University of Waterloo
Department of English

English 210 E
Technical Writing

Course Instructor: Professor C. Schryer
Office: HH 222
Phone: 3318
Email: cschryer@watarts
Office Hrs: Tuesday 10-11:30 a.m.; Tuesday 1-2:30 p.m.

Section Leader:
Office:
Phone:
Email:
Office Hrs:

Course Description: This course provides an overview of many of the processes and strategies which constitute the writing and reading of technical communication in organizations.

Goals:
1. to provide students with experience in the process of writing and reading technical communication (from research to editing)
2. to provide students with strategic approaches to several forms of technical writing
3. to provide students with opportunities to work in groups and as individuals.

Required Texts:
Rew, Lois Johnson. Introduction to Technical Writing.
Kinko's reader.

Course Assignments

Purpose: The purpose of these interrelated assignments is to provide students with the experience of developing a series of related documents in a particular social context. Due dates of drafts and final versions are indicated on course schedule.

Background: An innovative company is hiring individuals capable of developing and marketing products or services of interest to students and/or faculty at the University of Waterloo. As a member of a research team, you will be responsible for working with your team to do the initial planning for a product or service and for some of the initial documentation. Your team can propose developing
either a new product or service or extending the services or products of an existing organization.

1. Letter of Application 5%
   Write a letter of application for the following position.

   The Innovative Development Group (IDG) at the University of Waterloo is an organization devoted to the development of products or services of value to faculty and/or students at the University of Waterloo. The IDG is looking for individuals with the following:
   - Strong communication skills
   - Effective Interpersonal skills
   - Excellent Analytical skills
   - Strong sense of curiosity
   - Good research abilities
   - Background in a discipline or organization related to the University of Waterloo

   Send application to Christa Ptatschek, Patricia Hardy or Bruce Dadie c/o English Department, University of Waterloo.

2. Memo - Initial Proposal 10%
   This memo should outline your initial planning for your product or service. It should contain the following elements:
   * A general description of your product or service
   * An analysis of your group's abilities with relation to your product or service
   * An explanation as to why this product or service is worth exploring
   * A projected audience for your product or service
   * A plan for organizing your group's endeavour

Reader: Section and course leader

3. Interim Research Report - 10%
   This short group report (3-5 pages) should provide the information that you have gathered on your product or service. It should contain the following elements:
   * Summaries of the information that you have gathered from interviews, library research or other types of data gathering
   * Plans for future data gathering

A covering memo should be attached which explains the roles and responsibilities of each group member in researching and constructing the report.

Readers: Section and course leader
4. Customer Material with Analytical Memo or Report - 15%
   A. Write a prototype letter or brochure explaining your new product or service to your proposed audience. Be sure to incorporate elements of definition and process description as well as good document design. (Group project)

   Reader: Create a customer or user.

   B. Attach a memo or short report (2-3 pages) analyzing your audience and the rhetorical, stylistic choices that your group made to address this audience. (Individual reports)

   Readers: Section and course leader

5. Prototype Document - 15%
   A. Write a set of technical instructions (4-6 pages) explaining how to do some aspect of your product or service. Be sure to include graphic and visual elements.

   Reader: Create a reader for this document.

   B. Write a short report (2-3 pages) identifying your audience and the strategies you used to address this audience. (Individual reports)

   Reader: Section and course leader

6. Formal Feasibility Report - 20%
   This report (1,200-1,500 words) should evaluate the status of your project, and your group's progress towards its completion. Essentially, your readers want to know whether your group recommends that the IDG continue your group's special project.

   This final report can be written as a group report or as a series of individual reports. If the report is written by the group, a covering letter must explain the roles and responsibilities of each member. Also the report must adhere to a consistent format.

   Readers: Section Leader, Group members.
   Date for feasibility report: Dec. 8

7. Oral Report - 10%

   Each group will explain their service or product to other members of the class and recommend that the project be continued or discontinued.

8. Journal - 10%

   The journal records students' reactions to the course and their interactions with the ideas and content of the course (3
pages per week minimum). These journals will be graded for completion and will be collected at least twice during the semester.

9. Editing - 5%

During the course, students will be asked to edit each other's work frequently. Editing is an important skill in technical communication. This grade will be awarded in total to those students who make a consistent effort to edit other students' work thoroughly and tactfully.

Course Policies

1. To do well in this course students must participate in the writing process. Accordingly, any student who does not hand in a required DRAFT version of any assignment to their group and/or section instructor will automatically lose 20% of the grade of that assignment. LATE final drafts will lose 10% per day unless extraordinary extenuating circumstances exist.

2. All final drafts must be typed. Every effort should be made to wordprocess both drafts and final versions.

3. The working groups are central to this course. These groups are responsible for assisting their members in developing better research and writing abilities. Groups will convene during every workshop period.

Course Schedule

Week 1
Sept. 13 Introduction

Sept. 15 Workshop
Group work and invention. Discussion of assignments.
Reading: Rew "Introduction"

Week 2
Sept. 20 Technical writing process, rhetorical constraints, letter of application

Sept. 22 Workshop
Group planning
Due: Draft of Letter of Application
Reading: Rew, Chapts 1, 2, 16 and 17
Week 3
Sept. 27 Gathering information, memos and informal reports

Sept. 29 Workshop
Due: Final version of Letter of Application
Reading: Rew, Chaps 3 and 15

Week 4
Oct. 4 Organizing Information

Oct. 6 Workshop
Group planning of research report

Due: Draft of memo proposal
Reading: Rew, Chapt 4 and 6

Week 5
Oct. 11 Thanksgiving

Oct. 13 Workshop
Drafting techniques

Due: Draft of research report
Reading: Rew, Chapt 5.

Week 6
Oct. 18 Revising, editing and style

Oct. 20 Workshop
Style techniques

Due: Final memo proposal
Reading: Rew, Chaps 7 and 8

Week 7
Oct. 25 Specific techniques--Defining, Comparing and Describing

Oct. 27 Workshop
Group planning - brochure or letter

Due: Final research report
Reading: Rew, Chaps 9 and 10
Marketing samples in Kinko's reader

Week 8
Nov. 1 Document Design

Nov. 3 Workshop
Design techniques
Planning for technical instructions

Due: Draft of marketing material and report
Reading: Rew, Chapt 11 and 12

Week 9
Nov. 8 Specific techniques - instructions

Nov. 10 Workshop
Planning for report

Due: Draft of instructions and report
Reading: Rew, Chapt 18 and 19
Relevant Kinko's material

Week 10
Nov. 15 Reports

Nov. 17 Workshop
Planning for report

Due: Final marketing material
Reading: Rew, Chapt 22

Week 11
Nov. 22 Technical Speaking Techniques

Due: Final instructions material

Nov. 24 Workshop
Editing
Oral reports begin

Due: Draft of final report
Reading: Rew, Chapt 24

Week 12
Nov. 29 Conclusions and Recommendations

Dec. 1 Oral presentations

Week 13
Dec. 6 Oral presentations (if necessary)