

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title LMC 3403 - Technical Communication, Theory and Practice

Section BA5

Credits 3 credits

Semester and Academic Year Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor Aaron Montalvo

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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 TOPICS

In this business-oriented version of Technical Communication, we will explore several key themes of contemporary communication, including issues of corporate social responsibility, international communication, document usability, and collaborative work. In addition to learning about these issues, students will gain hands-on skills in areas including analyzing and designing workplace documents, delivering presentations, and writing formal reports. Students in this course will thus be equipped with the knowledge to adapt to the evolving expectations of the modern workplace.

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. |

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| <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

[Writing that Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job, 13th edition, by Walter E. Oliu, Charles T. Brusaw, and Gerald J. Alred, published by Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2020.](#)

GRADING POLICY

This course follows a traditional grading policy in which student work is evaluated based on the quality of the final product. Projects will be graded according to a set of evaluation criteria provided with each project assignment sheet. Expectations for effective peer review will be discussed in our course.

As this is an advanced course, the expectations for A-quality work are high. If you are concerned about your grades, I recommend meeting with me to discuss your work before the final draft is due.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED COMPONENTS

Project 1: ESG Report Analysis—15%

Analyze an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) report or similar document, considering the context and purpose of the report and how it is designed to appeal to one or more audiences. (1000-1200 words)

Project 2: Intercultural Communication Presentation—15%

Working in small groups, you will research communication expectations for a country of your choice and review several corporate websites designed for that country. You will deliver a presentation that describes the communication etiquette and analyzes the websites for how their designs appeal to the cultural expectations of their audience. (15–20-minute presentation, plus slide deck.)

Project 3: Instruction Set—15%

Design a set of instructions that uses both verbal and visual components to help users carry out a task of your choice. As part of this work, you will conduct a usability test of your instructions in which you ask a peer to perform the task using your instructions as a guide. (900-1100 words)

Project 4: Proposal—20%

Working in small groups, develop a proposal to improve an aspect of your community. The proposal will be a formal proposal written to the audience best suited to carry out the change. (1500-2000 words)

Peer Review—10%

Throughout the semester, we will have four peer reviews in which you will provide feedback analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of your peer's work. Each review will be worth 2.5 points.

Reading Quizzes—10%

Throughout the semester, we will have 10 short reading quizzes on material from the textbook. These quizzes will be given in class and will be worth 1 point each.

Participation—15%

Participation grades will be determined by a combination of class attendance and active involvement in course discussion and class activities. See “Participation” below for more.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attending lectures and participating in in-class discussions and writings are necessary to avoid falling behind or missing important information and assignments. You are allowed to have four absences. Each additional absence will take 2 points off your final grade. If you have reasons to miss additional classes due to unforeseen circumstances, you can speak to me or contact me to discuss the situation. **That said, you are responsible for the work or in-class writing/activity you may miss on the day of your absence.** Check the syllabus or ask a classmate instead of sending me a “what did I miss in class” email. You may drop by my office hours to go through what you have missed.

Tardiness: Students are expected to be in class on time. However, I understand that the distance to Scheller can make this difficult. Thus, I am allowing a five-minute grace period. Students who are more than five minutes late will be marked late; excessive lateness will result in a penalty to one’s participation grade. Students who are more than fifteen minutes late will be marked absent.

Participation

As part of their participation grade, students are expected to come to class having read the material and to participate in class and group discussions and activities. Aim to volunteer to answer at least one question per class. For each class, please bring a laptop, paper, and a pen.

To remove distractions, cell phones and headphones should be put away during class. Laptops should only be used for learning purposes, such as taking notes or working on group projects. Excessive use of electronics for non-learning purposes will result in a deduction in your participation grade.

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 growing in your ability to write, communicate, and think critically. Generative AI agents such as ChatGPT, DALL-E 2, and others present great opportunities for learning and for communicating. However, AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so cannot meet the course requirements for you.

In this course, using generative AI tools in the work of the course (including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc.) is allowed only in instances specified by your instructor.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, in instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

- **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.

Using generative AI tools at times not allowed by the instructor will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity. Likewise, using generative AI tools in the course 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 and Extensions

Consistent with workplace expectations, coursework is expected to be turned in on time. Final drafts turned in late will be deducted a partial letter grade per day late (A to A-). As peer reviews are time sensitive, they will be deducted a full letter grade per day late.

I understand the complexity of managing a busy schedule. Therefore, I will allow for one extension on the final draft of any project except the presentation. Email me beforehand to explain the reasons you require an extension and the date you will turn in the final draft. For the final, group project, you may only request an extension if the majority of the group has not previously received an extension; I will set the extension deadline in that case.

Missing Class and Making Up In-class Work

If you are absent for class, please contact a classmate to discuss the day's materials and review the relevant PowerPoints and class activities on our Canvas page. Students do not need to make up in-class work except in the case of peer review. I will email students who are absent during peer review with instructions for how to make up the work.

Assignment Revision

I allow assignment revisions for projects that receive a D or an F, as this indicates to me that the student did not understand the fundamental expectations of the assignment. Revising the assignment will require meeting with me to discuss the project and two rounds of revision, one after our meeting and one after an appointment at the Naugle Writing and Communication Center.