

**Course Title:** LMC 3403 - Technical Communication

**Section:** C30, C38, C8

**Credits:** 3 credits

**Semester and Academic Year:** Fall 2026

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Ben Rutherford

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to workplace document genres to develop visual and verbal skills in critical analysis and document development.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Category	Outcomes
<b>Rhetoric</b> Rhetoric focuses on available means of persuasion, considering the synergy of factors such as context, audience, purpose, role, argument, organization, design, visuals, and conventions of language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fashion artifacts that address the exigencies of diverse contexts, exhibiting effective persuasive strategies, tact, and sensitivity to theoretical, ethical and legal concerns.</li><li>• Collect, craft, and present technical information in ways that convey a clear purpose to a specific audience.</li></ul>
<b>Process</b> Processes for communication—for example, creating, planning, drafting, designing, rehearsing, revising, presenting, publishing—are recursive, not linear. Learning productive processes is as important as creating products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construct, select, craft, revise, and repurpose information to reflect individual, cultural, and/or organizational values.</li><li>• Collaborate on artifacts that meet the needs of the specific audiences.</li></ul>
<b>Modes and Media</b> Activities and assignments should use a variety of modes and media—written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal—singly and in combination. The context and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create WOVEN (Written, Oral, Visual, Electronic, and Nonverbal) artifacts— such as memos, emails, proposals, reports, instructions, manuals, websites, and short and long presentations— that display strategic uses of generic and stylistic conventions.</li></ul>

culture of multimodality and multimedia are critical.	
<b>Design</b> Documents and other artifacts should arrange visual elements according to consistent, efficient, and effective principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use theories and principles of document design to create and present accessible, comprehensible, and usable artifacts.</li> <li>• Integrate graphics to achieve maximum clarity in print documents, presentation slides, websites, and other artifacts.</li> </ul>

## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

While many course materials will be supplied through Canvas, you will need to acquire *Technical Communication: Advice for an Evolving Field, 13<sup>th</sup> Ed.* by Mike Markel and Stuart A. Selber, which will be available at the GA Tech Barnes and Noble.

## GRADING POLICY

While I will closely review the documents you compose in this course, providing thorough feedback along the way, in some cases you will be responsible for grading your own work. What this means is that, for each of the major projects, you will help me formulate a score through reflection and self-assessment. Meanwhile, the smaller assignments, such as journals and process documents, will be graded by me. I will give more detailed instructions for self-assessment, but basically, I want you to build metacognitive skills based not just on your final drafts but on your labor, your process, and your intellectual and creative development. In rare cases, I may have to change your grade, but if you work hard, participate, and hold yourself accountable, this won't happen.

To learn more about ungrading, as it's come to be called, you can check out Jesse Stommel's "[Ungrading: A Bibliography](#)." But, basically, traditional grading methods have been shown to hinder the learning process for some, in part by placing focus on the **product** instead of the **process**.

## DESCRIPTION OF GRADED COMPONENTS

Project 1: Job and portfolio: 20% of overall grade

Project 2: 20% of overall grade

Project 3: 25% of overall grade

Participation: 15% of overall grade

Weekly Journals / other assignments: 20% of overall grade

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Attendance**

Because communication skills develop gradually over time, attendance and participation are essential to success in this course. Therefore, you are expected to attend class in person; failing to do so will result in an absence.

There may be times when you cannot or should not attend class, such as if you are not feeling well. Therefore, this course allows a specified number of absences without penalty, regardless of reason. After that, penalties accrue. Exceptions are allowed for Institute-approved absences (for example, those documented by the Registrar) and situations such as hospitalization or family emergencies (documented by the Office of the Dean of Students). If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to first get in touch with one of your classmates to find out what you missed. If you still have questions, please also get in touch with me. I will communicate with you about how to access materials or make up work you missed during your absence or suggest ways to participate in class remotely and/or asynchronously.

Students may miss **a total of four (4) classes** over the course of the semester without penalty. After that, each additional absence will deduct 2% from a student's final grade (unless excused). Missing 10 classes will result in failure of the class.

### **Participation**

...is essential, and it includes not only speaking during class discussion but being in your seat on time, ready to engage with the material. Simply put, the more present you are and the more you speak in class, the more you will learn. If you come to class regularly, take the learning process seriously, approach collaborative projects with enthusiasm, and contribute to discussions, you will likely do very well in this course.

### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

## **AI Policy**

This course is about cultivating your ability to write, communicate, and think critically in specific, workplace scenarios. Generative AI agents like ChatGPT, DALL-E 2, and others can present opportunities for learning and for communicating, but we need to be very careful about how we define these opportunities. AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so you cannot meet the course requirements simply by using it. Therefore, the utilization of AI in the work of this course (including ungraded work) is allowed **ONLY** in the instances specified by me. Doing so without my consent will result in a failing grade on the assignment and possibly further reprimand.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, in instances when I allow generative AI use, you are expected to adhere to these principles (as outlined on the WCP webpage):

·**Responsibility**: You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, this means that any work you submit should be your own, with any AI assistance appropriately disclosed (see “Transparency” below) and any AI-generated content appropriately cited (see “Documentation” below). This also means you must ensure that any factual statements produced by a generative AI tool are true and that any references or citations produced by the AI tool are correct.

·**Transparency**: Any generative AI tools you use in the work of the course should be clearly acknowledged as indicated by the instructor. This work includes not only when you use content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when you use a generative AI tool in the process of composition (for example, for brainstorming, outlining, or translation purposes).

·**Documentation**: You should cite any content generated by an AI tool as you would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people.

## **Course Completion**

Failure to complete any component of the course, including projects, assignments, and stages of projects or assignments, may result in failure of the course, as determined by the instructor of the course in consultation with the Director of the Writing and Communication Program.

## **Syllabus Modifications**

This syllabus may be modified as the semester progresses to meet course outcomes and address the needs of members of the class.

## **Other Course Specific Policies**

### **Late and Missing Work**

Most assignments will be submitted to Canvas, either 24 hours before the start of class or, in the case of some of the major projects, by 11:59pm on their due date.

Any of the three major projects turned in one day late will be accepted with a 10%-point deduction. If turned in two days late, they will be deducted 20%. After that, they will receive a zero, unless you have asked for an extension **24 hours prior to the due date**. No late journals, peer reviews, or other smaller assignments will be accepted, unless you have spoken with me well before the due date and have a reasonable excuse.

### **Missing Class and Making Up In-class Work**

If you are absent, always check the course schedule on Canvas first, which will have an updated, itemized schedule of what was covered. If you still have questions or need clarity on something found there, please email me.

### **Assignment Revision**

Since I provide feedback to your projects throughout the semester, there will not be opportunities for revising assignments.