

ENG 1133, Specialized Communication for Technology Students “Interfacing with the Workplace Integrated Circuit”



ENG 1133 D503 | MW 4:00PM-5:15PM | Namm N-601B

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Office Hours: M 3:30-4:00PM, W 2:30-4:00PM, and by appointment

Class Description

In this class, you will learn how to use different forms of business and technical communication as a practitioner in a technology-centered field. You will build on what you already know about rhetoric and the composition process. You will work closely with others as collaborators and develop strategies for building persuasive communications addressed to different audiences and responding to specific situations. You will also learn how these practices continue to evolve and how they relate to the larger field of technical communication. To achieve these goals, we will use a best effort approach to model a workplace environment dependent upon collaboration, professional interaction, and enforced deadlines. To keep our subject interesting and increase its utility to your personal development, you will tentatively enter the discourse through readings from the Society of Technical Communication's *Intercom* magazine and collaborative, team project reflecting on a specific, ubiquitous technology: computers.

Learning Objectives and Prerequisites (See Additional Handout)

Required Texts:

Wilson, Kevin and Jennifer Wauson. *The AMA Handbook of Business Documents: Guidelines and Sample Documents That Make Business Writing Easy*. New York: American Management Association, 2011. Print.

Daily readings will be made available on our OpenLab website or via email.

Required Resources

Access to your campus email account. Use it to create an account on openlab.citytech.cuny.edu during the first week. Join our class on OpenLab (I will show you where to find it during class).

Software: Office suite of applications capable of producing files in DOCX, PPTX, and PDF formats.

Create accounts (or use your existing accounts) for Google and LinkedIn.com.

Ability to create DOCX, PPTX, and PDF documents, and print color and b/w documents.

Recommended Resources

Journals and magazines in the field available through the library: *Intercom*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *Technical Communication*, and *Technical Communication Quarterly*.

Usability.gov is an important website from the Department of Health and Human Services that provides information and methodologies for improving user experiences (UX).

City Tech's Ursula C. Schwerin Library, Atrium 4th Floor: <http://library.citytech.cuny.edu>

City Tech Learning Center, Atrium G-18: <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/students/learningcenter/>

Purdue Online Writing Lab: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Grading Policy

Due dates are on the tentative schedule below. Instructions for these assignments will be given to you with plenty of time to discuss them with me or your peers before they are due. Should you have any questions, concerns, or issues about an assignment, you **MUST** speak with me **BEFORE** an assignment is due, because **ALL GRADES FOR THIS COURSE ARE FINAL**. This means that I will not entertain student arguments for grade changes after an assignment is completed. Also, failure to complete any major assignment in the course may result in the failure of the course as a whole. Should you find yourself having trouble, you **MUST** speak with me **BEFORE** an assignment is due. I will not listen to any arguments after an assignment is completed. If assignments are submitted late, one letter grade will be deducted from the assignment's score for each day that the assignment is late.

Attendance Policy

City Tech permits students to miss three absences without penalty. There is no distinction between excused or unexcused absences. An absence does not give you an extension on assignment or presentation due dates. It is your responsibility to have your work submitted on time. Presentations cannot be made up except in the most exceptional cases. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class for its duration. Each late arrival or early exit will equal half of an absence. Excessive absence can result in failure of the course or a final WU grade.

Major Assignment Grade Distribution

Project 1: Job Application Portfolio	Create a portfolio of job application documents, including: a memo on the career that you seek, a memo on your program of study at City Tech preparing you for that career, a research memo on a company/job ad, a personal LinkedIn.com profile, a letter of application for that job, a skills-based resume for that job, and a chronological/work-experience resume for that job, and a letter of resignation (imagining that you have worked at this job for some time and have been offered a job elsewhere).	20%
Project 2: Team-Based Technical Communication Portfolio Project	Working in a team of students, work cooperatively and collaboratively to create a set of technical documents for a vintage computer (for our purposes, a personal computer constructed before 1985). Some of your work will be hands-on and some will be research-based. As a team, you will create a portfolio of documents, including team rules, a mission statement, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, a research report, a specifications one-sheet, a brochure, a press release, a procedure list for one task relating to the computer, and finally, a PowerPoint-supported presentation to an audience of investors. Besides creating documents using the writing process, you will want to be mindful of rhetoric and your intended audience for each document.	30%
Final Exam	During our last class, you will write an impromptu essay reflecting on and	15%

	discussing the specialized communications that you have learned about and attempted throughout the semester.	
In-Class Writing	At the beginning of each class, you will have ten minutes to write a summary memo of the reading assigned for that day's class. In addition to your summary, you will write a brief paragraph connecting what you have read to something that you already know or have learned about on your own.	20%
Reading Presentation	You will have an opportunity to gain extra practice giving formal presentations in front of an audience. Once during the semester, you will present a 5-minute presentation that summarizes a reading from <i>Intercom</i> and provides additional details that you learn from your own documented research. You will support your oral presentation with a PowerPoint slideshow, and a printed script that you will give to the professor after your presentation.	15%
Total		100%

Teaching Philosophy and Standards for Professor Performance

As a first generation college graduate, I deeply understand the importance of a college education. Furthermore, my experiences as a student—positive and negative—inform the way that I design and teach classes. I know firsthand and by studying the research of others that learning and cognitive development takes place best through extensive practice and challenging work. Put another way, you have to work out your brain as you work out your cardiovascular system (work over time) and your muscular system (repetitions and exceeding prior limits). If you are not metaphorically sweating and in pain, you are likely not achieving the cognitive development that you desire. Think of me as your trainer. I will teach you techniques, I will encourage you to push past what you think you are capable of, and I will spot you to make sure that you are safe. As a class, we should all be working together and supporting one another.

<p>You can expect me to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be professional inside and outside the classroom. ● Treat you like an adult in a professional and respectful manner. ● Be prepared for class. ● Attend class regularly. ● Respond promptly to email 	<p>You should not expect me to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accept notes or other documents from third parties excusing you from class or other activities. ● Respond favorably to excuses of any kind. ● Answer emails or phone calls from parents, guardians, or other third
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<p>communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adhere to my policies and standards. ● Be available for student meetings with an appointment. ● Maintain a positive attitude. ● Be a problem solver. ● Offer thoughtful, constructive criticism on your work. ● Be a coach, instead of a “sage on the stage,” in the classroom. ● Be a mentor. 	<p>parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be available outside my office hours without an appointment. ● Respond favorably to any argument for missing my class or leaving my class early because of activities in another class. ● Make exceptions to my policies and standards. ● Grant make-ups. ● Accept late work without a <i>pre-arranged</i> extension. ● Answer emails on the weekends.
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Standards for Student Performance

Another important aspect of this class is developing your professionalism. Expect to be held to these professional standards in our class:

- **Respect deadlines.** In the workplace, you will be held to a high standard of making and meeting project deadlines. I do not accept late work unless the student speaks with me about arranging an extension. I do not guarantee extension, but I often grant them if there is a documented, compelling need that is identified before an assignment is due.
- **Do not expect make-ups.** In the workplace, there are consequences for poor performance or incomplete projects. Likewise in our class, you should not expect any make-up opportunities for late or incomplete work. Students who participate in school sanctioned absences are a possible exception, but it is the responsibility of those students to meet with me before assignments are due to discuss and establish a plan for the individual student.
- **Arrive on time for class and stay for the duration of class.** Being late or leaving early can be disruptive and are disrespectful in any situation, especially in the workplace. I assign partial absences to students who arrive late or leave early, because those students miss a portion of the class lecture, exercises, or team participation. Students who are perpetually late run the risk of receiving a failing grade in the class.
- **Respect others.** Following a workplace example, we will treat our class as meetings. This means that you should not disrupt class with texting, phone calls, or unnecessary computer sounds. Furthermore, you should respect the people who you work with in class on daily assignments or major projects. Give one another your full attention, your attention to detail, and your vast wealth of expertise. In addition, be receptive to constructive criticism and provide it in full measure to your classroom colleagues.
- **Maintain a positive attitude.** Many of your projects will be collaborative. Having a negative attitude can influence your and your teammates’ performance and success. Put your best foot forward regardless of any situation’s challenges.
- **Be a problem solver.** This is the best strategy for maintaining a positive attitude. The workplace is replete with problems, miscommunications, and difficulties. In any job or

situation, we should work toward solutions, compromises, and successful communication. This involves identifying where the problem lies, figuring out a solution, applying the solution, evaluating its success, and revising if possible until the problem is fully resolved (or as resolved as possible). This class gives you many opportunities to be a problem solver in preparation for the higher stakes of the workplace.

Student Opportunities for Developing Significant Skills

- **Reading:** As indicated on the schedule, there will be approximately 25 pages of reading due for each class on average.
- **Writing:** Each class begins with a brief writing prompt related to that day's reading. This helps you gather your thoughts together before discussion and the regular writing practice has been shown to improve writing ability in general. This is true for native English speakers and English language learners (ELL) alike.
- **Problem Solving and Critical Thinking:** Through your work in the class, you will have many opportunities to develop heuristics based on your critical analysis of complex issues, and you will improve your rhetorical acumen through observation, analysis, discussion, and iterative application of rhetorical techniques.
- **Presentations:** During the semester, each student will have an opportunity to give a low-stakes presentation on a given day's reading and a higher-stakes research-based presentation on the final major project.
- **Team Work:** Many of the daily exercises will involve cooperative teamwork of several students. Some of the major projects will require teams of students to work together for an extended time on a collaborative project. Developing rhetorically effective communication is also process-driven. This means that we will rely on peer review to improve your writing as part of a process of revision that you can employ in your other classes and in the workplace.
- **Multimodality:** The assignments in this class were designed to give you an opportunity at working with WOVEN modalities in different ways. As we will learn from our neuroscience readings, humans integrate and remember information that is meaningfully conveyed using multimodalities. You will learn how to do this more effectively.
- **Professional Responsibility:** It is your responsibility to follow the schedule, obtain notes from your classmates when absent, communicate with the professor if there are concerns or problems that might affect your success in the class, and safeguard your work by keeping multiple backups.

Nondiscrimination Policy

This class does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, disability, or status as a veteran. Alternative viewpoints are welcome; however, statements that are deemed racist, sexist, homophobic, classist, or otherwise discriminatory toward others in the class or outside the class will not be tolerated.

Accommodations Policy

Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the Student Support Services Program (SSSP). Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student's eligibility from SSSP, which is located in A-237. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the SSSP staff and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

Communication

School email is the official medium of communication for our class. You should use it to contact me with questions or to arrange appointments for office hours. You are expected to check it regularly for announcements relating to the class. I will not discuss grades by email, but I will be happy to discuss student grades in person during my office hours or by appointment. Please feel free to stop by during my office hours, but please send me an email beforehand so that I can prepare appropriately for what you would like to discuss.

Office Hours

I encourage students to meet with me outside of class to discuss their work. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, you may setup an appointment to meet with me at another time. Students should send me an email at least 24 hours in advance requesting a meeting and including information about the student's available meeting times for the next few days.

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 (http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/academics/catalog_listing.shtml).

While we will discuss academic integrity and plagiarism in class, please do not hesitate to seek my advice on this subject should you have any question at any time before an assignment is due. In our class, any writing or work by others that you incorporate into your writing and work should be properly attributed using MLA professional style. There is a section on MLA in the Purdue OWL website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>). City Tech provides

a list of tips on avoiding plagiarism

(http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/students/academic_integrity/plagiarism_tips.pdf).

Tentative Schedule

I believe that classes should be organic and adaptive for each group of students. Therefore, I reserve the right to alter the following tentative schedule depending on the needs of the class as a whole. This also means that you have to be involved and invested to reap the greatest reward from our class. If you have suggestions for supplemental readings or viewings, please share them with me. If you have questions about the course content, please speak with me.

Week	Day	Date	Announcements	Reading	Due
1	M	8/31	<p>FIRST DAY OF CLASS</p> <p>Handout syllabus.</p> <p>Activate your City Tech email if you have not already done so.</p> <p>Create an account on openlab.citytech.cuny.edu.</p> <p>Navigate to our OpenLab site and join.</p>	Syllabus.	<p>Using your City Tech email address, signup for an account on OpenLab.citytech.cuny.edu and join our class.</p>
	W	9/2	<p>Assign seats and give reading presentation assignments.</p> <p>Discuss reading presentations.</p> <p>Note taking basics.</p> <p>Begin foundational lectures on rhetoric and multimodality.</p>		<p>Complete last page of syllabus and return to the professor at the end of class or beginning of next class.</p>
2	M	9/7	No Class.		
	W	9/9	Introduce Project One.	<i>AMA Handbook</i> , Application Letter and Resumes.	
	Th	10/10	<p>Follow a Monday schedule.</p> <p>Student-led introduction to the reading.</p>	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	<p>OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.</p>
3	M	9/14	No Class.		
	W	9/16	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	<p>OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.</p>

4	M	9/21	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	9/23	No class.		
5	M	9/28	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	9/30	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
6	M	10/5	Student-led introduction to the reading. Introduce Project Two.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class. Project One Portfolio due at the beginning of class.
	W	10/7	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
7	M	10/12	No class.		
	W	10/14	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
8	M	10/19	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	10/21	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
9	M	10/26	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	10/28	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
10	M	11/2	Student-led introduction to the reading. Midterm grades available.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	11/4	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten

					minutes of class.
11	M	11/9	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	11/11	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
12	M	11/16	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	11/18	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.
13	M	11/23	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	11/25	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
14	M	11/30	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	12/2	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
15	M	12/7	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
	W	12/9	Student-led introduction to the reading.	Reading from <i>Intercom</i> .	OpenLab: Post reading summary during first ten minutes of class.
16	M	12/14		Project 2 Team Presentations.	Project 2 Portfolio due at the beginning of class.
	W	12/16	Handout final exam writing prompt.	Project 2 Team Presentations.	
17	M	12/21	LAST DAY OF CLASS.	Final exam during class.	
			Final grades available on CUNYfirst after midnight on 12/29.		

Syllabus/Policy Acknowledgment and Permission Statement**PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS BY OUR NEXT CLASS.**

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for _____ and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

print name

signature

date

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

- I give my instructor, JASON W. ELLIS, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.
- I do NOT give my instructor, JASON W. ELLIS, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.

Please indicate whether you want to be acknowledged if your work is used:

- Please use my name in association with my work.
- Please use my work, but do NOT acknowledge me.

If your instructor decides to use your work, he//she may wish to contact you. Please provide your contact information below:

print name

signature

email address

phone number

print address

date