**ENG 2700, OL01, Introduction to Professional and Technical Writing**

**3 credit hours, Fall 2021**

Professor R. Ferdinand

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Zoom Office Hours: 11:30—1:30 p.m. Mondays (and by appointment)

**Course Description**

An introductory course in effective professional and technical writing techniques and concepts. Students use digital media to communicate professional and technical information to a variety of audiences via written and oral presentations. Students also analyze a wide range of documents, study appropriate models, and practice collaborative research, writing, and presentation.

**Learning Outcomes, Activities, and Assessment:**

Students will be able to learn the conventions of writing situational analyses, proposals, progress reports, and usability tests. Written, oral, and multimedia assignments will measure their ability to:

* Identify and understand the functions, conventions, and purposes of primary technical and professional writing genres including letters, memos, emails, reports, proposals, technical descriptions, technical definitions, and technical manuals
* Produce professional caliber technical documents
* Analyze rhetorical situations and develop writing strategies that adapt to their constraints, purposes, audiences, uses, and contexts

Learning outcomes will be achieved by giving students the opportunity to:

* Strategically orchestrate elements of document design and layout, including type, spacing, color, and medium
* Research effectively for the needs of professional situations
* Revise for content, organization, style, clarity, and emphasis
* Produce documents within independent and collaborative contexts for professional and technical writing
* Work with peers in order to provide written and oral feedback to one another
* Understand ethical issues in professional and technical writing

**Required Texts**:

[Technical Writing](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting)by Allison Gross, Annemarie Hamlin, Billy Merck, Chris Rubio, Jodi Naas, Megan Savage, and Michele DeSilva is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/), except where otherwise noted. You can access the entire eBook, or you can then download a PDF version of the book, a Word version, or print pages from it.

**Additional Recommended Resources:**

Free handbook of English usage at<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Society for Technical Communication:<http://www.stc.org/>

Tech Whirl:<http://techwhirl.com/what-is-technical-writing/>

How to Write for the Web: [https://www.nngroup.com/articles/concise-scannable-and-objective-how-towrite-for-the-web/](https://www.nngroup.com/articles/concise-scannable-and-objective-how-to-write-for-the-web/)

**Other Materials:**

You must devise a system to record, store, and organize the course materials. It is very important that you save all of your work for this class. Devise a filing system that allows you to maintain prior drafts and final copies of all major assignments, as well as your research notes, outlines, and written evaluations. Save all final drafts of assignments on a stable format such as a flash drive or on a remote hard drive/server such as Dropbox. Never throw away or delete drafts or notes until after you have received your final grade.

**Course Structure:**

Regular attendance and active participation are extremely important, so be sure to log into Blackboard daily and to check our Openlab site: <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/>

**Not logging into Blackboard or Openlab will negatively affect you in the following ways**: You will lose active participation because peer review workshops and class writing/activities cannot be made up, you will be less prepared for completing projects, and you will quickly fall behind on the course concepts covered in lectures and discussions. If you miss a week, it is your responsibility to email me about your situation, to keep up with the reading/homework, and to contact your classmatesto find out what you missed.

In order to demonstrate that you are fully present during class, I expect you to participate in lively discussion boards, respond to classmates and to my queries, complete weekly assignments (including quizzes and readings), and to participate in a positive classroom environment (*including treating your fellow students and myself with a positive and respectful attitude).*

**Communication Policy:**

Participation in each weekly module is mandatory for this course.

The Instructor and peer reviews will provide you with feedback on your assignments. Under each formal assignment, there will be a Discussion prompt where you can post any questions or comments regarding that particular assignment. ***Please note that your posting on the discussion board is limited to the week that the topic is being discussed, as it is outlined in the Course Guide.*** Failure to adhere to the course schedule will result in you receiving no credit for the assignment (s).

Lastly, I want to invite you to my Virtual Office Hours. This is a video-conferencing feature where I will be hosting my regularly scheduled office hours from 11:30-1:30 a.m. Mondays and (and by appointment). You will have a chance to see me and vice-versa for questions regarding the course and assignments. I will provide the link in Course Announcements in Blackboard.

*Tips for Using Zoom*

1. If you are using your computer, you may have to download the Application first before you can join the room.
2. Yes, you can download the ZOOM app from the App Store. Then, just use the Meeting ID# provided above.

# Communication Etiquette

Please keep in mind that this is a professional setting between and your Professor. With this in mind, I am asking that you adhere to the following criteria when communicating with me and your peers in this virtual, video setting:

* *Ensure that you are appropriately dressed.*
* *If you are using the app at home, please make sure that you are free from distractions, such as loud music, television, etc.*
* *If you have to go to the bathroom, please do not take us in there with you. Put us on Mute with the sound and video. Then, leave whatever device you are using in the other room.*

**Discussion Guidelines:** *Limit Responses:*

Limit most discussion responses to 1‐2 screens. That's approximately 24 lines per screen, depending upon your software package. Please also bear in mind that opening your message may take time, so avoid posts that simply say "Me too!" or "I agree!" Make every effort to ensure that your posts are substantive and concise. And a little humor is always welcome!

*Interaction:*

While there is a minimum requirement for participation in the discussion forums, it is not a maximum. You are required to respond to other students' opinions (minimum of 2 students), offer helpful feedback, or answer questions in the interest of continuing the ongoing dialog of topics related to online learning. As always, exercise proper netiquette and maintain a tactful, respectful tone in your comments in this course.

*Rubric:*

Your posting on the Discussion Board will be evaluated on a scale from 0-5 based on the following criteria:

* *Understanding*. Student demonstrates a clear understanding of the concepts that are being discussed.
* *Writing Skills*. Student responses will be assessed based on the quality of their writing, such as spelling, grammar, syntax, sentence structure, etc.
* *Application/Analysis*. Student application and analysis of concepts are clear, as a result insight has been offered to the discussion.
* *Peer Feedback*. Student feedback to their peer’s posts are of high quality and timely. High quality demonstrates that the student is adding to the discussion and not just saying “I agree” or “You are right.” Timely means that the students meets the required deadline set for peer feedback.

**Grading:**

All of the assignments call for you to evaluate or write a technical document, considering such aspects as audience, tone, writing style, etc. Most assignments require specific structuring of technical information, considering how information is processed, and how information can be misused for personal agendas.

Planning Emails (10%): Most major assignments will begin with a **Planning Email** written to your instructor in correct, effective, professional style. Planning Emails are graded; they cannot be revised or made up due to absences, unless the absence is excused per CityTech absences policy. **Planning Emails are** written to me in correct, effective, professional style. Planning Emails are graded; This is where you tell me how you plan on completing the assignment, whether that includes conducting research, downloading needed

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| software, seeking help from the career center, etc.). You can include anything in the planning email that | |
| you "plan" to do, whether you actually end up doing it or not. The point is that you have a plan. |  |

**Major Assignments:**

*Job Application Materials (20%)*: Your job application materials will consist of the following elements:Research into the nature of the job market, using such sources as book, article, websites, campus resources, and interviews;Customizable cover letter in which you emphasize a strong fit between your qualifications and the reader’s needs; Customizable professional resume which presents your qualifications in a concise, positive, and persuasive way; A profile of the ideal candidate; Analysis of your qualifications; A recommendation from a class peer.

*Instructions (15%)*: A set of instructions for a task such as using the web to register for courses, writing an evaluation portfolio, or operating a machine. No recipes!

*Usability Test Report (15%)*: A report that demonstrates student’s ability to conduct a scientific test of their own instructional manual. (See additional explanation of the assignment at the end of syllabus).

*Final (10%):* The final for this course will cover proposals.

**Discussion Board Participation: 20%**

Participation online is expected regularly and represents a part of your final grade.Participation is calculated based on meaningful impact on the development of the class discussion and the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of your responses.

**Other Assignments and Quizzes: 10%**

Most of the assignments require you to write/complete them in stages. Your ability to complete the rough drafts and early stages of an assignment will be calculated into your grade.

**Written Work**

* + Since writing is a process, you should draft and revise your work before submitting the final draft. While I will not review an entire document via email, I’m happy to conference with you about your drafts and ideas during my office hours. I am also happy to respond to specific questions via email. Feel free to consult with me at any stage in your writing process.

* + Your writing should be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors, and it should demonstrate increasingly complex critical thinking and analysis as the semester progresses.If this is a challenge for you, I encourage you to visit my office hours and the Learning Center for help throughout the semester.

* + **I DO NOT accept late work**. All work is due online when indicated or you will get no credit for them. If you have a personal emergency or other circumstances that prohibit you from finishing your assignment on time or turning in work as scheduled, email or see me as soon as possible so we can discuss your situation.

* + You will be responsible for peer review during class, which means that you will read the work of other students and offer meaningful feedback to help them make their work as effective as possible. **If you do not bring a complete draft of your work to the peer review workshop, you will receive a “0” for the workshop**.

**Center for Student Accessibility**

The Center for Student Accessibility (CSA) is located in the Atrium Building (A-237) and provides accommodations for students with documented disabilities. For more information, please call (718) 2605143 or email John Currie at jcurrie@citytech.cuny.edu. If you have an IEP or have received extra time on tests in the past, you need to coordinate with CSA early in the semester.

Finally, please keep in mind throughout the semester, if ever any type of question, problem, or confusion should arise contact me so that we can address whatever may prevent you from successfully completing this course.

**New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity**

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

Students are expected to be familiar with the accepted academic principles regarding plagiarism. ***If ANY section, no matter how small, of your work is plagiarized, you will get a ZERO for that paper, with no rewrites.***

**Weekly Course Outline** (subject to change):

Readings and assignments are due by the beginning of class on the dates shown.

This is a list of the major reading assignments for the course. It may be revised as dictated by the needs of the class. Students are responsible for completing all assigned reading *before* each class meeting.

\*\*\*Note: There is a lot of work to complete in this class. To get through it all and to ensure that you are learning the necessary information, it is important that you keep up with the work. I’ve provided you with the entire course schedule in the hopes that you will stay up-to-date and prepared for each week. I suggest you complete readings and begin assignments on time!

**Tentative Course Schedule**

**Week 1 Module: Welcome and Introductions**

August 25—August 29

1. Read “[How to Email Your Professor Without Being Annoying AF](https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087).”
2. Go ahead and peruse our online textbook, [Technical Writing](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/).
3. Read the first chapter, “[Introduction](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/front-matter/introduction-2/) (pp. 1-3) and Chapter 1, “[Email](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/chapter/1-2-e-mail/),” (1.2/ pp. 8-9) in our book.

**Due:** Go into Blackboard and complete the syllabus quiz and Discussion Board 1 by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, August 29.

**Week 2 Module: Job Application Materials**

August 30-Sept. 2

1. Read about your first assignment, Job Application Materials, from this site’s [Assignments menu](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/assignments/).
2. View the video by Nicky Bleiel, “[Technical Writing 101: Introduction to Technical Writing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTDsgd0ytbE),” on Youtube.
3. Read “Chapter 12: Employment materials,” (pp. 183-205) from your textbook.
4. Listen the video “short” on the job application assignment in Week 2 module in Blackboard.
5. View the [Resume Powerpoint](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/files/2021/06/Resumes.pdf).

**Due:** PLANNING EMAIL due in Blackboard Dropbox by Thursday, September 2, 11:59 p.m.

**Week 3 Module: Job Advertisement**

September 9—September 12

1. Do some research! Using sources as books, articles, websites, campus resources, and interviews, research into the nature of the job market in which you plan to enter.
   1. To help you in the research process, read “[4.4. Research Tools](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/chapter/4-4-research-tools/)” (pp. 44-48) and “[4.5. Search Strategies](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/chapter/4-5-search-strategies/)” (pp. 49-54) in your textbook.
2. Find a job advertisement that you are interested in (it should list things such as required education, salary, skills, location, etc.). This is the job advertisement you will write your cover letter and resume towards.

**Due:**Upload the job advertisement (not as an outside link) to Week 3 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, September 12.

**Week 4 Module: Sample Cover Letter and Resume**

September 13—19

**Complete Blackboard Discussion Board Week 4**:

1. Find a sample cover letter and resume. You have two options here: 1) find a good one that you could use as an example for your own, which means that you point to its strengths and try to follow them, or 2) find a bad one that you will use as a cautionary tale for your own, which means you will find the weaknesses so you can avoid them.
2. Find at least 3 discussion points about the document. Your initial posting is due by 11:59 p.m., Friday, September 17. Respond to at least 2 classmates by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, September 19.

**Next:**Begin drafting your own resume and cover letter.

**Week 5 Module: Videos and Quizzes**

September 20—26

1. View the video by Professor Heather Austin, “[How To Write A WINNING Resume in 2020 –Resume Examples INCLUDED](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iwCzT2P7vw).”
2. Complete the video quiz in Week 5 Blackboard by 11:59, Sunday, September 26.
3. View the video by Professor Heather Austin, “[How To Write An INCREDIBLE Cover Letter In 2020 – Cover Letter Examples INCLUDED](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycKMs2FDbs0).”
4. Complete the video quiz in Week 5 Blackboard by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, September 26.

**Next:**Keep working on your own resume and cover letter.

**Week 6 Module: Peer Review**

September 27—October 3

**Week 6 Blackboard Discussion Board:**

1. Create a cover letter and resume based off of the job advertisement you chose and post it to the discussion board by 11:59 p.m., Friday, October 1.
2. Choose one of your peer’s resume and cover letter.
3. Review the cover letter and resume and offer guidance to the writer. Find strengths and weaknesses for each document. Post your review by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, October 3.

**Next:** Keep working on your own resume and cover letter.

**Week 7 Module: Video “Shorts”**

October 4—10

1. Go into Week 7 in Blackboard and view the video “shorts” I made on the Ideal Candidate and Analysis of Your Qualifications.

**Next:**Upload the Ideal Candidate and Analysis of Your Qualifications to the Week 7 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, October 10.

**Week 8 Module: Job Packet Due**

October 11—17

1. Finish all materials for your job packet. To help you with the letter of recommendation that you have to write for a classmate, read “[Letters](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/chapter/1-5-letters)” (1.5/pp. 15-17) in our eBook and “[Positive Recommendations Letter Samples](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/positive-recommendation-letter-2062916)” and “[How to Write a Letter of Recommendation (With Template and Example)](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-a-letter-of-recommendation-with-examples)“.

**Next:**Upload your Job Packet Materials as ONE document into Week 8 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, October 17.

\*\*\*Note: I will send you a classmate’s document to write a recommendation letter.

**Week 9: Letter of Recommendation**

October 18—24

**Due**: Upload your peer letter of recommendation to Week 9 Blackboard Dropbox as a Microsoft Word document by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, October 24.

**Week 10: Conferences**

October 25—October 31

We will meet on Zoom to discuss your progress so far.

**Week 11: Instructions and Manuals**

November 1—7

1. Read about your second assignment, Instructional Manual, from the site’s [Assignments menu](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/assignments/) or [here](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/assignment-two-instructions/).
2. View [PowerPoint 2](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/files/2021/06/Instructions-3.pdf) on Instructions.
3. View “[Writing Instructions and Procedures](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DFFnqqbIQU)” on Youtube.
4. Complete Discussion Board 7: Locate a document on the Web that you believe to be an example of an instructional manual. You have two options here: 1) find a good one that you could use as an example for your own, which means that you point to its strengths and try to follow them, or 2) find a bad one that you will use as a cautionary tale for your own, which means you will find the weaknesses so you can avoid them. Find at least 3 discussion points and write a paragraph explaining each. Post your initial reaction by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Nov. 5. Respond to 2 classmates by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 7.
5. Start thinking of a possible topic for your instructional manual.

**Week 12: Instructions and Manuals Contd.**

November 8—14

1. Listen to the video “short” on instructions in Week 12 Blackboard.
2. Read “[Instructions](https://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/instrux.html)” by David McMurrey.
3. Review this [example](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/files/2021/06/BeginnersGuide.pdf) of an instructional manual.

**Due:** PLANNING EMAIL due in Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 14. \*\*\*Note: In the planning email, you must indicate what you liked/disliked about the example instructional manual you reviewed this week.

**Week 13: Audience Analysis**

November 15—21

1. Read “[Chapter 2: Audience Analysis](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/course-materials/.pub/technicalwriting/part/2-audience-analysis/)” (2.1-2.3//pp. 19-26) from your textbook.
2. Complete the [audience analysis assignment](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/audience-analysis/) due in Week 13 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 21.
3. Read “[Chapter 8: Creating and Integrating Graphics](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/part/8-creating-and-integrating-graphics/) (8.1-8.5//pp.81-90).
4. Find at least 2 graphics to use in your manual. \*\*\*Note: you will need to discuss these in your progress report next week.
5. Continue working on your instructional manual.

**Week 14: Progress Report**

November 22-24

1. Continue working on your instructional manual.
2. View two sample student instructional manual, “[How to Pack a Suitcase](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/files/2021/06/How-to-Pack-a-Suitcase-Instructional-Manual-1.pdf)” and “[How to Remove Red Wine](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/files/2021/06/How-To-Remove-Red-Wine.pdf)“.
3. Read “[Chapter 6 Progress Reports](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/part/6-progress-reports/)” (6.1-6.5//pp. 67-73) in your textbook.
4. Follow the guidelines to begin drafting your progress report.

**Due**: Upload your progress report to Week 14 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 24.

\*\*\*Note: You will not peer review the instructional manual; instead, you will conduct a usability test as a peer review.

**Week 15: Usability Testing**

November 29—Dec. 5

1. Read about your third assignment, Usability Testing, from the site [Assignments menu](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/assignments/) or [here](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/assignment-three-usability-testing/).
2. Listen to the video “short” on Usability Testing in Week 15 Blackboard.
3. Read “[Usability Evaluation Basics](https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/usability-evaluation.html)” at usability.gov.
4. Read “[Usability 101: Introduction to Usability](https://www.nngroup.com/articles/usability-101-introduction-to-usability/)”
5. View video, “[Principles of Human-Centered Design](https://www.nngroup.com/videos/principles-human-centered-design-don-norman/)” by Don Norman.
6. Put the finishing touches on your instructional draft. Use the [checklist](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/instructions-checklist/) found on the Assignments tab.

**Due**: Planning Email due in Week 15 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 5.

\*\*\*\*Note: Based off of the next week’s reading, be prepared to run your first usability test of your draft instructional manual.

**Week 16: Conducting a Usability Test**

December 6—12

1. Read “[Usability Testing](https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/usability-testing.html)” at Usability.gov.
2. Read “[Planning a Usability Test](https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/planning-usability-testing.html)” at Usability.gov.
3. Read “[Running a Usability Test](https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/running-usability-tests.html)” at Usability.gov.
4. View the student sample usability test report [here](https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/ferdinandeng2700oer/files/2021/06/SampleUsabilityTestReport.pdf).
5. Conduct your usability test.

**Due**: Upload usability test document to Week 16 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 12.

**Week 17: Final Week of Class**

December 13—19

1. Make revisions to your instructional manual based off of the usability test. Upload it to Week 17 Blackboard Dropbox by 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 15.
2. Read “[Chapter 3: Proposals](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/part/3-proposals/) (3.1-3.7//pp. 27-36) in your textbook.
3. Complete Final Exam Test in Week 17 Blackboard by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 19.

**Additional Explanation of Assignments**

**Usability Test Report**

This is an individual assignment that builds upon our discussions of usability and user-centered design, and the difficulties that designers have looking at things from the users' perspective. It provides an opportunity for you, as an expert user, to assess that instructional manual through the eyes of a novice user.

Use your completed instructional manual.

Find someone (a friend, roommate, relative, etc.) who has never seen or used your manual before. Ask this person to complete the tasks while you observe their activities; you can ask them to complete a specific task if you want, or just let them do whatever they want.

Watch what happens as they complete the tasks. Try to figure out what they do, what they want to do, and how the two match up. Pay particular attention to what happens when things go wrong. Remember also to look for what they didn't do, but that you might have expected they would do.

Write a report covering the following points, in this order, using subheadings to separate each point:

1. Briefly -- and anonymously! -- describe your user tester, their technical expertise of the topic, and their familiarity with this manual in particular.
2. Describe your user's actions... What did you observe? What did they do that you found unexpected? What problems did they as a novice user encounter that you, as an expert user, would not have encountered?
3. Focusing on the difference between expert and novice users, discuss how the manual helped or hindered the user in their activities from a user-centered design perspective, and explain how the manual might better support novice users. Where appropriate, include embedded links to appropriate pages so that we can see the causes of the difficulties you observed.
4. Describe how you would make changes to the instructional manual based on your observation of the user. What things would you change? What things would remain the same?