Course Number: ENGL 3342 (62863 -02R)

Course Name:

Technical Communication: Interdisciplinary

Where: ELABS 178, Online, & other locations as indicated
When: 11:20am-12:50pm, MTWRF (unless otherwise indicated)
Term: Summer I 2019, June 3 – July 9, 2019

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Randall W. Monty, PhD.
Office Hours:
   Edinburg: ELABS 203; TW 9:00-11:00am
   Edinburg: Writing Center, ESTAC 3.119, W 2:00-5:00pm
   B’ville: Writing Center, by appointment
   Synchronous online: Google Hangouts & Zoom, email to set up an appointment
   Asynchronous online: Email & Twitter DM, any time
E-mail & OneDrive: randall.monty@utrgv.edu
Twitter: @rwmonty
Google Drive & Hangouts: rwmonty@gmail.com

Response Time:
Generally, I will respond to all asynchronous communication within 48 hours of receiving them, although feedback on written drafts or responses that require additional research may take longer. If I plan to be away from my computer for more than a couple of days, I will let you know in advance. Any technical questions can be referred to Blackboard Support.

I will update grades each time a grading session has been complete—typically five days following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Blackboard home page under the link to this course.
WELCOME & COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this professionally-oriented writing course, students will develop individual technical writing processes for composing technical reports and documents. This will include assembling, organizing, drafting, and revising technical information to produce written documents and oral reports suitable for internal use and public dissemination.

Students will critically investigate scholarship of Technical Writing, as well as the related disciplines and fields of Rhetoric and Composition, Design (industrial, web, interior), Medical Rhetoric, and Occupational Therapy*. In order to demonstrate understandings of the concepts introduced by the course readings, and to cultivate an environment of interdisciplinary collaboration, students will develop and present on theories and pedagogies of writing relating to their own disciplinary areas of interest.

This course is designed to help students mature as professional communicators through a variety of technical discourses. If approached with thoughtful consideration and unflagging effort, the skills learned in this course can transfer to areas both academic and professional contexts.

Thanks,
RWMonty

*This course section fulfills the Technical Writing requirement for a BSCS degree, application to the OT MA program, and other programs at UTRGV. Whatever area of study or career path you find yourself on, we can tailor aspects of this class to align with your goals.

Prerequisite

English 1301: Rhetoric & Composition 1 (or equivalent)
English 1302: Rhetoric & Composition 2 (or equivalent)

DETAILS & EXPECTATIONS

Course Topics & Themes

This course is rooted in scholarship of technical writing, but this course section is interdisciplinary – meaning students typically come to this class from different academic disciplines and programs of study, and they intend to enter a range of professional fields. This class will embrace that intellectual diversity by following shared sequences based on the course content, while also incorporating content from the represented disciplines (some assigned by the instructor, some supplied by the students). Students in this class will be introduced to all of it, placing emphases on interpreting the content through their home disciplines, and by learning when to leverage their own strengths and when to diffuse control to other stakeholders.
Preparing Yourself to Work

Your thoughts, ideas, and interpretations are your valuable contributions to this class. Be on time for the start of each class meeting, and bring your course reading notes and anything you need to do your writing work to class every day. If we start an activity and you don’t have the necessary materials, or if you are excessively tardy, you won’t be able to constructively contribute to the work, and you may not receive credit for that portion of that assignment.

Accessibility

This class is designed with the goal of providing accessibility for all students. If you have a documented condition or (dis)ability that may make it difficult for you to carry out the work as we have outlined and/or you need special accommodations or assistance because of a disability, please contact UTRGV Student Accessibility Services at ability@utrgv.edu to schedule a consultation. Appropriate arrangements and accommodations can be made. Verification of disability and processing for special services, such as note takers, extended time, separate accommodations for testing, is required and will be determined by SAS. If your concerns fall outside the scope of UTRGV’s SAS, I am willing to work with you to help make this class meet your needs, so long as you feel comfortable in this regard.

Support

This is a writing intensive course, and writing is a collaborative process - even if you’re writing will be, for the most part, individually assessed. Fortunately, the UTRGV Writing Center offers tutoring, instruction, and support for all things writing based. The Writing Center can be found in STAC 3.119 (Edinburg) and UBLB 3.206 (Brownsville). In addition to face-to-face consultations, the Writing Center offers feedback through Skype meetings and asynchronous consultations. Contact the Writing Center at wc@utrgv.edu for more info.

Balancing work, personal life, and school can be stressful, so it’s important to seek support when you need it. UTRGV Counseling services can be reached at counseling@utrgv.edu.

Technical Writing Process

Through in-class and online discussions, we will investigate a variety of concepts and theories from foundational and emergent Rhetoric & Composition scholarship that have been curated and organized to help you develop your individual technical writing process. This recursive process includes invention, research, evaluation of sources, user-testing, feedback, revision, and reflection. Although no single writing process and concept will apply to all contexts, the assignments in this course are built for transfer. In other words, with some modification, you should be able to apply your writing process to a variety of technical and professional writing projects and assignments.

Writing, Revision, Feedback

It shouldn’t come as a surprise to find out that successfully navigating this class will involve a lot of writing on your part. Upper division courses are like that. Through composing in a variety of modes, that you will be able to articulate your ideas to a wide range of audiences. Our writing will also serve an epistemological function – writing isn’t just how to show what
you’ve learned, but it is the exacting process through which you create meaning. Thought of another way, you learn by writing.

In spite of our better efforts, it can be difficult to estimate your course grade throughout the semester. If you’d like to have an idea of where you stand after you’ve completed a substantial amount of writing and revision, please make an appointment to meet me outside of class, and I will review your work with you and give you a better sense of where you are, grade-wise. It will be entirely your responsibility to set up a grade discussion meeting, and it’s important that you not wait until the last week to do so. At that point, it will likely be too late for you to do what needs to be done to significantly raise your overall course grade.

_I don’t want to have to mention this last point, but you can probably infer why I feel inclined to do so:_ Appeals for extra-curricular grade changes will not be accepted.

Course Readings, Discussions

This is a writing-and-reading-intensive college course, and as such, you will be expected to read and respond to a considerable amount of scholarly and popular media, and then to contribute to discussions related to these readings. Simply scanning over an assigned reading will not be sufficient; rather, you will be expected to thoroughly peruse each assigned reading, take copious notes, and prepare yourself to talk about, question, and respond to what you have read.

Each assigned reading must be completed by the start of the class specified in the course home page, which is available on the wiki. (Consider the calendar a rough guide.) This goes for whole group and hybrid course meetings, both synchronous and asynchronous. Most frequently, we will meet and discuss the course readings during the regularly scheduled class time. In addition, we will often meet online (via the course wiki). At times, we may meet in some other campus space entirely.

**TEXTBOOK & COURSE MATERIALS**

Required Readings & Course Content

All assigned readings, video, audio, and other content will be freely available via the course Blackboard space.

If at some point you are asked to assign a supplemental reading to the class, you should be sure to prioritize accessibility along with disciplinary usefulness.

**Note:** Most materials used in conjunction with the course are subject to copyright protection.

Other Course Materials

Depending on how you choose to complete projects for this course, you may need to buy additional materials, pay for services, or purchase supplementary resources. Those decisions will be left up to individual students and groups.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course topics and objectives for English 3342: Technical Communication have been developed to help you learn and improve as a college writer, researcher, and critical thinker. Those topics and objectives include: developing a writing process, writing with clarity and purpose, evaluating and using secondary scholarly sources, and applying advanced critical and rhetorical theory to our work.

Some of the themes and concepts that will guide our work in this course include techne, telos, remix, and praxis. In addition, you will explore theory situated at the intersection of rhetoric and composition and fields and disciplines like: occupational and physical therapy; computer science and engineering; English studies; translation and interpretation; education; and others that you and your classmates may bring to the discussion.

Program Goals: Student Learning Outcomes for Professional Writing (SLOs) [in progress]

- SLO1: Develop awareness of foundational professional writing concepts and theories such as rhetorical situation, discourse, genre, techne, and telos in order to communicate with professional, disciplinary, and non-specialist audiences.
- SLO2: Understand of how texts and discourse are composed and circulate within their field and discipline.
- SLO3: Collaborate with disciplinary and interdisciplinary groups on the identification, curation, analysis, and production of traditional written and emergent multimodal texts and discourse.
- SLO4: Consider and engage with how various aspects of end-user embodiment -- including but not limited to, access and use, accessibility, pluralization, and tactility -- impact communication, design, and writing processes.
- SLO5: Develop and integrate the writing process into professional environments by planning, drafting, reviewing, revising, and critiquing theirs and others professional documents.

Degree Goals: Student Learning Outcomes for English (SLOs)

- SLO1—Students will articulate the historical, theoretical, cultural, and/or personal significance of language and literature.
- SLO2—Students will analyze and interpret a variety of texts, using a range of theoretical approaches and disciplinary modes of inquiry.
- SLO3—Students will demonstrate a broad and foundational knowledge of the traditions of American, British, Ethnic, and/or World literatures by critically situating specific works of literature within these traditions.
- SLO4—Students will write coherently and demonstrate a consistent use of the conventions of a variety of genres, including, but not limited to, the academic essay.
- SLO5—Students will apply appropriate research methodologies to understand and/or illuminate specific questions about language and literature.
- SLO6—Students will demonstrate information literacy through the use, analysis, and evaluation of appropriate resources, including, but not limited to, those found in electronic databases and websites.
- SLO7—Students in certification tracks will demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of writing, literature, reading, oral communication, media literacy, and English language arts pedagogy.
COURSE ORGANIZATION & TOOLS

Course Structure:

This course is listed as a Reduced Seat (also known as a Hybrid course). A Hybrid course, defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, is a “course in which a majority (more than 50 percent but less than 85 percent), of the planned instruction occurs when the students and instructor(s) are not in the same place.” The goal is to join the best features of in-class teaching with the best features of online learning to promote active independent learning and to reduce class seat-time.

Online work and materials will be provided through the course management system Blackboard Learn. You will use your UTRGV account to login to the course from the My UTRGV site and under applications click on Blackboard Learn.

This course is broken down into three units across five modules, with each module corresponding with a new calendar week during the semester. Weeks, for the purposes of this class, begin on Monday mornings and end on Sunday nights.

Unit 1 will be all about immersion. During this unit, we’ll read into the critical and pedagogical theory that will help us discuss, research, and write about the disciplinary concepts of rhetoric & composition, as well as your individual topics. We’ll also begin the invention processes for your individual research projects, including collecting and coding data from your everyday and academic writing.

In Unit 2, the focus will shift to developing your research projects. This will include collecting further information through primary and secondary research, and writing, providing/receiving peer feedback, and revising.

Finally, for Unit 3, we’ll complete our research projects, including learning strategies for editing and publication. We’ll also create public documents related to our projects so that our research will reach more varied audiences and have broader impacts.

Whole Group Expectations:

During our traditional, face-to-face class meetings, you be expected to participate in all discussions and activities, including sharing drafts of your work. You should come to each whole group meeting with questions, concerns, and ideas about the readings and assignments.

Online Expectations:

The online work for this course will consist of three main things: completing assigned readings and discussing those readings with your peers; completing individual activities such as quizzes and other assignments; and, of course, writing.

Small Group Expectations:

Occasionally throughout the semester, we will meet in small groups to discuss our research projects and provide feedback on drafts. Before small group meetings, you will be expected to read and comment on your peers’ drafts. During the meetings,
you will be expected to discuss your peers’ drafts and to take notes while your peers discuss your draft.

**Individual Consultation Expectations:**

Twice during the semester, you will be required to meet individually with your instructor. For the first meeting, we will discuss your plans for your research project and help you develop a schedule for completing your work. For the second meeting, we will discuss how to move your drafted project to completion, and then we will plan how to modify your scholarly essay into a public document.

**Discussion Forums**

In addition to our in-person meetings, this course will utilize Blackboard’s discussion boards as a space for in-depth response and supplemental conversation.

Your instructor’s role in discussion forums will be that of a facilitator. I will occasionally correct misconceptions and/or redirect conversations, but for the most part, the discussions are intended to be student-led. I may also post summative comments following the completion of discussion indicating my general impressions of the comments and conclusions.

If you’ve got a question about the course that you feel is specific to your work or that is more personal in nature, you can always contact me individually. If you’ve got a longer question, or if you’re sending a draft to comment on, use UTRGV email. If you’ve got a quick question, you can contact me via Twitter DM or Google Hangouts chat.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Computer Hardware**

In order to participate in this course, you should have easy access to a computer with high-speed internet connection.

For whole group, small group, and individual meetings, I suggest you bring your web-enabled devices, including laptops, smart phones, and/or tablets. We’ll use these devices to interact with one another, to take notes, to research, and to compose original content for class. (Sometimes, we’ll put the devices away in order to take advantage of the rhetorical aspects of the shared classroom space.)

**Student Technical Skills**

You are expected to be proficient with basic computer applications, such as word processing, document design, Web 2.0, cloud storage, and social media, as well as sending and receiving email with attachments.

**Software**

- Updated web browser (e.g. Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome); multimodal software (Adobe Flash, QuickTime); and PDF reader (Adobe Reader, PDF Xchange)
• Composition software, such as Microsoft Office, Apple suite, Google Drive
• Digital image manipulation software, such as Photoshop, GIMP, or Paint.NET
• Access to a cloud drive, like OneDrive (via myUTRGV), Google Drive, or DropBox

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:

• Visit the Blackboard Student Help Site
• Submit a Support Ticket

Help Contact Information (UTRGV’s Blackboard Support):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Brownsville</th>
<th>Edinburg</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Rusteberg Hall Room 108</td>
<td>Education Building Room 2.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (24/7 Support)</td>
<td>956-882-6697 or 956-882-6792</td>
<td>956-665-5327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Operation</td>
<td>Monday – Friday 7:30AM – 6:00PM</td>
<td>Monday – Friday 7:30AM – 6:00PM</td>
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TOPIC OUTLINE/SCHEDULE

Important Note #1 – Assignment Descriptions: Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each module’s corresponding content area on Blackboard. If you have any questions, please contact your instructor.

Important Note #2 – Readings: Open-source readings that are available online are linked from Blackboard. If you have any questions, please contact your instructor.

Important Note #3 – Changes to the Syllabus: This syllabus represents a plan for this semester. While the rules and regulations will remain consistent, individual assignments and dates may be modified depending upon the individualized nature and progression of this course section. If you’ve made it this far into the syllabus, please email me a picture of a dog doing something funny.

Module 1: Technical Writing Literacies, Genre, Disciplines
Module 2: Instructions, Audience, Usability
Module 3: Instructions, User-Test
Module 4: Instructions, Feedback, Revision
Module 5: Remix, Revision, Reflection, Assessment

GRADING POLICY

Graded Course Activities

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<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Points</th>
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Page 8
You may have noticed that the possible points for the assignments and activities listed in the section above add up to more than 100 points. Rather, there will be a total of 1000 possible points available to you over the course of this semester, and this move has more meaning than simply adding a zero. What this change does is provides me with a better way to organize and track student performance, while providing you with a greater assurance that you will be assessed and credited for each task you are asked to complete. Additionally, this system helps ensure that individual assignments are valued to be commensurate with the work required to complete them. In other words, assignments that require more time and effort are worth more points.

In order to ensure that you receive proper credit for your day-to-day efforts in this course, I will periodically evaluate everything else you do for class (reading responses, workshops, in-class writings, blog posts & comments, homework, etc.), and you will earn points based on participation.

Students will earn individual scores and a cumulative grade based on their work. Quantity, while important, is not a substitute for quality. In other words, simply completing an assignment will not guarantee a certain result – you must produce work befitting a college-level student.

This approach will also allow us to more easily gauge how you’re doing in different areas of the course and how you can improve on that work. At the end the semester, there will be a total number of possible points, which may be lesser or greater than 1000. Your specific grade will be determined by what percentage of the total points you have accumulated. For example:

A = 900-1000
B = 800-899
C = 700-799
F = Below 700

On the off-chance that we end up doing more or less work than listed here (it’s a possibility), your grade will reflect the corresponding grade according to a percentage of the available points.
Bonus points will not count towards the available point total but will count towards your individual total.

Late Work Policy

Late work makes life hard for all of us (you, me, your peers, the program, the department, the institution, the local flora and fauna, etc.), so you should expect and prepare to turn in all assignments by their due dates. Assignments submitted after their due dates may not be accepted. If you know of an upcoming absence, plan to complete and turn in your work early. The hybrid nature of this course allows for some flexibility with regards to participating in class, even when a student is not physically present, but persistent tardiness will only inhibit learning and performance.

Viewing Grades in Blackboard

Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Blackboard Grade Book. Click on the My Grades link on the left navigation to view your points.

Your instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete—typically five days following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Blackboard home page under the link to this course.

COURSE POLICIES

Participation

Online:

- In discussion forums, you learn from one another by posing questions, justifying your comments, and providing multiple perspectives. When you prepare for discussions through thoughtful reflection, you contribute to your own successful learning experience as well as to the experience of your peers.

- Log in to the course frequently (at least several times per week for long semesters and daily for summer sessions) and check the announcements. This will keep you apprised of any course updates, progress in discussions, assignment information, and messages requiring immediate attention.

- Be aware of and keep up with the Course Schedule in the Syllabus.

In Class:

- Be prepared for in class activities by going over your assigned materials prior to coming to class.

- Participate in in-class activities to the best of your ability.

- Group activities: How well your team does—and how well you do—depends on all the team members working cooperatively.
Communication Skills

Students are expected to follow appropriate disciplinary formatting guidelines, use person-first, non-racist, and non-sexist language, and include sufficient references to support their thesis and ideas in the paper.

Netiquette

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner during in class and online interactions. Netiquette describes the code of conduct for online activities. It ensures respect for others and prevents misunderstandings or unintentional offenses to others. The netiquette described here is amended to ensure your success in this course.

- When you are typing or submitting a response, avoid using all capital letters (caps). Caps is equal to SHOUTING YOUR MESSAGE.
- Although it is customary to use acronyms (ex. ROFL - rolling on floor laughing, BTW - by the way, or FYI - for your information) when texting online, avoid using these in your class communication.
- Although you are encouraged to participate and ask questions, it is asked that you do not spam other users (SPAM refers to unwanted or excessive email). Before sending mass emails, consider using the discussion board to post general inquiries or requesting assistance from your instructor.
- Students are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but students are not to attack an individual. It is important to foster a safe learning environment.

In order to ease the peer review and submission processes, please use a font and text size that will make it easier for your readers to print and respond to your work. Additionally, when submitting drafts to your instructor, please save and submit your rough drafts in one of the following formats: DOC/DOCX, RTF, or shared via Google Docs.

Submitted final drafts should be saved as PDF, JPEG, or some other final and universally accessible format.

When you save your drafts, use the following naming convention: UTRGV username (your email address before the @ sign), short name for the assignment, due date
For example: randall.monty01 GA RD 06.07.19

UTRGV Policy Statements

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student
Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Course evaluations will be available TBD.

ATTENDANCE:
“The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions. It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of absences. When, however, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of ‘DP’ or ‘DF’ (HOP 5.2.4).

If a student is absent for any combination of more than three (3) whole group class days, hybrid assignments, or group or individual meetings, they will have difficulty passing the course or earning a high final grade. If these absences occur prior to the university’s stated drop date, the student may be dropped from the class.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY: (department approved)
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

If you have questions about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, writing center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.
COURSE DROPS:
According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.