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**COURSE GUIDE FOR ENGLISH 362:**

# *Foundations of Technical Writing*

Spring 2006 • 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. MW • 4066 Wescoe Hall • Class # 64619

Instructor: Dr. Steve Evans

Office: 1090 Wescoe Hall • Office Hours: 8:00-9:00 M-F, and By Appointment

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

English 362 introduces students to the elements and genres of professional and technical communication. During the semester we will examine and learn to analyze the rhetorical features of various writing situations, including the writer's purpose, assumed audience, and use of appropriate styles and tones. Students will gain experience in drafting, evaluating, and revising various kinds of professional documents: résumés and letters of application, memos, manuals, and more. In addition, through participation in collaborative projects, group and individual presentations, and peer review sessions, students will enlarge their repertoires of communication skills in ways that will prepare them to meet the needs of many employment situations.

## **REQUIRED WORK AND GRADING SYSTEM**

In order to pass the course a student must complete all assigned work, satisfy the attendance requirement (see under Policies, below), and earn at least 420 of 700 possible points. Your course grade will be calculated according to the following point distribution. The Manual is a collaborative project; the Final Project, however, may be either collaborative or individual, depending on the interests and goals of students. **Note:** The Instructor may adjust point values for exercises, assignments, or projects as necessary.

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>MAXIMUM POINT VALUE</u>	<u>POINTS &amp; GRADES</u>
Résumé and Letter of Application	60	630-700 = A
Case Study Memo	40	560-629 = B
Sales and Claim Letters	60	490-559 = C
Manual	100	420-489 = D
Manual Oral Presentation	50	0-419 = F
Final Project	150	
Final Project Oral Presentation	50	
Peer Review Activities	90	
Daily Exercises/Homework	<u>100</u>	
	700	

In addition to requirements specific to the exercise, assignment, or project, student work will be graded on thoroughness of treatment; quality of ideas; quality of prose (grammar, syntax, punctuation, diction); appropriate use of specifics, data, tables, or graphic elements; and correct tech comm form. More specific grading guidelines will be explained on prompts for major assignments.

## TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- Markel, Mike. *Technical Communication*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. 2004. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

**Note:** This edition *only*. Beginning this semester, Bedford/St. Martin's has begun packaging this text with an interactive CD-ROM free of charge. Students are encouraged to purchase this version (available only at bookstores stocking KU texts), but a good used copy of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition—one without the CD-ROM—is perfectly acceptable. That is, while the CD-ROM is a useful supplement to the book, no assignments will require using it.

- Active <ku.edu> e-mail account (necessary for Course Distribution Mailing List).
- Materials for producing major projects (explained further on assignment prompts).
- Suggested: A pocket-style folder for organizing course materials.

### Recommended Text:

- Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Continued enrollment in the course signifies a student's understanding and acceptance of policies, rules, and regulations set forth in this and other documents relative to the course.**

The Office of Disability Resources—22 Strong Hall, 785/864-2620 (v/tty)—coordinates accommodations and services for students in KU courses. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation and have not yet contacted ODR, please do so as soon as possible (<<http://www.disability.ku.edu>>). Also see the Instructor privately with regard to this course.

**Promptness:** Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Except for a good reason, arriving later than five minutes will be considered an absence (see Attendance, under Policies, below). On the rare occasion when you must arrive late, please take your seat as quietly as possible. If you cannot make class on time regularly, please find a course that better fits your schedule.

**Classroom Atmosphere:** For our classroom to succeed as a learning environment, everyone must maintain the highest standards of behavior, including respect for and tolerance of others and their opinions and ideas. Try always, therefore, to maintain a spirit of intellectual flexibility. For obvious reasons, electronic communication devices must be turned off during class. Beverages, but not food, are acceptable in our room; please remember to use waste containers before you leave.

**Contacting the Instructor:** The Instructor asks that students use e-mail or home telephone—rather than office voice mail—preferably before 9:00 p.m. Avoid using e-mail to explain an absence; instead, discuss the matter in person with the Instructor. **Note:** The Instructor cannot discuss student matters with parents. The proper way for a student or parent to explain a serious illness or emergency situation affecting the student's attendance or performance is through services provided by the Academic Achievement and Access Center (22 Strong Hall; 785/864-4064; <<http://www.achievement.ku.edu>>). AAAC will furnish an official letter of explanation to each of the student's instructors.

**Writing Help:** For additional help with writing I strongly encourage students to contact KU's writing centers, called Writer's Roosts. At a Writer's Roost you can talk about your writing with trained tutors or consult reference

materials in a comfortable working environment. You may ask for feedback on your papers, advice and tips on writing (for all your courses), or for guidance on special writing tasks. Please check the website at <<http://www.ukans.edu/~writing>> for current locations and hours. The Writing Center welcomes both drop-ins and appointments, and there is no charge for their services. For more information, call 864-2399 or send an e-mail to [writing@ku.edu](mailto:writing@ku.edu). The website is loaded with helpful information about writing of all sorts, so even if you consider yourself already a good writer, check it out!

**Website:** The Instructor's website (see p.1) is intended to provide students with access to important course materials. **Students are responsible for downloading, printing, and bringing to class certain materials for discussion (see Schedule of Meetings and Assignments).**

Always save your work both to disk and your computer's hard drive. For your protection, keep a hard copy of out-of-class assignments as well.

**Make it a practice to check your e-mail at least twice daily.** Also, please send a brief note of reply to acknowledge receipt of a *personal* message (not Course Distribution List mail) from the Instructor.

## **POLICIES**

The Department of English reserves the right to terminate administratively the enrollment of any student who misses two consecutive class meetings during the first two weeks of the semester. Should an emergency situation cause the student to miss two consecutive class meetings, the student should contact the Instructor or the Department of English (864-4520) immediately. Students are expected to submit promptly requests to drop should they decide to disenroll from English classes. (See the Drop Policy at the end of this section.)

Course materials prepared by the Instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the Instructor are the property of the Instructor. Video or audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the Instructor is prohibited. On request, the Instructor usually will grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are used only as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the Instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

**Incompletes:** A grade of *I* (Incomplete) will be given only under extraordinary circumstances.

**Attendance:** Students will be allowed two unexcused absences. *With the third unexcused absence, the student's grade for the course will be lowered one full letter.* If a student incurs four or more unexcused absences, the Instructor may ask the student to withdraw or retake the course at another time. (Allowances will be made, of course, for unavoidable absences due to illness, conflicting University obligations, and other valid reasons.) Active participation in the course—in terms of *attendance, clear interest in learning the material, and class participation*—is mandatory in order for a student to earn a passing grade.

**Plagiarism:** Stealing and passing off as your own someone else's ideas or words, or using information from another's work without crediting the source, is called *plagiarism*. Some specific examples of actions that constitute plagiarism include pasting together uncredited information from the Internet or published sources; submitting an entire paper—or part of one—written by someone else; submitting a paper written for another class (and thus not original work); and copying another student's work (even with the student's permission). In order to avoid unintentional plagiarism and to represent your work honestly, you will need to be meticulous about giving credit to any and all sources, whether directly quoted (even a few words) or paraphrased.

Because one of the goals of this course is to help you to improve your writing; plagiarism hurts you as much as it does anyone. If you plagiarize another's work you will not be receiving the feedback necessary for

improving your own writing. There will be a zero tolerance policy for any type of plagiarism in this class. All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized, reported, and kept on file at the Department of English and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**Drop Policy:** If you are having trouble succeeding in the course, it is especially important that you consult with me so that we can develop a plan of action that may enable you to complete the course. If you decide to drop this class, please refer to this website: <<http://www.registrar.ku.edu/timetable/052adddrop.shtml>>.

## **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

The following schedule is tentative, and subject to change at the Instructor's discretion. Always bring your text and necessary handouts to class.

### **Important Announcements:**

Students are responsible for printing and bringing to class for discussion a number of prompts posted under Study Materials at the course website (see p. 1).

As soon as possible, students should study Markel's "Appendix A: Documenting Sources" in order to learn the professional style (APA, CBE, MLA) that is appropriate for work in their fields of study.

### **WEEK 2**

M 23 Jan Introduction to the course.

W 25 Ch. 1: Introduction to Technical Communication  
Document review memo due (5 pts.)

### **WEEK 3**

M 30 Ch. 16: Preparing Job-Application Materials (**print Résumé-Letter Prompt from website**)  
Appendix C: Editing Your Documents  
Appendix D: Commonly Misused Words  
Ch. 16 quiz (5 pts.)

W 1 Feb Résumé workshop  
Website evaluation memo due (10 pts.)  
Ch. 3: Understanding the Writing Process  
Ch. 8: Organizing Your Information

### **WEEK 4**

M 6 Résumé and Letter of Application drafts due for Peer Review (20 pts.)  
Ch. 15: Writing Letters, Memos, and E-mails  
Ch. 15 quiz (5 pts.)

W 8 Revised Résumé and Letter of Application due (60 pts.)  
Ch. 5: Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose  
Ch. 6: Communicating Persuasively  
Ch. 5 quiz (5 pts.)

### **WEEK 5**

M 13 Assign Manual project and groups (**print Manual Prompt from website**)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ch. 20: Writing Instructions and Manuals  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ch. 20 quiz (10 pts.)

W 15 Ch. 4: Writing Collaboratively  
Ch. 4 memo (10 pts.)

**WEEK 6**

M 20 Ch. 13: Designing the Document  
Ch. 14: Creating Graphics  
Ch. 13 quiz (5 pts.)

W 22 Assign Case Study Memo (**print Case Study Prompt from website**)  
Ch. 2: Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations

**WEEK 7**

M 27 Case Study Memo draft due for Peer Review (10 pts.)  
Ch. 10: Drafting and Revising Coherent Documents

W 1 Mar Case Study Memo due (40 pts.)  
Ch. 11: Drafting and Revising Effective Sentences

**WEEK 8**

M 6 Manual Proposal draft due for Peer Review (10 pts.)  
Ch. 9: Drafting and Revising Definitions and Descriptions

W 8 Manual Proposal due (20 pts.)  
Manual drafting workshop  
Ch. 19: Writing Formal Reports  
Ch. 19 quiz (5 pts.)

**WEEK 9**

M 13 Sales/Claim Letters workshop (**print Sales Claim Prompt from website**)  
Ch. 15 (continued)

W 15 Sales/Claim Letters drafts due for Peer Review (20 pts.)  
Ch. 17: Writing Proposals

**WEEK 10**

**Spring Break—No Classes**

**WEEK 11**

M 27 Sales/Claim letters due (60 pts.)  
Manual Proposal workshop  
Ch. 20 (continued)

W 29 Assign Final Project and groups (**print Final Project Prompt from website**)  
Ch. 22: Making Oral Presentations

**WEEK 12**

M 3 Apr Manual Oral Presentations (50 pts.); manuals due (80 pts.)

W 5 Manual Oral Presentations (50 pts.); manuals due (80 pts.)

**WEEK 13**

M 10 Manual Oral Presentations (50 pts.); manuals due (80 pts.)

W 12 Web Page Design  
Ch. 21: Creating Web Sites  
"Mike Markel's Web Design Tutorial" (at techcomm website)  
Ch. 21: Website evaluation memo (10 pts.)

**WEEK 14**

M 17 Final Project Proposal draft due for Peer Review (10 pts.)  
Ch. 12: Drafting and Revising Front and Back Matter

W 19 Revised Final Project Proposal due (25 pts.)

**WEEK 15**

M 24 Final Project Progress Report due (25 pts.)  
Final Project Oral Presentation workshop

W 26 Final Project draft due for Peer Review (20 pts.)  
Final Project Oral Presentation memo (20 pts.)

**WEEK 16**

M 1 May Final Project oral presentations (50 pts.); Final Projects due (100 + 50 pts.)

W 3 Final Project oral presentations (50 pts.); Final Projects due (100 + 150 pts.)

**WEEK 17**

M 8 Final Project oral presentations (50 pts.); Final Projects due (100 + 150 pts.)

W 10 Last day of class. Course evaluations. Exit Memo (10 pts.)