English 210E Technical Communication
Winter 2002

Instructor: Deb Maskens

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             HH267, ext 3965

Office hours: Thursdays 11:30-1:00 p.m, HH 267

Class times: Lecture: Tues (DWE 1515): 10:00 -11:20
             Tutorial: Thurs MC(4040): 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Required Text:

Assignments:

1. Individual Critique of Document Design (25%)
   
   This assignment asks you to provide an informed critique of an existing
   instruction manual for a non-computer product. Your critique (of 3-5
   pages) should be presented in the form of a business report that includes
   your recommendations for improvements.

2. In-class Shriver Mid-Term test (25%).
   
   Karen Shriver's test is your resource for the entire term, offering you
   details, suggestions, and guidelines on a wide range of considerations in
   document design. This one-hour in-class test will ensure that you know
   how to use Shriver to critique existing technical documents. (Open-book
   format.)

3. Major Assignment: Group Progress Report, Presentation, and Final
   Document Design (50%)
   
   This multi-part group assignment consists of a progress report (10%), team
   presentation (10%), and final delivery of your group's proposed document
   design (30%). Your final document may be a hardcopy booklet, manual,
   poster, online help volume, web page, PDF document, or any document
   format that meets your audience and usability objectives.
## Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class dates</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 3 (1 class)</td>
<td>Introduction. Course Admin, Objectives and Expectations. What's wrong with Technical Communication? &lt;br&gt;Reading: Shriver, Chapters 1, 3 &lt;br&gt;Assignment 0: Bring in best/worst cases of document design.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 8,10</td>
<td>Lecture: Documents and Readers. &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Discuss student examples of doc design best/worse cases &lt;br&gt;Reading: Shriver, Chapters 3, 4</td>
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<td>Jan 17,17</td>
<td>Lecture: Documents in Distress. The Dancing Bear. &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Class critique of document and product designs &lt;br&gt;Reading: Shriver, Chapter 4 &lt;br&gt;Assignment 1: intro to assignment 1 (individual critique) - 2 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 22,24</td>
<td>Lecture: Designing better documents: Insight techniques &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Insight workshop &lt;br&gt;Reading: Shriver, Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Jan 29, 31</td>
<td>Lecture: Usability methods &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Case studies in usability (Video samples) &lt;br&gt;Reading: Shriver, Chapter 7 (cont'd) &lt;br&gt;Assignment 1 due: Individual critique of document design (25%)</td>
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<td>Feb 5,7</td>
<td>Lecture: Designing from Insight out &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Prototyping &lt;br&gt;Reading: (Chapter 5 for project use) &lt;br&gt;Assignment 2 (Major Project) introduced. Teams Assigned.</td>
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<td>Feb 12,14</td>
<td>Lecture: Words and Pictures &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Teams Meet: Planning the process &lt;br&gt;Reading: Shriver, Chapter 6 (Interplay of Words and Pictures)</td>
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<td>Feb 19,21</td>
<td>&lt;&lt; Winter Study Period. No classes. &gt;&gt; &lt;br&gt;Reading: (review Schriver 1,3, 4, 6,7)</td>
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<td>Feb 26,28</td>
<td>Lecture: In-class Shriver test: (25%) &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Teams Meet. Progress Reports Due (10%) &lt;br&gt;Reading:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 5,7</td>
<td>Lecture: Designing online documents &lt;br&gt;Tutorial: Online Help workshop &lt;br&gt;Reading: Articles as assigned</td>
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<td>Mar 12,14</td>
<td>Lecture: Writing for the Web</td>
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| Mar 19, 21 | Lecture: Professional context for technical communicators  
Tutorial: Teams meet  
Reading: Articles as assigned |
| Mar 26, 28 | Team Presentations of Major Project.                                 |
| Apr 2, 4?  | Assignment 2 (Major Project) due April 4th.  
Wrap up & Consultation: Future of Technical Communication.  
Lectures end April 4th |
English 210E Assignment 1: Critique

Instructor: Deb Maskens

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HH267, ext 3965

Assignment Details:

Individual Critique of Document Design (25%)

Purpose:

This assignment provides you with an opportunity to practice your critical evaluation skills and apply the guidelines in the Shriver text to an existing document design.

Details:

This assignment asks you to provide an informed critique of an existing instruction manual for a non-computer product. The product you choose must be sufficiently complicated to require an instruction manual of the required length. Please check with your instructor if you're not sure that your product is acceptable. Your critique (of 3-5 pages) should be presented in the form of a business report that includes your recommendations for improvements. Note: you must include the original instruction manual (or photocopy) with your critique.

Delivery:

Hand in your assignment in hardcopy by the deadline. Late assignments will be graded at -10% per day unless circumstances are exceptional.

Deadline:

English 210E Assignment 2: Major Project

Instructor: Deb Maskens

Contact info: english210e@hotmail.com
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             HH267, ext 3965

Assignment Details:

Document Design (50% in total)

Purpose:

This assignment provides you with an opportunity to work with others to plan and produce a document that demonstrates your applied understanding of good document design. Your finished piece will be suitable as a portfolio discussion piece that showcases your skills as a technical communicator.

Details:

Choose a topic that interests you and demonstrates sufficient complexity to warrant your efforts to produce a more usable document design. You may choose a software product that you need to learn more about (e.g., PowerPoint), a hardware device, a home appliance or electronic device, a "do it yourself" kit of any sort, or something that strikes you as having great room for improvement.

Your "document" need not be hardcopy. You can produce a hardcopy booklet, a manual, a poster, a fold-out sheet, an online help topic, a web page, PDF, CD-ROM,... whatever your research indicates would be most appropriate for the target audience in the context setting.

10% Progress Report (Email note to Instructor listing team members, roles on the team, your subject matter, proposed strategy and expected document format.)

10% Team Presentation. A presentation to class (Powerpoint or other presentation) detailing your team's approach to the document design challenge, your research methods, decisions, and presenting the final document design). Plan for your presentation to be 10-15 minutes plus questions.
30% Document Design and Contextual Overview. Submit your team's final document in its final form, along with a brief (2-3 page) description of your audience, your research methods, and your rationale for your document design decisions. Note: if you have reworked current instructions for a product, you must also provide a photocopy of existing instructions for comparison. Thank you.

Delivery:

Hand in your assignment in hardcopy by the deadline. Late assignments will be graded at -10% per day unless circumstances are exceptional.

Deadline:

Presentations: Week of March 26th & 28th, 2002.