



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

ENC 4260: Advanced Technical Writing – SEC 001

Course Syllabus

Department and Reference #: ENG 10408
Semester: Spring 2008
Day/Time: Tuesday/Thursday: 12:30pm – 1:45pm
Room: CPR 202

Instructor: Michael L. Shuman, Ph.D.
Office: CPR 358-F (Inside Department of English Main Suite)
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 11:00am – 12:00 Noon
Tuesday & Thursday 10:00am – 11:00am
Virtual Office Online Meeting Available by Request; Other hours by appointment
Email: mshuman@mail.usf.edu
Website: www.mshuman.com

Prerequisite: ENC 2210 Minimum Grade: C-

Required Text:

**Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*. 6th ed.
Boston: Thomson, 2007. ISBN 1-4130-1770-3.**

OASIS Description: Advanced Technical Writing is a course designed to develop writing skills of a high order: technical exposition; technical narration, description, and argumentation; graphics; proposals; progress reports; physical research reports; and feasibility reports.

Course Section Description: This section of ENC 4260 provides technical writing majors with practical experience using the tools of modern technical communications and to reinforce their knowledge of standard document design, usability, and publication. This course also explores the practical and legal aspects of finding a contracting position or full-time employment as a technical communications specialist. We will emphasize development and management of enterprise content as a concentric task involving multiple authors and a variety of media and modes, including primary content, documentation, and promotional campaigns distributed through print media as well as the web. This course satisfies 3 credit hours of academic work.

About the Text: Anderson's book will be our primary text for the course. This book provides useful guidelines for creating documents appropriate to the intended audience, as well as advice on usability, design, and revision in a variety of media. We will use this book as both text and as a reference throughout the class.

Student Learning Outcomes and Methodology: The specific objectives of this course reflect the USF Department of English Professional/Technical Academic Learning Compact at <http://www.acad.usf.edu/ALC/alc.asp?id=110>, and emphasize three significant areas of personal and professional development. When you complete this class, you will have developed or extended your ability to perform the following tasks relative to each skill area:

Content/Discipline Skills

- Produce competent and stylistically correct technical and professional documents related to the technical communications profession
- Develop and demonstrate proficiency in sophisticated use of the computer and the tools and technologies of contemporary technical communication
- Acquire or refine professional/technical writing skills of a level of competency to attain gainful employment as a technical communications professional, and learn to represent those skills in an effective résumé and portfolio
- Demonstrate familiarity with a wide range of technical communication tools and media, and with a concentric approach of developing and maintaining diverse enterprise content across a variety of delivery platforms

Critical Thinking Skills

- Revise and edit both your own technical and professional writing and the collaborative efforts of your colleagues
- Perform thorough, critical, and efficient research in preparing written projects
- Develop technical content with an appreciation for the diversity of a technical global audience

Communication Skills

- Demonstrate ability to offer and to accept constructive feedback on technical documents and other professional writing
- Deliver technical communication project overviews and progress reports to a diverse audience using both oral and computer presentation skills
- Work in collaboration with other technical writers in production of team documents in a variety of media

Assessment: Strategies to measure student learning outcomes will include the instructor's evaluation of:

- Individual and team writing projects and oral presentations, including electronic delivery of projects and the use of presentation software
- Collaboration, document revision, and class discussion using content management software such as Blackboard or Sharepoint
- Peer evaluations of project team members
- Quizzes and/or other assessments related to technical communication document formats, tools, and procedures

A letter grade will be assigned using the plus/minus grading system for each individual or team writing project and for the student’s overall final class grade. Blackboard class discussions and quizzes are assigned a numeric score based upon a total possible value of 100 points.

The Blackboard Grading Rubric will be used for the mathematical breakdown on a 100 point scale to a letter grade scale. To determine final grades, the individual grades will be converted to points according to the Grade Point Average grading system as follows:

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| A+ (96-100) 4.00 | B+ (86-89) 3.33 | C+ (76-79) 2.33 | D+ (66-69) 1.33 |
| A (93-95) 4.00 | B (83-85) 3.00 | C (73-75) 2.00 | D (63-65) 1.00 |
| A- (90-92) 3.67 | B- (80-82) 2.67 | C- (70-72) 1.67 | D- (60-62) 0.67 |

For final grades, averages within the range between these points will go to the higher grade (e.g., 3.68-4.0 = “A”; 3.01-3.33 = “B+”; etc.).

Students will have the opportunity to submit work both individually and in collaboration with fellow classmates. Your grade for each team project will be based upon the overall project grade, with adjustment made relative to feedback from you team peers. You will also receive a grade for your own peer reviews, so be candid and forthcoming in your assessment of your team members. The following percentages will be used to determine your final grade:

Team Assignments

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Software/Tools Team Presentation | 5% |
| Software/Tools Team Project | 15% |
| Core Project Team Presentation | 5% |
| Core Project | 15% |

Individual Assignments

| | |
|---|-----|
| Résumé and Cover Letter | 4% |
| Software/Tools Team Peer Evaluation | 3% |
| Core Project Team Peer Evaluation | 3% |
| Final Individual Project Discussion Forum Post | 5% |
| Final Individual Project Presentation | 5% |
| Final Individual Project | 20% |
| Class Discussion – In Class & Blackboard Forums | 10% |
| Quizzes/Other Assessments | 10% |

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Total | 100% |
|--------------|-------------|

The Attendance section of this syllabus outlines how attendance is audited and how attendance scores may influence your final course grade.

Late Assignments: Assignments are due on the dates indicated on this syllabus or by the alternate date announced in class. No late assignments will be accepted without a compelling reason for an individual extension. Students who cannot attend class on an assignment due date should arrange to deliver the assignment via email or another alternative method.

Quizzes and Exams: We will have quizzes and/or other regular assessments concerning our readings in *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach* and other assigned resources. There will be no exams for this class.

Reading Assignments: All reading assignments must be completed **before** our first class meeting for the assignment week. For example, the readings listed under the Week Four heading “Reading Assignments for *This Week*” must be completed **prior to our first class meeting** scheduled for the 4th week of classes. You should always look at the upcoming week’s assignments on our syllabus and stay current with your class readings.

Supplementary Material: Additional reading and research material will be provided as appropriate.

Attendance: Students in this class are expected to be fully involved in assigned readings, class discussions, and team development sessions throughout the semester. Regular attendance therefore is a requirement for successfully completing this class.

You should let me know in advance by email if you expect to be absent for any class, and you should have a compelling reason for that absence. Excused absences typically are granted for personal medical issues, military or jury duty or the death of an immediate family member. Students anticipating an absence from class due to a major religious observance must provide advance written notice of that absence. Please be prepared to consult a classmate for information about the content of any class you miss.

Tardy students cause a distraction in class, and persistent unexcused tardiness, especially arrival 10 minutes or later than the established class starting time, may be considered a disruption of the academic process and penalties will be assessed according to the terms of USF’s policy for academic disruption. Once you have entered the classroom, you should not leave until class has been dismissed, unless you have made arrangements with the instructor in advance. Leaving the classroom early is equally as distracting as tardiness, and persistent early departure similarly may be considered a disruption of the academic process.

You will be required to sign an attendance register each class meeting. A numerical attendance score will be part of your Blackboard grade book, and is calculated using the following scale:

Present for Class = 2 points
Tardy = 1 point
Absent = 0 points

Total point value for attendance is determined by doubling the actual number of class meetings for the semester, consistent with assigning 2 points for each class meeting. Attendance scores will reflect the absolute value of your calculated number of days present, regardless of any excused

absences or special circumstances. Students with excused absences who wish to receive a numerical score for that day's attendance may be required to complete additional work relative to that day's class assignments. You must notify me no later than our next scheduled class meeting if you want to take advantage of this excused-absence score policy. *Remember, it is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance register each class meeting. You will not be permitted to sign the register for any specific class meeting at a later date, so please do not ask.*

Your attendance score *normally* will not be included in your final grade calculation.

However, your course grade may be lowered if you have more than 6 unexcused absences (approximately 20% of our regularly-scheduled class meetings) during the semester or if, in the evaluation of your instructor, excessive absences, tardiness, or early departures have marginalized your learning experience or impeded the attainment of team project goals in this class.

Additionally, students with exceptional class attendance (fewer than 2 absences) will receive extra consideration in any borderline grading situations.

Disruption of Academic Process: Disruption of academic process is defined as the act or words of a student in a classroom or teaching environment which in the reasonable estimation of a faculty member: (a) directs attention from the academic matters at hand, such as noisy distractions; persistent, disrespectful or abusive interruptions of lecture, exam or academic discussions, or (b) presents a danger to the health, safety or well being of the faculty member or students.

Penalties for disruption of academic process will depend on the seriousness of the disruption and will range from a private verbal reprimand to dismissal from class. In the case of student dismissal, a final grade of "W" will be assigned if the student is passing the course as of the date of dismissal, and a grade of "F" will be assigned if the student is not passing at the time of expulsion from the class.

Computer Skills and Access: Students enrolled in a class related to technical communications at University of South Florida should already have basic computer skills and access to a computer for class assignments. You should be familiar with Blackboard or agree to become familiar with Blackboard during the first few weeks of class, and you must be prepared to collaborate with classmates and with the instructor using the designated Blackboard or SharePoint site. You must also be willing to communicate with the instructor using your USF email account, and you must regularly check your USF email throughout the semester for important notices related to the class. *Your emails must clearly include your full name, along with the course number and section.*

Access to USF email and to Blackboard is managed through your USF NetID. Students who do not already have a USF NetID may obtain one by visiting the [Academic Computing Net ID Sign Up Page](https://una.acomp.usf.edu/) at <https://una.acomp.usf.edu/>. Please see me if you are unable to obtain a USF NetID or are unsure about meeting this computer skills and access requirement.

Use of classroom PCs and notebook/laptop computers during class meetings is encouraged but restricted to researching topics directly related to our course material. Casual web browsing or work on assignments for other classes is prohibited. Again, you are expected to be fully engaged in the day's assignments during our class time together.

Plagiarism/Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is the intentional appropriation of another person's work without proper reference to the source material. Plagiarists commit the highest form of academic dishonesty by representing the research or thoughts of another scholar or researcher as their own work. Plagiarism may consist of appropriating information from the web, copying information from published books or articles or representing another student's work as your own. Be sure you understand and employ the methods of proper attribution and documentation in all your references to other source material; we will discuss these methods in some detail during the course. Please consult with me if you are unsure of proper documentation format for any given reference.

The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service allowing instructors and students to submit written assignments for analysis. Assignments are compared automatically with a database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers, and the instructor receives a report analyzing appropriated material for proper attribution and citation acknowledgment. Your enrollment in this class is an implicit agreement to submit assignments as electronic files as requested by the instructor. You also agree to allow me, the instructor, to submit your work to SafeAssignment for evaluation or to request that you, the student, submit drafts to SafeAssignment for relevant feedback as you compose an essay.

Confirmed instances of plagiarism committed by students in this class for any assignment will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course. Subsequent instances of plagiarism will result in a grade of "FF" for the course, an indication of academic dishonesty.

Please consult the USF catalog for further information concerning academic dishonesty and the penalties for intentional appropriation of another person's work:

<http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0607/adadap.htm>

For more information about SafeAssignment and plagiarism, click on Plagiarism Resources at <http://www.c21te.usf.edu>.

Public Writing: As a student enrolled in ENC 4260, you will be asked to engage in public writing, including online class discussions using Blackboard or the designated discussion lists on the SharePoint site for this class. The goal of public writing, in part, is to prepare you for contemporary literacies, including electronic collaboration, publishing, editing, and online archiving. As a citizen of our digital world and as a professional technical writer, you need to be able to locate, critique, and author content online.

Before committing any writing to a public forum, think before you write. Do not publish anything that might embarrass you tomorrow or at some point later in your career. Imagine how your online

texts might be interpreted by other students in this class, your professor, and even readers browsing the web who might discover your contributions in some open forum. Never publish anything on Blackboard, SharePoint, or any other website that you are uncomfortable sharing with strangers, and generally avoid disclosing personal information that could compromise your safety or identity.

Archiving: You will be required to submit electronic copies of your work to the Digital Dropbox area of Blackboard or to a designated area of the SharePoint site maintained for this class. In this manner your work will be archived automatically by the very nature of the submission process. However, each student is responsible for ensuring access to all assignments completed for the course, and consequently you should maintain a separate archive of your work on a diskette, CD, flash drive, website, or in printed format.

Academic Assistance: Students who require additional assistance throughout the term should take advantage of my office hours or arrange to see me at an alternate time. Additional assistance is also available from The Writing Center, located in CPR 257. Contact the Center at 974-9572 for appointments and additional information.

Special Accommodations: Students who require special accommodations for this course as the result of a disability must submit a letter from the Office of Academic Support and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, located in SVC 1133.

Audio Taping: Taping of lectures is not permitted without prior approval from the instructor.

Cell Phones: You are required to turn off your cell phone before the start of each class meeting.

Course Structure: Our work in this class will emphasize experience with a wide range of technical communication tools, including software facilitating the development of printed documents and web sites, the creation of graphics and multimedia resources, and the assessment of document effectiveness and usability. Early in the class we will devote a substantial amount of time, in both individual and team settings, to learning software packages available to technical communicators, and you later will use this background to assist in the design and development of a core team project as well as a final individual project relevant to your particular professional interest. You will also have a significant number of reading assignments throughout the semester, particularly during the early weeks of the class, as we prepare to begin the core project and identify appropriate topics for final individual projects.

Core Project – The Bullitzer Prize Publication:

The core project this semester will be the design and layout of **The Bullitzer Prize** essay publication for 2008. The Bullitzer Prize for Outstanding Student Writing is sponsored by the USF Department of English First Year Composition Program, and acknowledges noteworthy essays written by composition students in ENC 1101 and 1102. In addition to the print publication and promotional material, we will design a website to promote the prize and to provide the winning essays with a web presence.

Syllabus Agreement: You will be asked to post a formal statement of agreement to the terms and conditions of this syllabus in a designated Blackboard discussion forum during the first week of class. This discussion post is mandatory if you wish to remain enrolled in the course. Students who do not post a formal agreement by the date specified will be dropped from the class.

Proprietary Rights: Software products researched by this class and mentioned in the course schedule below generally are trademarks of their respective development companies or owners. This class endeavors to respect those trademarks and to honor all licensing requirements.

Course Schedule

This agenda is subject to change with appropriate notice. Supplementary reference material and reading assignments will be added as required.

Week One

01/08/08: Introduction to Course

Reading Assignment for Next Class:

- Anderson Chapter 1: Communication, Your Career, and This Book (3-24)

01/10/08: Introduction to Advanced Technical Communication & Enterprise Content Management

Milestone: Spring Drop/Add Ends & Last day to drop for a full refund: 01/11/08

Week Two

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 2: Overview of the Reader-Centered Communication Process: Obtaining a Job (25-62)
 - Chapter 20: Writing Reader-Centered Correspondence: Letters, Memos, and E-mail (525-556)
- “Resume 101” at <http://www.usatoday.com/img/content/flash/resume/frame.htm>

01/15/08: Technical Communication and the Reader-Centered Approach / Survey of Interests

01/17/08: Résumés and CVs

Week Three

Week of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 16: Creating Communications with a Team (439-458)
 - Chapter 13: Designing Reader-Centered Pages and Documents (372-398)
 - Chapter 21: Writing Reader-Centered Reports (539-556)

01/22/08: Project Collaboration Software

- *Collaboration applications include Microsoft Sharepoint and Grove; Elluminate Live!; Cisco WebEx; Oracle Fusion; Vignette*

01/24/08: Document Design / Word Processing and Electronic Publishing Software

- *Word processing applications include Microsoft Word and Works; Corel WordPerfect Office; OpenOffice*
- *Electronic publishing applications include Adobe PageMaker, FrameMaker, InDesign, PDF Writer, Acrobat Distiller; QuarkXPress; Corel VENTURA*

Assignment Due: Résumé and Letter of Application

Week Four

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 18: Creating Reader-Centered Web Pages and Websites (484-506)
 - Chapter 3: Defining Your Communication's Objectives (65-95)
 - Chapter 4: Planning for Usability (99-117)

01/29/08: Web Development Software

- *Web development applications include Adobe Dreamweaver; Microsoft Visual Web Developer, Expression Web, and Office FrontPage 2003; CoffeeCup*
- *Usability applications include Adobe RoboHelp; Divcom Help Development Studio; ComponentOne DocToHelp; Olson HyperText Studio; EC Help & Manual*

01/31/08: Preliminary Core Project Requirements

Event: Career Networking Fair – 01/31/08 (Thursday) 10:00am – 3:00pm – Sun Dome
Network for internships, co-op positions, and fulltime jobs; bring résumé & USF ID.
This is NOT a class meeting, and you are not required to attend. However, you may find this experience rewarding, and your attendance is encouraged. For more information, see <http://www.career.usf.edu/students/index.htm>

Week Five

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 12: Creating Reader-Centered Graphics (325-350) **and** Writer's Reference Guide to Creating Eleven Types of Reader-Centered Graphics (351-371)
 - Chapter 6: Conducting Reader-Centered Research (151-163) **and** Writer's Reference Guide to Using Five Reader-Centered Research Methods (165-196)
 - Writer's Reference Guide to Creating Three Types of Special Reports [*Progress Reports Only*] (607-617)
- John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen, "Concise, Scannable, and Objective: How to Write for the Web" at <http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html>

02/05/08: Graphics Software / In-Class Work on Core Project

- *Graphics applications include Microsoft Expression Design; CorelDraw!; Adobe Photoshop, PaintShop Pro, and Illustrator*

02/07/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Six

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 17: Creating and Delivering Listener-Centered Oral Presentations (459-483)
 - Chapter 5: Planning Your Persuasive Strategies (118-150)

02/12/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

- *Presentation applications include Microsoft Office PowerPoint; OpenOffice Impress; Corel Presentations; Astound Presentation; MagicPoint*

02/14/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Seven

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson Chapter 11: Writing Reader-Centered Front and Back Matter (305-322)

02/19/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

02/21/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Eight

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 14: Revising Your Drafts (401-420)
 - Chapter 15: Testing Drafts for Usability and Persuasiveness (421-436)

02/26/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

02/28/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

Week Nine

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 9: Beginning a Communication (280-296)
 - Chapter 10: Ending a Communication (297-304)

03/04/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

03/06/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Core Project

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| <i>Assignment Due: Team Core Project – Electronic & Hard Copy</i> |
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| <i>Assignment Due: Core Project Peer Evaluation (one from each team member)</i> |
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Milestone: Spring Break March 10th – 15th

Week Ten

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson
 - Chapter 19: Managing Client and Service-Learning Projects (507-522)

03/18/08: Technology Presentations / Preparation for Individual Project

03/20/08: Technology Presentations / In-Class Work on Individual Project

- *Learning applications include Articulate Studio; Adobe Captivate; FlexTraining*

Milestone: Last Day to drop with “W”; no refund and no academic penalty: Saturday, 03/22/08

Week Eleven

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson Chapter 7: Drafting Paragraphs, Sections, and Chapters (199-228)

Continue Work on Final Individual Project

03/25/08: Core Project Team Presentations – Day 1

03/27/08: Core Project Team Presentations – Day 2

Week Twelve

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson Chapter 8: Developing an Effective Style (257-279)

Continue Work on Final Individual Project

04/01/08: In-Class Work on Individual Projects

Assignment Due: Individual Project Discussion Forum Post

04/03/08: In-Class Work on Individual Projects

Week Thirteen

Reading Assignment for This Week:

- Anderson Chapter 22: Writing Reader-Centered Proposals (618-641)
- Anderson Chapter 23: Writing Reader-Centered Instructions (642-669)

Continue Work on Final Individual Project

04/08/08: Misc. Report Formats – Proposals / In-Class Work on Individual Projects

04/10/08: Misc. Report Formats – Instructions / Team Work on Process Documentation Project

Week Fourteen

Reading Assignment for This Week:

Supplementary Material and Class Discussion – See Assignment Announcement

04/15/08: Individual Project Presentations – Day 1

04/17/08: Individual Project Presentations – Day 2

Week Fifteen

Reading Assignment for This Week:

Supplementary Material and Class Discussion – See Assignment Announcement

04/22/08: Individual Project Presentations – Day 3

Assignment Due: Individual Final Project – Electronic & Hard Copy

04/24/08: Summary and Wrap-up / Course Assessment

Milestone: Last day of classes: 04/25/08