

ENG 2311 Technical Writing

Spring 2025 / MW 9:30-10:45 / BLH 251

Dr. Yvette Chairez

Course Description:

ENG 2311 is a writing intensive course focused on developing competency in written, visual, and oratory genres that are typical to *public-facing* technical communications. We will focus on basic concepts like audience, style, design, and genre which highlight the relationship between content (having something to say) and expression (saying something a certain way), as well as more specialized concepts like ethics, rhetorical appeals, and data visualization. We will also study special topics in Technical Writing along with relevant current events.

This is an Experiential Learning course, meaning we will engage in activities and assignments that are designed to offer students real world experiences that can translate into lines on their resumes. This will be achieved primarily through the Recommendation Report Project.

Materials Needed:

- Open Source Textbooks (free!): [Howdy or Hello: Technical and Professional Writing](#) and [Technical Writing Spaces](#)
- Tri-fold project poster
- GroupMe app

Assignments and Grading:

Minor:

Is this Tech Writing Activity...3pts
Lego Activity.....3pts
Texas Activity.....3pts
Quant vs. Qual Activity.....3pts

Major:

Instructions Assignment.....10pts
Summarizing for the Public Assignment.....10pts
Texas Brand Analysis Assignment.....8pts
Social Media Analysis Assignment.....8pts
Midterm Project.....15pts
Recommendation Report Project
- Abstract and Research Questions.....5pts
- Annotated Bibliography.....5pts
- Data and Graphics.....5pts
- Presentation.....5pts
- Written Reflection.....10pts
Attendance.....8pts

Learning Objectives:

- Introductory knowledge of the field of Technical Writing
- Understanding of how the field of Technical Writing intersects with one's own field of interest
- Develop decision-making skills linking Technical Writing genres to one's communication needs
- Think critically about the role of Technical Writing in presenting information to the general public
- Utilize Technical Writing concepts to achieve results within and outside of the University
- Acquire skills to implement and manage a project with real world impact from start to finish

First-Year Composition Commitments

This course fulfills a Core Curriculum communication requirement and is part of Texas A&M University-San Antonio's First-Year Composition (FYC) Program. This program supports your ongoing growth as a writer and prepares you to use your writing to contribute in academic, civic, and professional contexts. We will fulfill the FYC program's commitments this semester by working together to:

- bring writing journal and laptop/tablet/word processing device to each class period
- develop and achieve your individual writing goals
- see yourself as an active member of a community of writers both in and outside the university
- articulate your prior knowledge about writing and draw from this knowledge to inform your current writing
- explore language and communication as a function of culture
- identify and understand the expectations of a range of audiences across academic, civic, and professional contexts
- employ rhetorical strategies to communicate in different situations, genres, and media
- analyze and critique a variety of texts for rhetorical effectiveness
- acquire critical reading skills
- develop writing projects through invention, drafting, and revision
- reflect on and revise individual and collaborative writing processes
- engage in primary and secondary research
- adapt your organization, style, grammar and citation conventions as appropriate for different audiences and contexts
- transfer your knowledge about writing to different contexts

Attendance Policy

The best way to pass this course is to be present for the discussions that are meant to bring all the concepts from the readings together, and to participate in group activities and journaling. While

you are allowed to be absent as much as necessary, **please note that half a point will be subtracted from your final grade for each absence after number 3.** This is part of your participation grade. Please communicate with me when you know you will be absent. However, you will not be penalized for missing classes due to following Covid quarantine guidelines, attending to military duties, or taking time for mourning. I do not need to see any doctor's notes or death notes if you are absent. For military members, I probably need to see government orders, as per university policy. Please stay home when you are sick.

Labor-Based Grading Contract

In the FYC program each professor enacts a form of labor-based grading. What this means in this course is that I allow you to turn in assignments "as is" for an appropriate grade. Therefore, if you turn in an assignment that is half done, you will get half credit. If you turn in an assignment that is a quarter done, you will get a quarter of the credit. The catch is that this must be quality work that demonstrates you understand the material the assignment is meant to measure, but perhaps you are having a difficult week and know you will not be able to complete the assignment, nor do you want to keep putting it off.

Late Work, Re-works, and Extra Credit

Yes, yes, and yes. I accept, allow, and assign, respectively, all of these. Please schedule a time to talk with me about any of the above should you want to request any of these.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADAAA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodation of their disability. If you have a diagnosed disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dss@tamusa.edu.

FYC Policy on AI in the Classroom

The FYC program expects you to generate your own content this semester. However, there are situations and contexts within our courses where you may use generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools to support your work as a writer. For example, GAI technologies such as ChatGPT can work well as a starting point for written assignments, assisting you with brainstorming, outlining, generating ideas, and collecting basic information about a topic/idea. Note that the emphasis here is on "support." GAI programs have been shown to provide biased information, to circulate misinformation, and to generate writing that is, at best, mediocre. For these reasons, FYC discourages you from using GAI technology to generate content for you. If you have reason to use GAI to generate content with you, then we ask that you consult with your professor before

doing so. If your professor approves your use, you should acknowledge the GAI program you have used, and you should identify which portions of the text you submit were produced by GAI. Using GAI content without your professor's permission and/or without proper attribution qualifies as plagiarism.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

Counseling Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM. All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (as the law allows), and are not part of a student's academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual, couples, and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

In a crisis situation, please walk-in to the Student Counseling Center (SCC) any time between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM to be seen by a licensed clinician. After hours, please contact UPD at 911 or text "HOME" to 741-741 24/7/365 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The National Suicide Prevention hotline also offers a 24/7/365 hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the

U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center

The WLD Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. The Writing Center is currently holding all appointments digitally. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the student services tab. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an “Online Appointment.” Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an “eTutoring” appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at www.tamusa.edu/Writing-Center. The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots’ Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

Instructor policy regarding students who are parents.

Children are allowed in our classroom. Please do not ever feel as though you need to miss a class due to a lapse child care. They may even enjoy some of our group activities! Also, nursing parents are welcome to breastfeed in our classroom.

Respect for Others

We understand that our students represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. The University is committed to building cultural competencies, or the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate these differences in working with people from diverse cultures. Respecting and accepting people different than you is vital to your success in the class, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature.

Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the A&M-San Antonio community.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and

more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions for the student freedom and responsibility to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System. This includes the [A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct](#).

Students' Rights

- A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
- Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
- A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
- Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

- A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and the administration.
- A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, University Catalog and students must comply with them and the laws of the land.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire university community.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide an environment for learning.
- A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.
- We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation
- **Weekly Schedule**

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- **Week 1 / Aug 25-29 / Welcome Week**
- M: Intro to the Course; student introductions, syllabus overview, and textbook navigation
- W: Read [Chapter 1: Introduction to Technical and Professional Writing](#); **Group Activity**: “Is this Technical Writing?”
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- **Week 2 / Sep 1-5 / What is Technical Writing?**
- M: No class, Labor Day (Monday)
- W: **Group Activity**: Lego Instructions; go over Campus Directions Assignment
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- **Week 3 / Sep 8-12 / Popular Tech Writing Genres**
- M: Read [Chapter 17: Writing Instructions](#); in-class work time for Campus Directions Assignment
- W: **Group Activity**: Campus Directions Assignment swap
- **Due Thursday: Instructions Assignment**
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- **Week 4 / Sep 15-19 / Popular Tech Writing Genres cont’d**
- M: Read [“Science Communication for the General Public”](#) and [“Communicating on Climate Change”](#); discuss importance of Writing for the Public
- W: Presentation from Research Librarian; go over Summarizing for the Public Assignment; in-class work time for Summarizing Assignment
- **Due Sunday: Summarizing for the Public Assignment**
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- **Week 5 / Sep 22-26 / Popular Tech Writing Genres cont’d**
- M: **Group activity**: Texas Branding - HEB, Whataburger, Kendra Scott, Buc-ee’s, Dr. Pepper, and Yeti.
- W: Read [Chapter 16: How to Write for Global Audiences](#); go over Texas Brand Analysis Assignment; in-class work time for Texas Brand Analysis
- **Due Sunday: Texas Brand Analysis**
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- **Week 6 / Sep 29-Oct 3 / Popular Tech Writing Genres cont’d**
- M: Read [Chapter 10: Social Media for Today’s Technical Communication](#); **Group Activity**: TBD
- W: Discuss the Rhetorical Situation Triangle; go over Social Media Analysis Assignment
- **Due Sunday: Social Media Analysis**
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- **Week 7 / Oct 6-10 / Midterm Week**
- M: Read [“Chapter 3.2: Using Visuals in Technical Writing”](#); examples of Visual Rhetoric in Tech Writing; go over Mapping Project
- W: Read [Chapter 7: Constructing Visual Arguments in Technical Communication](#); **Group Activity**: University Icons
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- **Week 8 / Oct 13-17 / Midterm Week cont’d**
- M: Read TBD; discuss Ethics in Visual Communication

- W: In class work time for Mapping Project
- **Due Sunday: Google Mapping Assignment**
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- **Week 9 / Oct 20-24 / Creating a Project with the Public in Mind**
- M: Read [Chapter 3: Applying Ethics in Technical Communication](#); go over Recommendation Report Project; in class: brainstorming for Recommendation Report Project
- W: Read [Chapter 20: Recommendation Reports](#); read excerpts of [“Google Developer Documentation Style Guide”](#); in class: brainstorming for Recommendation Report Abstract
- **Due: Recommendation Report Abstract with Research Questions**
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- **Week 10 / Oct 27-31 / Conducting Secondary Research**
- M: Discuss Tertiary, Secondary, and Primary Research
- W: Visit from Research Librarian; in class work time for Annotated Bibliography
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- **Week 11 / Nov 3-7 / Conducting Secondary Research cont’d**
- M: NO CLASS, Election Day
- W: Read [Chapter 12: Citing Sources Properly](#); Visit from Research Librarian!
- **Due: Annotated Bibliography**
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- **Week 12 / Nov 10-14 / Working with Quantitative and Qualitative Data**
- M: Read [“Quantitative vs. Qualitative Data”](#) and **Group activity** on Quantitative vs Qualitative Data
- W: Read [“Appendix: Qualitative Interview Design”](#) (from textbook) and [“Interviewing with Compassion”](#)
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- **Week 13 / Nov 17-21 / Working with Quantitative and Qualitative Data, cont’d**
- M: Read [Chapter 8: Graphics](#); watch “The Beauty of Data Visualization”; in-class work time for surveying and generating graphics
- W: In-class work time for surveying and generating graphics
- **Due: Data Collection and Graphics**
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- **Week 14 / Nov 24-28 / Thanksgiving Break**
- M: No Class
- W: No Class
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- **Week 15 / Dec 1-5 / Presentations Week!**
- **Due: Finished Recommendation Report Slides**
- M: Read [Chapter 14: Oratory Communication](#); Presentations!
- W: [Read Chapter 5: Writing Skills](#) and [Chapter 6: Writing Organization](#) Presentations!
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- **Week 16 / May 5-9 / Presentations Week cont’d!**
- M: Presentations!

- W: Presentations!
- **Due Friday: Recommendation Report Reflection**