

LMC 3403: Technical Communication

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: LMC 3403 - Technical Communication, Theory and Practice

Section: FS1

Credits: 3 credits

Semester and Academic Year: Summer 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Megan Mericle

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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.

COURSE THEME

Our course theme is “**Technical Communication in the Community.**” Throughout the semester, we’ll explore the relationship between technical communication in workplaces, universities, and communities. Across the semester, you’ll practice communicating about technical issues in computer science to professional and public audiences by creating job materials, infographics, reports, data visualizations, and training materials.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Category	Outcomes
Rhetoric 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">• Fashion artifacts that address the exigencies of diverse contexts, exhibiting effective persuasive strategies, tact, and sensitivity to theoretical, ethical and legal concerns.• Collect, craft, and present technical information in ways that convey a clear purpose to a specific audience.

<p>Process 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct, select, craft, revise, and repurpose information to reflect individual, cultural, and/or organizational values. • Collaborate on artifacts that meet the needs of the specific audiences.
<p>Modes and Media Activities and assignments should use a variety of modes and media—written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal—singly and in combination. The context and culture of multimodality and multimedia are critical.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Design Documents and other artifacts should arrange visual elements according to consistent, efficient, and effective principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use theories and principles of document design to create and present accessible, comprehensible, and usable artifacts. • Integrate graphics to achieve maximum clarity in print documents, presentation slides, websites, and other artifacts.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

All readings for this course are either free, open-access, or available through the GT online library. I have assigned readings from the following open-access texts:

- Tijerina, et al. (2016, updated 2020). *Open Technical Communication* (4th edition). Affordable Learning Georgia. <https://alg.manifoldapp.org/projects/open-technical-communication>
- St.Amant, K., & Zemliansky, P. (2024). *Technical Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, Volume 6. WritingSpaces.org; Parlor Press; The WAC Clearinghouse. <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces/writingspaces6/>

All materials will be linked on Canvas and available through Perusall, which we will use to annotate course readings throughout the semester.

GRADING POLICY

This course follows a labor-based grading system. Your grade will be determined by the work you complete rather than my judgment of the quality of your work. Assessment research has found that labor-based grading can increase motivation, make more room for risk taking, and allow you to focus more on your goals for your work rather than instructor expectations ([Kohn, 2011](#); [Niemi & Ryan, 2009](#)).

Although you will not receive a letter (A-F) or percentage (0-100%) grade on each assignment, you will receive detailed feedback from me and your peers. Each assignment will have a set of criteria that you need to meet, such as a number of peer-review sources or formatting requirements, which will be outlined on the assignment rubric in Canvas. Aside from your Perusall responses, which will be marked as complete or incomplete, all your assignments will be marked on a 3-point scale as follows:

3 (Complete)	You've met all the assignment expectations and submitted an effective and complete product.
2 (Needs improvement)	You met almost all the assignment expectations, but there's room for improvement on one or two small areas. For instance, you might be missing required formatting or an additional source.
1 (Revise & resubmit)	The assignment does not meet the minimum requirements listed on the prompt. You'll receive this score if you haven't addressed one of the major expectations such as length, audience, or citation requirements.
0 (Missing)	The assignment has not been submitted or is otherwise not assessable due to academic integrity violations.

While you can still receive an A or B with some assignments marked as 2 (Needs improvement), you will need to revise all 1s (Revise & resubmit) to receive an A or B. Your overall grade will be determined based on the following table:

Grade	Requirements
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn a 3 on all Major Project Finals • Earn a 3 on the Final Portfolio • Earn at least 43 points on Process Documents • Receive a complete grade on at least 10 Perusall assignments • Meet course participation expectations by submitting all assignments on time or within 48-hour grace period/approved extension and completing at least 90% of asynchronous activities

B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn at least one 3 on a Major Project Final, and 2s on the remaining Major Projects • Earn a 2 or above on the Final Portfolio • Earn at least 42 points on Process Documents • Receive a complete grade on at least 9 Perusall assignments • Meet course participation expectations by submitting all but 1-2 assignments on time or within 48-hour grace period/approved extension and completing at least 80% of asynchronous activities
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn at least a 2 on all Major Project Finals • Earn a 2 or above on the Final Portfolio • Earn at least 41 points on Process Documents • Receive a complete grade on at least 8 Perusall assignments • Meet course participation expectations by submitting all but 3-4 assignments on time or within 48-hour grace period/approved extension and completing at least 70% of asynchronous activities
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn at least one 2 on a Major Project Final, and 1s on the remaining Major Projects • Earn a 1 or above on the Final Portfolio • Earn at least 40 points on Process Documents • Receive a complete grade on at least 7 Perusall assignments • Did not fully meet course participation expectations, submitting 5-6 assignments late without communication and only completing 60% of asynchronous activities
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received only 1s or 0s on Major Project Finals • Received 39 points or less on Process Documents • Receive a complete grade on 6 or fewer Perusall assignments • Submitted more than 6 assignments late without communication and completed less than 60% of asynchronous activities

Assignment Revision

If your assignment receives a 2 or 1, you may revise it up to **2 times**. For the first revision, you can resubmit the assignment at any time, no questions asked, up until 2 weeks after you receive feedback.

If, after revision, your revised assignment still receives a 2 or 1 due to missing requirements, you are required to meet with me over Zoom to discuss the missing expectations and negotiate a new revision deadline. Additionally, you must either make an appointment at the [Naugle Writing and Communication Center](#), or submit a 200-

word revision plan to me via email that details the revisions you'll make based on the feedback you received and the resources you'll use to complete that revision. You have a week after receiving the incomplete to reach out and set up this meeting.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED COMPONENTS

Perusall Responses

Throughout the semester, I'll have you annotate course readings collaboratively using Perusall. For each Perusall assignment, you should create at least four annotations: one question or point for further discussion, one favorite quotation with a brief explanation of why it stood out to you, using the hashtag #favquote, and two other annotations of your choice, which can include replies to other students' comments. To receive an A on our grading contract, you should complete at least 10 Perusall responses, and there will be 13 response opportunities.

Video Pitch

In the first part of the semester, I'll ask you to film a short pitch where you discuss your technical communication experiences and propose goals that you want to work on this semester. We'll use this video as a starting point to determine what you want to showcase in your final portfolio.

How (Not) to Write Like AI Assignment

To consider how Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has impacted and will continue to impact technical communication, in our first unit you will write with and against AI. You'll create three versions of a personal bio statement: one that resists the hallmarks of AI writing, another that leans into them, and a final statement created using AI prompts.

Major Project 1: Career Materials

For your first major project, you'll create (or revise) materials that you could use for an internship, job or graduate school application. Those materials should include a résumé or CV, a cover letter or statement of purpose, and a personal portfolio website. The goal of this assignment is to practice framing your skills for a real-world audience.

Process Documents:

- Career materials draft
- Peer review
- Reflection memo

Major Project 2: Technical Crisis Report & Infographic

The second major project will dive into how technical and scientific crises are communicated, both effectively and irresponsibly. You'll choose a specific technical issue and research how different stakeholders communicated about that issue. You'll create a report aimed at specialists in the field focused on what they can learn about communication from this crisis, and then transform your findings into an infographic aimed at the wider public.

Process Documents:

- Proposal
- Primary & secondary source map
- Report draft & infographic mock-up
- Peer review
- Reflection memo

Major Project 3: Community Training Materials

For your final major project, you'll work in teams to create training or onboarding materials. Each team will choose a community organization that you have a connection to (such as a student organization, nonprofit, or research group) and create materials that help onboard new members. Your materials can take the form of a video tutorial, a wiki, a website, an interactive guide, or a combination of multimodal approaches. Along with the training materials, you'll create a recommendation report outlining possible directions for the organization's future technical communications.

Process Documents:

- Proposal slide deck
- Recommendation report draft
- Training materials draft
- Peer review
- Collaboration memo

Final Reflection & Rhetorical Analysis

At the end of the semester, I'll ask you to reflect on the learning outcomes and discuss how you developed your skills in rhetoric, process, modes and media, and design. You'll revisit your video pitch from the beginning of the semester and write a final reflection that argues how you've met the course learning outcomes through a rhetorical analysis of your work across the semester.

Process Documents:

- Analysis draft

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance & Participation

Attendance and participation are essential to success in courses in the Writing and Communication Program. Because of this, you are expected to fully participate in the online course. Since our course is asynchronous, attendance and participation will look different. I've set up the course to operate on a weekly Tuesday/Thursday schedule. On Tuesdays, I'll post a video overview of the course concepts and assignments due for the week. You'll complete a reading, Perusall response, and asynchronous activity that reinforces concepts from the readings, which will be due by the end of the day on Tuesday. Then on Thursdays, process documents that build up to your major projects will be due. To receive an A on our grading contract, I expect you to keep up with the weekly flow, communicate when you run into delays or issues, and participate as a reliable teammate on collaborative work such as peer review and mock interview practice.

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.

In designing this course, I've kept different ways of learning and composing in mind, in the hopes that you can interact with the course in a way that works best for you. Whether or not you decide to seek accommodations through the Office of Disability Services, please do talk to me about your learning style or access needs, so that I can work toward making the classroom space accessible for everyone.

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 growing in your ability to write, communicate, and think critically. As we will discuss throughout the semester, Generative AI agents such as ChatGPT, Microsoft CoPilot, and Claude are shaping technical communication practices in the workplace and beyond. However, AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so cannot meet the learning outcomes for you.

In this course, **you are not allowed to copy-paste AI output into your course work.**

A large part of effective technical communication is language choice and using your voice to connect with your audience. AI text can lack rhetorical context and audience awareness, and uncritical copy-pasting prevents you from practicing making those important language choices that you'll need moving forward. You can copy-paste your own text into AI agents to get feedback, but should not copy-paste revision suggestions and submit them as your own work.

As a way to build accountability for these heuristics, I'll ask you to create a Google Drive folder and share all assignments as Google Doc links. I will use a Revision History tool to better understand your writing process and flag large copy-pastes that may be indicative of AI use. After completing each major assignment, I'll ask you to complete a **AI Reflection Form**, where you outline how and why you used AI for each project. As with any technology, generative AI needs to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for the work you submit. This means that any work you submit should be your own, with any AI assistance appropriately disclosed and any AI-generated content appropriately cited. 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.

Using generative AI tools at times not allowed by the instructor or without adhering to these principles will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity.

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.

Late and Missing Work

Deadlines in this course are considered motivation and accountability tools. I've set deadlines to give you a sense of how long I expect a project to take and to help you pace out your responsibilities. Turning assignments in on time is important for receiving timely feedback from me and your peers.

To account for scheduling conflicts, illness and other things that may arise in your lives, **all assignments have a built-in 48-hour grace period.** If you submit the assignment within 48 hours of the original due date & time (for example, you submit an assignment due Thursday at 11:59pm before Saturday at 11:59pm), there is no late penalty and I will treat the assignment as submitted on time.

If you need an extension beyond the 48-hour grace period, either because of changes in your process or extenuating circumstances, communicate that to me directly in advance of the deadline so that we can talk about the possibility of a new deadline while making sure you can stay on track in the course.