitions that demonstrate an understanding of the technical knowledge of their readers.
- **Technical Instructions Memo:** Starting with a flawed set of technical instructions, students will formulate and compose a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the instructions based on information from the lecture and textbook material. Following this analysis, students will revise the instructions based of their interpretation of the usability of the original set.
- **Group Research Project:** Integrating the knowledge from the first half of the course, students will work in project teams to tackle a specific, real-world problem using technical communication techniques. Each group will begin by composing a Recommendation Report and accompanying Presentation, using research techniques to illustrate an understanding of the problem the group is attempting to solve. Following this, the class as a whole will analyze and vote on the presentations, and each group will be given a hypothetical budget based on the outcome of the vote. Based on this budget, each group will formulate a specific, real-world solution for the problem they are attempting to solve, and will create a detailed Project Plan explaining how the solution will be implemented and the budget allocated. In the final group assignment, each group will be asked to trouble-shoot an unexpected problem in the project by doing additional research and writing a detailed Claim Letter.
- **Discussion Board Assignments 1-4:** Students will complete several three hundred word discussion board assignments on the subject of business and personal ethics. In these assignments, students to show their ability to apply knowledge, debate issues and ideas, and provide rationale for the positions they take on complex ethical topics. Students are evaluated on their ability to support their positions and to converse intelligently with those who disagree with them.
- **Final Exam:** The final exam consists of two essay questions in which students illustrate a comprehensive knowledge of the fundamentals of technical communication. In the first essay question, students are required to compose a one page recommendation letter, in which they demonstrate an ability to apply a large range of evaluative and persuasive techniques. In the second essay question, students are required to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a problematic technical document. In this essay, students discriminate between strong and weak methods of technical writing and offer concrete recommendations for revision.
- **In-Class Worksheets:** To complete these worksheet assignments, students will work in groups, focusing on honing the skills necessary to complete the more formalized individual projects. Following the completion of the in-class worksheets, each team will be required to present their results to the class.

Sample Assignments

Revised Introductory Letter (25 points, 300-500 words)

INSTRUCTIONS: Using chapters 12-13 of the course textbook and the feedback comments you received on your initial draft, revise your introductory letter. Please keep in mind that your grade on this assignment is entirely separate from your grade on your first draft of the introductory letter. This means you are expected to make **significant revisions** to your work in order to do well on this assignment.

A successful Revised Introductory Letter will:

- Demonstrate **significant improvements** over the initial draft.
- Be edited for **clarity, concision, and fluency** (as described in Ch. 13 of our textbook).
- Demonstrate a clear **organizational method** (as described in Ch. 12 of our textbook).
- Conform to **business letter format**, including addresses for writer and reader, correct date format, correct line spacing, and correct margin justification.
- Display **professional tone and content**.
- Illustrate an **awareness of target audience**.
- Use **adequate detail** (be specific!).

Introductory Letter (Original Assignment)

Read chapters 1, 2, 3 and 17 in your textbook. Focus particularly on the specific guidelines in chapter 17.

Write a one-page business letter introducing yourself to Dr. Barnwell (I am your recipient. Keep me in mind as you write; who am I, what do I care about, how much information do I need, and what is the nature of our relationship?). You may use block or modified block format. In your letter, you should:

- Discuss what you expect from this class.
- Describe past experiences that prepare you for this class.
- Explain the role of this class in your career and educational plans.
- Ask any questions you have about this class.

Résumé and Cover Letter (50 points, 750-1000 words)

Read chapters 4 and 18 before you complete this **three-part assignment**.

- 1) Find a job listing that interests you and relates to your educational or employment background. You can find job postings through Monster.com, the UH Career Center database, the Houston Chronicle classifieds, or any of the venues recommended by your textbook. *When you turn in the final copy of your assignment, include the job announcement with it.*
- 2) Write a **persuasive résumé** in appropriate format. Consider whether you should have a chronological, functional, or combination résumé (see the textbook for examples), and organize your résumé accordingly.
- 3) Write a **persuasive job application letter** to accompany your résumé.

A successful résumé will:

- Display appropriate, attractive, professional format and style.
- Emphasize your strongest skills through the organization of résumé parts (career objective, education, work experience, etc.).
- Use action verbs to highlight skills and accomplishments.
- Be free of errors in grammar and mechanics.
- Demonstrate clarity, concision, and fluency.
- Include an attached job listing.

A successful cover letter will:

- Refer to the name of an employee in the company, if possible.
- Refer to the source of your information (Monster.com, UH Career Center, etc.).
- Refer to the job description and describe in detail how your qualifications fit the requirements.
- Use the body of the letter to build interest and to persuade the employer to hire you.
- Motivate action in its closing.
- Demonstrate clarity, concision, and fluency.
- Avoid errors in grammar, mechanics, and style.
- Include an attached job listing.

TELS 3363 FINAL EXAM
(Complete BOTH of the following essays.)

ESSAY 1 (of 2)

You manage the Angelica Film Center (510 Texas Avenue, Houston, TX 77002, 713 225 1470, manager@angelikafc.com) in downtown Houston. Your film projectionist, Jennifer Boehm, is applying for a scholarship at UH-Downtown. She wants you to write a letter of recommendation for her. If she wins this scholarship, she will probably stop working at AFC.

In her present position, Ms. Bohem:

- Receives and checks the films.
- Repairs and stores the films when necessary.
- Loads the spools onto the projectors in the right order.
- Ensures that the films run smoothly during showings.
- Joins (splices) lengths of film together if they break.
- Sends film off to the next destination after a run of performances.
- Maintains the projector.
- Checks that the film sound is operating properly and is at the right volume during a showing.

Ms. Boehm works a weekly shift, as well as helping out at film festivals that AFC sponsors, such as the October Silver Screams Festival. She even proposed and helped organize the Classic Director's Fortnight Festival, which screens double features every night for 2 weeks, with 10% of profits donated to Children's Cancer Center. You are pleased with Ms. Boehm's work and happy to help as she is one of your best employees.

Here is the scholarship announcement Ms. Boehm has provided to help you with the recommendation letter:

Robert A. Eckels Scholarship: Scholarship for any student with a major declared in art. Additional criteria: documented leadership skills; must be enrolled for at least 9 semester hours. Students interested in applying for this scholarship should include mention of all leadership and community/civic involvement. Send letter to Scott Anthony, One Main Street, Houston, TX 77002, 713-221-8000.

Instructions:

Write a 1-2 page letter of recommendation for Jennifer Boehm. Your letter should use the direct strategy, provide specific examples of the applicant's professional and personal skills and attributes, and remain objective yet supportive of Ms. Boehm's scholarship application.

You will be graded on appropriate business letter format; grammar and punctuation; organization; concision, clarity, and fluency of language; professional tone; persuasiveness; and level of detail.

ESSAY 2 (of 2)

Instructions:

Write a 350-500 word analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the following technical document. In your analysis, discuss the document's use of language, awareness of audience, organization, professional format, and overall usability.

SUBJECT: Violence Memo

TO: Todd Shimoyama

FROM: Avianca Harper

DATE: April 2, 2007

Todd -

I went to OfficePro conference on May 2. The topic was how to prevent workplace violence, and I found it very fascinating. Although we have been fortunate to avoid serious incidents at our company, it's better to be safe than sorry. Since I was the representative from our company, I thought you would like me to report about some suggestions for preventing workplace violence. Robert Mather was the presenter, and he made suggestions in three categories, which I will summarize here.

Mr. Mather cautioned organizations to prescreen job applicants. As a matter of fact, wise companies do not offer employment until after a candidate's background has been checked. Just the mention of a background check is enough to make some candidates withdraw. These candidates, of course, are the ones with something to hide.

A second suggestion was that companies should prepare a good employee handbook that outlines what employees should do when they suspect potential workplace violence. This handbook should include a way for informers to be anonymous.

A third recommendation had to do with recognizing red-flag behavior. This involves having companies train managers to recognize signs of potential workplace violence. What are some of the red flags? One sign is an increasing number of arguments with coworkers. Another sign is extreme changes in behavior or statements indicating depression over family or financial problems. Another sign is bullying or harassing behavior. Bringing a firearm to work or displaying an extreme fascination with firearms is another sign.

By the way, the next OfficePro conference is in September, and the topic is the new OSHA standards.

I think that the best recommendation is prescreening job candidates. This is because it is most feasible. If you want me to do more research on prescreening techniques, do not hesitate to let me know. Let me know by May 7 if you want me to make a report at our management meeting, which is scheduled for June.

Avianca

Sample Rubrics

GRADING CRITERIA: INTRO LETTER	Points Possible	Student Score
Conforms to Business Letter Format	4	
Displays Professional Tone and Content	4	
Illustrates an Awareness of Audience	4	
Organizes Content Clearly and Logically	4	
Uses Adequate Detail	5	
Displays Correct Grammar and Mechanics	4	
TOTAL	25	

Grade Scale: 25=A+, 24=A, 23=A-, 22=B+, 21=B, 20=B-, 19=C, 18=C-, 17=D+, 16=D, 15=D-, 14=F

COMMENTS AND REVISION SUGGESTIONS

GRADING CRITERIA (Résumé – 25 Points)	Points Possible	Student Score
Inclusion of Job Listing	3	
Attractive and Professional Format and Style	3	
Appropriate and Effective Organization of Résumé Parts (Career Objective, Education, Work Experience, References, Etc.)	5	
Persuasive Presentation of Skills and Accomplishments	7	
Clarity, Concision, and Fluency	4	
Correct Grammar and Mechanics	3	
RÉSUMÉ TOTAL	25	

Grade Scale: 25=A+, 24=A, 23=A-, 22=B+, 21=B, 20=B-, 19=C, 18=C-, 17=D+, 16=D, 15=D-, 14=F

COMMENTS AND REVISION SUGGESTIONS

GRADING CRITERIA (Cover Letter – 25 Points)	Points Possible	Student Score
Inclusion of Job Listing	3	
Professional Format and Style	3	
Clarity, Concision, and Fluency of Writing	4	
Correct Grammar and Mechanics	3	
Letter Introduction (Mentions source of job listing, job title, and basic qualifications of the writer.)	3	
Letter Body (Builds interest and persuades the employer to hire the writer.)	6	
Letter Closing (Motivates action.)	3	
COVER LETTER TOTAL	25	

Grade Scale: 25=A+, 24=A, 23=A-, 22=B+, 21=B, 20=B-, 19=C, 18=C-, 17=D+, 16=D, 15=D-, 14=F

COMMENTS AND REVISION SUGGESTIONS

GRADING CRITERIA: DEFINITION MEMO	Points Possible	Student Score
Uses appropriate memo formatting	3	
Displays a logical organization and attractive page design	3	
Defines all appropriate words and terms	3	
Provides sentence definitions that adequately classify items and clarify meaning	5	
Illustrates an awareness of audience	4	
Uses proper grammar and mechanics	3	
Demonstrates concision, clarity, and fluency of language	4	
TOTAL	25	

Grade Scale: 25=A+, 24=A, 23=A-, 22=B+, 21=B, 20=B-, 19=C, 18=C-, 17=D+, 16=D, 15=D-, 14=F

COMMENTS AND REVISION SUGGESTIONS