Course Syllabus Fall 2010

BOT 209 Business and Technical Communication | Sections D03 & D04 | 3 Credits

Method of Instruction: Online via Blackboard

Contact Information

Instructor: Melissa Chavira, PhD ABD

Office Hours:
Face-to-Face by appointment
Online Tues & Thurs 9:00 - 10:00am via chat.

Office Information:

575-646-4571
mchavira@nmsu.edu
NMSU Main Campus
Academic Research Bldg B
Room 101-E

Course Information

Course Description
Effective written communication skills and techniques for career success in the workplace. Composition of letters, memos, short reports, forms, and proposals, and technical descriptions and directions.

Prerequisite: ENGL 111G or consent of instructor.

Course Rationale Why do you need this course?
Success in any position and in every career field requires good communication skills. This course is intended to build upon previous writing courses, such as English 111G, to help you develop the writing skills needed to become successful in any workplace. It provides case-study assignments directly related to business and technical writing.

Textbook Requirements

Author:
Gerson, S.J. & Gerson, S.M.

Title
Technical Communication: Process & Product

Year & Edition:

Publisher:
Prentice Hall

Notice to Students
Materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright.
Student Learning Outcomes
In this course you will learn to do the following:

• Think critically and develop language arts skills
• Analyze the audience and write to meet their information needs using correct sentence structure
• Organize information effectively in the body of various types of memos, letters, and reports
• Produce documents in standardized business formats
• Produce business/technical communications that effectively combine written and visual techniques
• Write effective step-by-step instructions for completing a process
• Write an incident report documenting a workplace problem
• Use PowerPoint to prepare a presentation
• Write an abstract or summary of an article
• Write a progress (status) report
• Use electronic communication (e-mail) effectively in the business office
• Compare/contrast/evaluate a product, service, or process and write a recommendation report
• Acquire skill in primary and secondary research

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get started?
You must pass the syllabus quiz to unlock the course! So please make sure you read though the syllabus content carefully! You can also watch the getting started video on the course home page.

What will I be doing?
The course will be comprised of assignments that will include chapter readings, short quizzes, online discussions, short individual writing assignments, a midterm project and exam, and a final project and exam.

The course is divided into eight units. In each unit you will find the learning outcomes for which the assignments are based from and a video/audio introduction. Each unit is organized into the following sections:

• Lecture that will help you understand the chapter readings
• Assignment module that contains all of the assignments, discussion questions, and the details on how to receive your participation and attendance credit for each week that will demonstrate your increased understanding of business/technical communication
• Quizzes
• Unit Checklist (this is a valuable item, it will give you an overview of what you should complete before moving on to the next unit)
• Extra Information that includes chapter summaries

You are welcome to browse through any of the units at any time during the semester.
You will be allowed to submit all assignments, take all quizzes and partake in the participation and attendance credit options at any time during the weeks that are indicated in each unit. Please take a look at the schedule for more information on due dates for each unit’s assignments and quizzes.

**What can I expect as a workload in this class?**

- Be prepared to spend approximately 7-10 hours a week on this class.
- You must be self-disciplined to learn the material. You will be responsible for submitting assignments on the due dates via Blackboard.
- Please save all your documents in portable document format (PDF) to avoid software incompatibility problems. We will learn how to do this in class.
- Assignments submitted in different file formats will not be graded and you will not receive credit for the assignment.
- All assignments submitted should be clearly identified with your name, and the assignment name.
- Assignments are due the last week of the unit (Saturdays at 11:55 pm), unless indicated as otherwise. This will give you at least two full weekends to complete assignments.
- Class Participation and Attendance will be determined by the completion of class discussions. Please review the schedule for what is assigned for participation and attendance credit for each unit.
- Quizzes can be taken up to three times. The highest score will be recorded. The quizzes are due on the last week of the unit (Saturdays at 11:55 pm). This will give you at least two full weekends to complete the quizzes.
- You can take the midterm as often as you like during the week long period that it is open. The highest score will be recorded. You may only take the final once. All exam scores will be included in the calculation of the final semester grade.

**How will my grade be determined?**

Your grades will be computed based on an accumulation of points and a weighted average. The percentages below will be used in calculating the final grade:

**20% Attendance/Participation.** In order to do well in this course, you will need to participate in the class discussion. Your participation grade is based on actively participating in discussions for the current unit. Any posts or submissions made before or after the current unit will not receive credit. Please see the schedule for participation and attendance requirements for each unit.

**15% Quizzes.** Chapter quizzes will demonstrate your understanding of text readings. Quiz deadlines will remain firm; no quizzes will be reset.
**40% Writing Assignments.** There are a total of 13 assignments. Please save all your documents in portable document format (PDF) to avoid software incompatibility problems. Assignments submitted in different file formats will not be graded and you will not receive credit for the assignment. All assignments submitted should be clearly identified with your name, and the assignment name.

If you are confused about an assignment, please call or e-mail the instructor for clarification before the due date. These writing assignments will receive a three-part grade: (1) format, (2) content, and (3) mechanics. Each assignment will use a rubric to determine your grade. You are welcome to view the grading rubrics at any time.

**10% Midterm Exams.** The Midterm will consist of a midterm project and an exam. The exam will cover the questions on the quizzes. You may take the exam as often as you like during the availability period.

**15% Final Exam.** The final exam will cover the questions on the quizzes. The final exam can only be taken once.

**Grading Procedure**

Your grades will be computed based on an accumulation of points and a weighted average. It is extremely important that you communicate with the instructor in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Total points will be calculated and grades will be assigned according to the following scale adopted by the Business Office Technology faculty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Points System</th>
<th>Weighted Average, 119 Total Pts.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = 119 - 107</td>
<td>Quizzes (6 - 30 pts. each) = 180 pts @ 15% = 27 possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(90 - 100%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B = 105 - 94</td>
<td>Participation = 42 pts. @ 20% = 8.4 possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(80 - 89%)</td>
<td>Writing Assignments = 174 pts @ 40% = 69.6 possible points</td>
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<tr>
<td>C = 84 - 93</td>
<td>Midterm Exam &amp; Project = 50 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(70 - 79%)</td>
<td>@ 10% = 5 possible points</td>
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<td>D = 72 - 92</td>
<td>Final Exam = 60 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(60 - 69%)</td>
<td>@ 15% = 9 possible points</td>
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<tr>
<td>F = 0 - 71</td>
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<tr>
<td>(0 - 59%)</td>
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Course Policies

Participation and Attendance
Your participation grade is based on actively participating in discussions for the current unit. Any posts or submissions made before or after the current unit will not receive credit. Please note the schedule for participation and attendance requirements for each unit.

Late Work
You will be allowed to submit all assignments, take all quizzes and partake in the participation and attendance credit options at any time during the weeks that are indicated for each unit. You have at a minimum two full weekends to complete your work, so the late work policy is firm. Please take a look at the schedule for more information on due dates for each unit’s assignments and quizzes.

Please note that all written assignments turned in late will receive a 5% point deduction per day that it is late. After five days, your assignment will receive a 25% point deduction.

Assignments turned in late due to documented medical, family, or technical emergencies and those accepted during Amnesty weeks are the ONLY exception to this rule.

Extra Credit
There are two forms of extra credit in the course, Amnesty Week and Extra Writing Assignments.

There are two weeks of amnesty throughout the semester. You will be able to turn in an missed assignment or revise one that you want a better grade on.

In addition to Amnesty Week there will be five extra credit writing assignments available during the semester. You can find these extra credit assignments in Unit 2, Unit 3, Unit 5, Unit 6, and Unit 7.

Each extra credit assignments is worth 25 points. I will take 40% of the average of your extra credit score and add that to your writing grade.

Please keep in mind that if you think you can get by this class with missing assignments and only taking quizzes and exams, you will fail the course. Amnesty and Extra Credit options are not intended to repair your grade as a result of procrastination! They are a privilege.

Student Code of Conduct
All students are expected to regard themselves as responsible citizens on campus and in the community. Policies and procedures concerning "Student Code of Conduct" including plagiarism, academic, and nonacademic misconduct are printed in the 2010-2011 DACC Student Handbook.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments &amp; Participation</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</table>
| **Unit 1** | Unit 1: Chapter 1, "An Introduction to Technical Communication" pgs 2-18, Chapter 2, "The Communication Process" pgs 22-44, Chapter 3, "The Goals of Technical Communication" pgs 48-76, Online Lectures as needed | - U1 Assignment 1: Course Introduction  
- U1 Activity 1, "Are you ready?"  
- U1 Activity 2, "Communication Style"  
- Unit 1 Quiz  
**Participation Requirement:** Respond to two of your classmates posts in the "course introduction" discussion board. | Saturday, Sept. 4th at 11:30PM. |
| **Unit 2** | Unit 2: Chapter 4, "Audience Recognition and Involvement" pgs 84-119, Chapter 10, "Communicating to Persuade" pgs 292-318, Online Lectures as needed | - U2 Assignment 2: Audience Analysis  
- U2 Group Activity: Persuasion  
- Unit 2 Quiz  
**Participation Requirement:** Respond to two of your classmates posts in the "audience analysis" discussion board | Saturday, Sept. 18th at 11:30PM. |
| **Unit 3** | Unit 3: Chapter 6, "Routine Correspondence" pgs 154-198, Chapter 15, "Short, Informal Reports" pgs 434-477, Online Lectures as needed | - U3 Assignment 3: Positive Letter  
- U3 Assignment 4: Negative Letter  
- U3 Activity: Inquiry Letter & Incident Report  
- Unit 3 Quiz  
**Participation Requirement**  
- U3 Participation: Resume Padding  
You must post your response to the discussion question and respond to at least one of your classmates posts. | Saturday, Oct. 9th at 11:30PM. |
| **Unit 4** | Unit 4: No Reading Assignment  
Review previous reading assignments to prepare for the midterm exam | - U4 Midterm Project: Persuasive Letter  
- Midterm Exam  
**No Participation Requirement** | Saturday, Oct. 9th at 11:30PM. |
| **Unit 5** | Unit 5: Chapter 8, "Document Design" pgs 236-254, Chapter 9, "Graphics" pgs 262-286, Online Lectures as needed | - U5 Assignment 5: Use of Graphics  
- U5 Group Activity: Design the Worst Slide  
- Unit 5 Quiz  
**Participation Requirement**  
Respond to two of your classmates posts in the "use of graphics" discussion board. Rate the worst slide in the "design the worst slide" discussion board. | Saturday, Oct. 23rd at 11:30PM. |
### Course Schedule continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments &amp; Participation</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 6</strong></td>
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| Oct. 24 - Nov. 6 | - Chapter 12, "Instructions" pgs 346-380  
- Online Lectures as needed | - U6 Assignment 6: Write Instructions  
- U6 Activity: Confirmation Memo  
- Unit 6 Quiz  
**Participation Requirement**  
- U6 Participation: Plagiarism on the Job  
You must post your response to the discussion question and respond to at least one of your classmates posts. | Saturday, Nov. 6th at 11:30PM. |
| **Unit 7** | | | |
| Nov. 7 - Dec. 4 | - Chapter 5, "Research and Documentation" pgs 128-150  
- Chapter 14, "Summaries" pgs 420-430  
- Revisit Chapter 15, "Short, Informal Reports" pgs 464-477 as needed.  
- Online Lectures as needed | - U7 Assignment 7: Secondary Research  
- U7 Activity 1: Primary Research  
- U7 Activity 2: Progress Report  
- Unit 7 Quiz  
**Participation Requirement**  
- U7 Participation: The Nightmare of the Modern Office  
You must post your response to the discussion question and respond to at least one of your classmates posts. | Saturday, Dec. 4th at 11:30PM. |
| **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY | NO CLASS NOVEMBER 22 - 26** | | |
| **Unit 8** | No Reading Assignment | - U8 Assignment 8: Recommendation Report  
- Final Exam  
**No Participation Requirement** | Friday, Dec. 10th at 12:00PM. |
| Dec. 5 - Dec. 10 | Review previous reading assignments to prepare for the final exam | | |

### Additional Notices

**Tutorial Services / Student Success Center**

One-on-one learning assistance is provided for subjects such as math, English, reading, language, test-taking, study skills, and most of the program areas. These services are provided free of charge to students who are already enrolled in programs, as well as those who want to upgrade their skills prior to entering a program (DACC 2010-2011 Catalog, pg 14). Contact the Student Success Center located in DAMA 83 at the Las Cruces Central Campus or DAAR 201 at the East Mesa Center for more information.
Library Services
The library system offers a variety of resources in both print and non-print formats, and promotes leading-edge technology and electronic resources. The student college I.D. serves as a library card for checking out books, which are loaned for three weeks. If you would like more information, contact the Library Media Center at 527-7555 or the East Mesa Library at 528-7260 (DACC 2010-2011 Catalog, pg. 15).

Career Services
Through a variety of services, the Career Services Office, located in room DAMA-99, assists students in achieving this goal. Students are advised to contact the office early in their first semester at DACC, in order that they might familiarize themselves with the services available and have adequate time to explore career options. For more information, call 527-7538 (DACC 2010-2011 Catalog, pg 15).

Bookstore
The bookstore is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and is located in room DACL-170 at the Las Cruces Campus and in DAAR-102 at the East Mesa Campus. In addition to textbooks, the bookstore sells calculators, educational supplies, and other types of merchandise. To receive information on extended hours during registration periods for fall and spring semesters call 527-7692 (DACC 2010-2011 Catalog, pg. 15).

Financial Aid
As an open-door institution, DACC is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to students regardless of personal, economic, or social conditions. This commitment means helping students overcome financial barriers in getting the education they seek (DACC 2010-2011 Catalog, pg. 12). As you may be eligible for financial aid, stop by the Financial Aid office at the Las Cruces Campus in Room DAMA 115 or call 527-7696 for additional information.

**Special Note About Financial Aid!**
You must attend class regularly or if enrolled in an online course, login and complete all course requirements to receive financial aid. Class participation is frequently monitored. If you stop participating or drop any course(s), you may be required to repay all or part of the financial aid received. It is a good idea to talk to a financial aid officer prior to withdrawing or dropping a course(s).

Counseling Assistance
Student concerns can be addressed with the help of the counseling staff. Counselors are licensed by the State of New Mexico and are available by appointment to assist students with academic, personal and career concerns. Counselors are located in room DAMA-117 of the Student Services area, and appointments can be scheduled by calling 527-7548 (2010-2011 Student Handbook). [http://www.dacc.nmsu.edu/SS/Counseling/] is the Counseling Assistance web site.
Services for Students with Disabilities
The Services for Students with Disabilities office provides resources, services, and assistance to ensure educational opportunities and personal development for persons with disabilities.

Students with Disabilities: If you have, or believe you have, a disability you may wish to self-identify. You may do so by providing documentation to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) located in Room 117 at the DACC Central Campus in Las Cruces (Gregg & Espina, Phone: Voice 527-7548. Appropriate accommodations may then be provided for you. Contact us at ssddacc@nmsu.edu with any questions. Information about SSD can be found on our webpage, http://dacc.nmsu.edu/SS/SSD/

If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the Specialist, Services for Students with Disabilities.

Instructors should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities before providing "reasonable accommodations" to a student. An ADA/504 violation can occur if an instructor does not provide reasonable accommodations when warranted or if the instructor is overly accommodating. Each student must be considered on an individual, case-by-case basis. Blanket approaches to providing accommodation for a type of disability are not appropriate.

Withdrawal/Attendance Policy
Students are expected to attend regularly or if enrolled in an online course, regularly login for all courses which they are registered. When the number of absences or failure to login online, hinders a student’s progress in a course, the instructor may initiate a statement of the student’s excessive absences including a recommendation of retention or expulsion from a class. Based on the recommendation of the instructor and with the concurrence of the course division head and the Campus Instructional Officer, a student may be dropped for persistent absences or for persistent failure to complete assignments. (DACC 2010-2011 Student Handbook).

Emergency Alert System
For inclement weather notices or handling of other emergencies, Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages can be found at http://safety.nmsu.edu/emergency.htm

Campus Security
Security staff is available to all faculty and students at the various DACC locations. If you have a security matter, need an escort, or a guard for safety purposes, please call Campus Security.

- Main Campus - 202-8962
- East Mesa Campus - 202-9781
- Gadsden Campus - 915-6954
- Sunland Park Center - 915-5728
- Workforce Center - 915-6194

Help keep DACC a safe place to learn and work.

Security Office: 153E Main Campus, 528-7029 (M-F, 8-5)