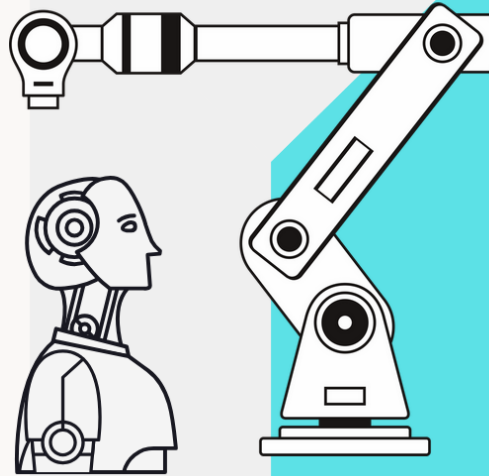


LMC 3403 SYLLABUS

Technical Communication: *The Human Engine, Digital Humans:*

LMC 3403
Dr. Galen Bunting
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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title LMC 3403 - Technical Communication, Theory and Practice

Section C36

Credits 3 credits

Semester and Academic Year Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor Dr. Galen David Bunting

Email gbunting7@gatech.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

COURSE THEME/TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Our assignments will provide you with opportunities to engage in technical communication through a memo which intervenes in a moment of emergency, a rhetorical analysis, a recommendation report, and a multimodal piece of writing.

In our class, we will think about how today's models of computing blur lines between human and digital communication—and how this has changed how we think about ourselves alongside digital technology. What are the borders between us and our machines- or does the border exist at all? By studying computation through language and as a technology of communication, we can all better understand the relationship between machinery and language.

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.	• 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.
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.	• 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.
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.	• 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.
Design Documents and other artifacts should arrange visual elements according to consistent, efficient, and effective principles.	• 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

□ Our reference text: Handbook of Technical Writing by Gerald J. Alred; Walter E. Oliu; Charles T. Brusaw, 12th edition

GRADING POLICY

A: 90-100 Superior performance—rhetorically, aesthetically, and technically—demonstrating advanced understanding and use of the media in particular contexts. An inventive spark and exceptional execution.

B: 80-89 Above-average, high-quality performance—rhetorically, aesthetically, and technically.

C: 70-79 Average (not inferior) performance. Competent and acceptable—rhetorically, aesthetically, and technically.

D: 60-69 Below-average performance. Less than competent — rhetorically, aesthetically, and/or technically.

F: 0-59 Unacceptable performance. Failure to meet even minimum criteria rhetorically, aesthetically, and/or technically.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED COMPONENTS

Assignment and Grading Breakdown:

assignment one: professional memo and reflection (10 points)

draft + reflection due Aug 28 (5/15 points), followed by online peer review (5 points/15 points for peer review), final due Sept 4

Assignment 2: annotation, reflection, and rhetorical analysis paper (20 points)

annotation and reflection due Sept 21 (5/15 points), final 3-4 page analysis paper by Oct 16.

Assignment 3: Team Proposal and Recommendation Report (20 points) due November 23rd

Oct 20: Team (of max 3 members) and proposal with five annotated sources and agreements due, in-class team check-in (5/20 points)

Nov 18: Research draft due for peer review (5 points/15 points for peer review)

Nov 23: Final Literature Review/Research Dossier due (15/20 points)

Assignment 4: Multimodal Project: (20 points) Final due Dec 7

Audience documentation due November 11th (5 points of 20), and multimodal project due to present on Nov 30, Dec 2, Dec 7(15 points of 20)

peer review and drafts (15 points) various due dates

discussion board posts (10 points) various due dates

Final Reflection (5 points) due Dec 7

assignment one: write professional memo and reflection (10 points)

Our first assignment asks you to diagnose a modern problem associated with technology and digital communication - and write a professional memo (1 memo, 1 page) explaining the emergency and a potential solution, for a selected (real) audience. Might we be able to solve communication issues which are exacerbated by distance, immediacy, emergency, through digital means? Accompany your memo with a reflection explaining why you selected this scenario and these audiences, as well as why your communication problem is a relevant one to solve.

What's due: 1 professional memo (1 memo, 1 page), and short reflection of at least 100 words regarding why you were motivated to choose this scenario.

assignment 2: Rhetorical Analysis of a Computer Acting Like a Human

(20 points)

annotation and reflection due Sept 21 (5/15 points), final 3-4 page analysis paper by Oct 16.

Our second assignment (3-4 pages) asks you to conduct a rhetorical analysis of a piece of news coverage, a short story, or a peer-reviewed article about a machine (a robot, computer, large language model, generative AI tool, or some other piece of technology) replacing or otherwise taking on the social role of a human. In this case, you'll be examining how a human author portrays a machine— and if there are excerpts where a machine takes an author's role, you should also pay attention to how it imitates human writing. What rhetoric is employed? What arguments are wielded? What's really going on?

The annotation and reflection are graded on completion (5 points together), while your analysis paper (15 points) will be assessed on your engagement with the original article, meaning your analysis, your references to rhetorical moves, and how the paper itself is conveying its claims. Essentially, you'll be backwards engineering a paper to see how it makes technical claims and defends its arguments.

What's due: You'll turn in your annotation of an article, accompanied by a short reflection (100-200 words) on what you're noticing (5 points), then you'll turn in your analysis paper of 3-4 pages.

assignment 3: collaborative proposal and recommendation report (20 points)

Our third assignment asks you to work with a group (max 3 people) in order to gather, annotate, and place peer-reviewed literature in conversation. These papers should be on a topic of your choice, especially a communication problem which faces your chosen profession.

What's due for part 1: Your team proposal regarding your breakdown of labor (who does what) and why you chose this topic (e.g. its timely relevance and why it interests you). Then you'll turn in at least 5 annotations (150-200 words) of 5 peer-reviewed scholarly papers as a team (5 points) By citing evidence from these papers, your team should demonstrate how these articles develop an ongoing research question in this area, examine trends in the field, or otherwise create a critical intervention.

What's due for part 2: Your report regarding your recommendations (15 points)

assignment 4: audience documentation and multimodal adaption (20 points)

Our fourth assignment asks you to create a multimodal piece of writing building on your recommendation report, translating it for a different modality (Infographic, podcast, or other of your choice). You should choose a selected audience for this assignment, and prepare for the multimodal aspect by creating audience documentation where you list audience expectations, venues to distribute this multimodal project, and potential calls to action. This piece of writing may use visual rhetoric as documentation, as explanation, as exploration.

What's due: your audience documentation (5 points) and your multimodal adaption (presented, 15 points).

Peer review and drafts (15 points)

Final Reflection (5 points)

Unless communicated otherwise, *peer review will generally be in person*, so please make every effort to be present in class for these dates.

Throughout our class, peer review is an important part of providing feedback to one another. Since most forms of writing take place in a community, and most professional forms of writing are intended to address other people, peer review is one way to test out ideas before you finalize them.

While a standard form of peer review includes physically marking drafts, we will also contribute by providing feedback on ideas, weighing in on presentations, and generally treat feedback as an ongoing conversation via discussion boards.

For credit, please prepare to give constructive (building up) feedback, instead of destructive (tearing down or insulting) feedback.

***(if not otherwise specified, assume assignment is due by 11:59pm on Canvas)**

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Please note that this is not an online course, and you should anticipate attending as many classes as possible in person. This class meets on-ground, and students should anticipate attending in person. I do not host class on Zoom. Class participation is essential to success no matter the course format or its delivery; therefore, attendance will be in person. Please note that I do not offer makeup opportunities for material and assignments covered in class. I do not offer makeup opportunities for peer review, field trips, or visitors to our class.

You will be allowed four absences, which you may use as you will. I suggest you conserve these excused absences to use as you need. These absences can be taken without penalty. Any absences beyond these 4 absences need a clear explanation, and without such explanation, will impact your final grade. Each additional absence after the allotted number deducts 2% from a student's final grade.

You have a limited number of excused absences, including absences due to specific university-sponsored activities, religious holidays, military deployment, and jury duty. There may be times when you cannot or should not attend class, such as if you are not feeling well, have an interview, or have family responsibilities. In such situations, please let me know ahead of time, as often as possible.

Other Absences

In the event of unforeseen events or circumstances, including illness, which cause you to miss class, please alert me, so that we can figure out an alternate timetable, make-up work, etc. You will not be penalized for unavoidable events. Just let me know as soon as possible. I cannot provide retroactive assistance for past absences.

Participation

The main way participation will be judged will be through the online discussion groups. Note: it's important to submit your work by the scheduled deadlines so you can benefit from and engage with the conversation of others. Turning in late work affects not only you, but also the others in the community. Without feedback, it's difficult to see where to improve! Please share your insights, ask questions, and assume good faith of your peers. Disagreements are welcome: be open to multiple perspectives, especially regarding writing.

Remember that this is a professional space, and as a professional space, you should expect to contribute to all discussions in a professional manner. For example, when you respond through peer review or on a discussion board, address your peers by name.

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

In this course, using generative AI tools (including visual AI, and chat-based agents which I'll refer to as Large Language Models, or LLMs) in the work of the course (including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc.) is permitted in limited contexts.

Allowed usages:

Collaboration with an LLM tool (e.g. Grammarly) for feedback on a phrase or paragraph, or organization for a paper

Searching with an LLM tool for sources (be careful, they hallucinate)

Asking an LLM to explain an unfamiliar topic for you, which you then write about, using your own words and not the LLM's export

If you use an LLM for any part of your assignments in our class, I expect you to do the following:

Share your prompt in your reflection (each assignment has an opportunity for reflection)

Share your exported link to your chatbot conversation (if one exists)

Explain what you changed, and how you remained in the driver's seat throughout the process

Explain how this constitutes collaboration

IF RELEVANT: Explain how you challenged the LLM's critiques

Disallowed usages:

Asking an LLM to write portions of your assignment and then copying and pasting that export and presenting it as your own work.

Generating images and including them on a multimodal assignment, presenting the images as your own work.

Asking an LLM to create summaries of your sources, then presenting the summaries of your sources as your own writing or your annotations (in part or in whole).

Asking an LLM to find a list of sources, doing no research on the sources, and then presenting the sources as the only sources which exist on a given topic. Keep in mind that LLMs are limited and do not have access to all scholarly sources. They also hallucinate citations. Keep in mind that source fabrication is considered a form of academic dishonesty!

Asking an LLM to write your assignment for you is NOT meaningful collaboration, and will be treated as plagiarism.

If you are not sure, you should ask!

We will work together collaboratively on ethical guidelines for best practices for using AI in this particular class. We will also experiment with some LLMs in our class. Throughout our class, we will engage in critical conversations considering the influence of AI on communication and collaboration as a modern problem.

Please note that structural reliance on AI to compose your work is in conflict with the learning outcomes for our class.

I value your originality of thought, your contributions to our class. Relying on an LLM to write is in direct conflict with the learning outcomes for this class, where you will work on improving your writing, not the writing of an LLM. Your use of an LLM tool cannot substitute for your own brainstorming, which is an important step of composing new writing.

I read your writing with a few assumptions: that you are the one writing, that you are speaking to other people as a writer, and that your writing is the result of your own creative thought process and intellectual rigor. If you rely on LLMs for every part of the writing process, these natural language processing tools cannot substitute for your own research and brainstorming.

For these complex reasons, we collaborate together on ethical guidelines, which consider LLMs as technology which impact writing and communication in our class.

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

If hoping to contact me outside office hours, the fastest way to get a reply is to send me an email, *not* a Canvas message.

Before emailing me, please consider the following:

- Have I already answered the question you have asked on the syllabus?
- Have you included the name of the course and some idea of your question in your subject line? This helps me respond to you in a direct manner!
- Have you properly addressed the email to me? Is your name included in the sign-off? I want to make sure I respond to the right person!
- Is your tone professional and calm?

I try to respond to emails received between 9am-5pm EST on weekdays within twenty-four hours. If you email me outside those hours, you can expect a longer response time. If you email me over the

weekend, you can expect a response by Monday. If I don't respond, please be assured that I am not ignoring you. I may be teaching or grading, may be encountering wifi issues, or Outlook may have decided that your email is spam. If you do not receive a response from me, either in-person or via email, and you still need an answer to your question, it is completely fine to follow up!

Late and Missing Work

Class participation is essential to success no matter the course format or its delivery; therefore, turning in material on time is imperative, not only for your success, but for the success of your peers, as we will conduct peer review in class.

Unless you have an accommodation provided by the Disability Resource Center that allows you extra time to complete an assignment or have discussed an extension with me, you are expected to submit all materials by the assigned due date. It is up to you to make sure to test your files, to make sure you know how to navigate Canvas, and all the other small details of being a student.

In my course, you may take one extension (not one per assignment, just one extension), no questions asked. I realize that life sometimes gets in the way of our best-laid plans. However, I do not offer extensions for peer review, because these activities take place in our classroom, and are intended to help one another improve through careful feedback. Being in class to provide peer review is a positive and professional way to participate in class, and more- it helps your fellow students succeed, while giving you a chance to practice and promote the practice of giving and receiving feedback.

Assignment Revision

Please note that I do not allow students to resubmit work for a new grade unless there are extenuating circumstances.