## Edmonds Community College: ENGR 231 Technical Writing, 5 credits

## Hybrid Course

## Instructor:

Email:

Voice Mail:

Office hours:

**Engr 231 Course Description**

Writing reports, memorandums, and other business and technical documents with an emphasis on layout, tone, clarity, and conciseness. Instruction in research technique, research paper formatting, and academic documentation, culminating in a formal report on a technical topic.

Discussions and assignments in this class reveal methods for developing the writing skills and techniques needed to communicate effectively and efficiently in professional and technical industries. The course explores techniques for gathering, organizing, and presenting technical information in written reports for technical and non-technical readers. By studying the purpose and design of reports commonly used in business and technical industries, students will gain practical writing experience and stronger persuasive skills, which will also be useful in academic writing.

**Prerequisite**

Technical writing is a rigorous college-level writing class, and you must have demonstrated abilities in analytical reading and writing prior to taking this class. Completion of Engl& 101 (was Engl 105) or equivalent with a grade of 2.0 (“C”) or higher is **required** for entrance into Engr 231.

I will check each student’s prerequisite information; if I have a question, I will inform you. Please be aware that a student who does not have the prerequisite, or documentation of the prerequisite, may not continue in the course even if he/she is registered.

**Required Text**

Gurak, Laura J. and John M. Lannon. *Strategies for Technical Communication in the Workplace*. New York: Longman, 2010. (ISBN: 978-0205698240).

* You may purchase this text in person at our college’s bookstore or online at <http://bookstore.edcc.edu/> (Edmonds CC). The text is also available online, at a lower price, at amazon.com. An e-text version of *Strategies for Technical Communication in the Workplace* is available for $28.30 at <http://www.coursesmart.com/strategies-for-technical-communication-in/laura-j-gurak-john-m-lannon/dp/9780205791859>.
* A copy ofour textbook is on reserve in the campus library, and you can check it out and use it in the library for 2 hours at a time.
* You can access Chapter One of our book online for free. Here's the link:  
  <http://instructors.coursesmart.com/strategies-for-technical-communication-in/laura-j-gurak-john-m-lannon/dp/9780205791859>. When you get to the page, click on "Take a Look" on the left-hand side of the page, and it will take you to a .pdf version of Chapter One.
* Plan ahead: **you are expected to have your textbook (or access to it) on the first day of class. I will not extend an assignment due date because you don’t have the book.**

**Online Communication**

* First and foremost, you need to have an updated personal e-mail address in Blackboard. Once you’ve logged into Blackboard, go to “Course Tools” then “Personal Information.” I communicate frequently via **personal e-mail** and course announcements, so make sure that your email address is one that you check regularly.
* Next, I expect that you will be online frequently. Please check e-mail **every 24 hours.** I know many of you check far more often, and I do too.
* I am committed to returning your e-mail within 24 hours on a weekday. On the weekend, it may take a bit longer. If you do not hear from me within 24 hours, please send me another e-mail. My email address is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Make sure and include the course number and your full name in your email. You can also call and leave me a voice mail at \_\_\_\_. I check voice mail once a day.
* Every e-mail that I send to you as a class is replicated in the announcements, so if you log into Blackboard regularly (should be as often as you check e-mail), you will see the announcement.
* For general questions and communication with your classmates, please use the Student Lounge. You’ll find this in the Discussion Board on Blackboard. I usually stay out of the lounge, so e-mail me directly if you want to ask me a question.

**How this Course Works**

**Instructional Delivery:** Course content is divided into modules or units. The schedule of assignments is the first document you’ll see in the unit folder. Each unit includes (at a minimum) text readings, an open book quiz on the readings, a “practice” writing assignment, and a final writing assignment. You might also participate in discussion boards and complete other types of assignments related to the focus of study in each unit.

#### Peer Critiques: Prior to submitting your final written assignment in each unit, our class meets in critique groups either in class or online and you collaboratively assist one another with document improvement. You are required to submit a completed draft on these dates and critique one of your peer’s drafts. Each rough draft and peer critique are worth 50 points, for a total of 100 points. Remember: you must submit a rough draft and critique a peer’s draft to receive these points.

**Assignment Submissions:**  In **Blackboard**, assignments are submitted through the unit folders. Click on the unit folder, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the “Assignment Submissions” folder.

Please also note these additional guidelines for submitting assignments

* Submit your homework as either a Word document (.doc or .docx) or rich text format (.rtf).
* If you are having trouble submitting an assignment, you need to call the Blackboard support line at 1-866-886-4854.
* Do NOT email an assignment to me. You need to submit your work to Blackboard to receive credit. Exception: **If Blackboard is down for an extended period of time**, you can submit your assignment to me via email to show that you have it completed by the deadline, but you must still submit it to Blackboard when the system is available. (Note: I am usually very aware when Blackboard is down because I can’t get my own work done and because the TRC on campus keeps faculty well informed.)
* **If you submit your assignment to BB and realize you submitted the wrong file or the wrong format**, you need to email me and ask me to delete your submission so that you can resubmit—Blackboard won’t let you delete your own file (ridiculous if you ask me). **Take extra care to ensure you are submitting the correct file. If you ask me to delete your submission after the due date, so you can submit a new file, I will assess a late penalty**. **DO NOT** email your assignment to me; just ask me to make the fix in Blackboard so that you can submit the correct file. (Note: this does not apply to the discussion board—in this location you are able to delete your own files.)

**Minimum Technical and Skills Requirements to Succeed in this Course**

**Technical Requirements**

* Access to a computer (at home, school, or work) which you can use for extended periods of time.
* Broadband internet access (cable modem, DSL, or other high speed).
* Firefox 3.0 or later or Internet Explorer 7 or later. (Note that Safari and Chrome are also compatible with Blackboard).
* Permissions/ability to install plug-ins or class software (e.g. Adobe Reader or Flash)
* Highly recommended: up-to-date anti-virus software
* Please note that technical problems are not an acceptable excuse for chronically late or missing work. Always back up your work and/or keep hard copies of it. Make a contingency plan in case your usual computer access fails or is not available; take note of the facilities for computer access on campus.

**Skills**

To succeed in this class, you should have the ability to:

* Navigate web sites, including downloading and reading files from web sites
* Download and install software or plug-ins such as Adobe Reader or Flash
* Use email, including attaching and downloading documents/files from emails
* Use the formatting tools in Word or a similar word processing program.
* Save files in commonly used word processing formats (.doc, .docx, .rtf)
* Copy and paste text and graphics on a computer
* Save and retrieve documents and files on your computer
* Locate information on the internet using search engines

**Getting Help with Blackboard**

* Instructions for access to Blackboard may be located online at <http://www.edcc.edu/online/study/Login_Directions.php> .
* Toll-free technical support (24/7 service) at <http://www.edcc.edu/online/support/> . Note that video tutorials are available on this site.
* Call 1-866-886-4854 for live assistance, including password problems. Assistance is available 24/7.

**Course Objectives**

1. **Demonstrate technical control**
   * Demonstrate control in writing Standard English at the following levels: paragraph, sentence, and word.
   * Demonstrate control of grammatical and mechanical (punctuation) elements of Standard English, including the ability to identify errors and correct them.
   * Apply the above elements for variety, clarity, and emphasis in writing.
   * Demonstrate technical control by writing at a Flesch Kincaid level accessible to the target audience, whether technical or lay audience.
   * Demonstrate technical control by writing reports with a passive sentence percentage no higher than 10.
   * Use a consistent and concise writing style appropriate to business/technical communication.
   * Produce a variety of memoranda, letters, and technical reports that meet contemporary business and industry document design standards.
   * Incorporate graphics effectively and efficiently in technical documents.
   * Demonstrate control of word processing formatting and highlighting elements in technical documents/reports.
   * Demonstrate correct use of MLA formatting and documentation for sources cited.
   * Show efficiency in information literacy skills through the use of library references and databases, the Internet, as well as texts, to research additional information needed for homework and projects.
   * Demonstrate Computer and Technology Proficiency through the use of computers, the Internet, online postings, and online assignment submissions.

* **Demonstrate critical thinking**
  + Recognize target audience and employ appropriate persuasive/communication strategies and Flesch Kincaid index.
  + Read a variety of sources independently; recognize and evaluate bias; and analyze content and type
  + Understand the purpose and design of written technical reports commonly used in business and industry.
  + Show ability to pick subject matter that fits assignment and report type.
  + Transfer concepts discussed in one context in class to other contexts to develop reports and projects.
  + Demonstrate, through written reports, an understanding of the interdependent relationship between text and graphics within technical documents.
* **Demonstrate a variety of communication skills**
  + Create, support, and sustain an idea/main point through clear, coherent, and focused documents.
  + Work collaboratively in peer critique groups, and other small groups, to complete assignments.
  + Incorporate an appropriate voice and tone for the target audience and report type.
  + Participate in class discussions and oral presentations and one-on-one conferences.
* **Demonstrate ability to write a credible and analytical formal report** (1800 - 2100 words), on a fairly new and controversial technically focused topic, that contains the following elements:
  + evidence of a well-balanced review of the research and literature for that topic;
  + a persuasive tone that that poses a solution to the issue under discussion;
  + citations of at least eight worthy, academic secondary sources, three of which must be current scholarly sources.(Note: for the purposes of this course, Wikipedia is not considered an academic secondary source);
  + an appropriate and well-reasoned thesis that is clearly stated and quickly identifiable;
  + personal understanding of and engagement with the topic;
  + language which reflects your genuine engagement with the research while still being precise and formal in tone and style;
  + correct use of MLA for documentation of the sources you cite.
  + Correctly formatted elements of the report: front matter, body, and back matter.

**Course Grading for Edmonds Community College**

**Grade Weights**

Collected chapter quizzes, rough drafts, 20 %

peer critiques, and group work

Collected short writing assignments (usually

called “exercises”) 15 %

Formal writing assignments:

Assignment One: Feasibility Report 10 %

Assignment Two: Progress Report 10 %

Assignment Three: Formal Report 35 %

Assignment Four: Technical Description 10 %

**Grading Scale**

EdCC uses a decimal-based grading system to assess academic achievement. To understand the relationship between a decimal-point grade and its related percentage/letter grade, please note the scale below:

**“A” Range “B” Range “C” Range “D” Range**

**Outstanding Above Average Average Below Average**

4.0 = 95-100% 3.4 = 89% 2.4 = 79% 1.4 = 69%

3.9 = 94% 3.3 = 88% 2.3 = 78% 1.3 = 68%

3.8 = 93% 3.2 = 87% 2.2 = 77% 1.2 = 67%

3.7 = 92% 3.1 = 86% 2.1 = 76% 1.1 = 66%

3.6 = 91% 3.0 = 85% 2.0 = 75% 1.0 = 65%

3.5 = 90% 2.9 = 84% 1.9 = 74% 0.9 = 64%

2.8 = 83% 1.8 = 73% 0.8 = 63%

2.7 = 82% 1.7 = 72% 0.7 = 60-62%

2.6 = 81% 1.6 = 71% 0.0 = 61-Below/plagiarism

2.5 = 80% 1.5 = 70%

**Common Grading Policies**

**Grading turnaround** **times**: For most assignments, it takes me between one to two weeks to post grades and comments. If you want additional feedback/comments after I have graded an assignment, please send me an email and let me know.

**Policy on Incompletes:** I don’t give them.

**Policy on the “V” Grade:** I don’t give them.

**Course Policies and Resources**

**Classroom Atmosphere: R-E-S-P-E-C-T.** Civility makes it possible for all of us to participate productively and to develop a supportive atmosphere for learning and for the exchange of ideas. Whether we meet in person or online, I expect communication that is appropriate to a college classroom, founded on courtesy and respect. I expect you to behave as if you care about the content of the class and are here to learn. I expect you to respect me and your fellow students. To that end, I want everyone to take a few minutes to read over and follow the guidelines for “netiquette” in online classes at this site: <http://www.online.uwc.edu/Technology/onlEtiquette.asp>

If I determine that you are not following the above guidelines, I will meet with you in person to discuss the problem. If the behavior continues, I will ask you to drop the class.

**Late Work:** The penalty for late work is 0.5 for each day an assignment is late up to two days (48 hours); after that, I will not accept the assignment. For example, if you write a 4.0 paper, but it’s two days late, then your grade will be 3.0. I do not accept accumulated late work.

**Note:** If you foresee that it will be impossible for you to meet a deadline, contact me **before** the deadline and we’ll discuss it. This must not become chronic. **Note that if you don’t contact me until after the due date, no extension will be possible and you cannot earn credit for the assignment**. If I do allow an extension, you will need to remind me of the extension when you submit your assignment. Make sure and write me a note in the “Comments” box in Blackboard, or it’s highly likely that I won’t remember our agreement.

**Plagiarism:** I fully enforce all campus plagiarism policies and do NOT tolerate acts of deliberate textual theft or academic dishonesty.

* Using someone else’s words or ideas **as if they were your** **own (or allowing someone else to use your words or ideas as his/her own)** is grounds for denial of credit for the assignment (you will receive a zero and will not be able to make up the points). I also have the right to notify the Vice-President for Student Services for further disciplinary action. See *Student Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities,* Guidelines for Student Conduct.
* To avoid plagiarism, learn and use the MLA documentation skills taught in this course. Use quotation marks around someone else’s words and give the name of the source. Also be aware that for any idea that is not your own, even if you are not quoting the exact words, you must still acknowledge your source. So, even if you are paraphrasing or summarizing information from another source, you must give the name of the source.
* If you aren’t sure whether or not you’re plagiarizing, or you aren’t familiar with the concept of plagiarism, look it up on the internet or ask me. I will not accept the excuse that you didn’t understand plagiarism.
* Do your own work!

**Disabled Student Services:** If you require an accommodation for a disability, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities, MLT 159, 425-640-1320, [ssdamail@edcc.edu](mailto:ssdamail@edcc.edu).

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center is a great place to get help with your writing assignments in this course. You can drop in to the center and get free help from writing tutors, or you can sign up for a credit and work with an instructor. If your writing is mechanically weak, with problems such as sentence-level errors, or if technical writing is completely new to you, I strongly urge you to visit the Writing Center to help you strengthen your skills. Mechanically correct English is necessary for written work in this class to receive a grade of 2.0 or above. The Writing Center is located on the first floor of Mukilteo Hall.

If you can’t make it to the Writing Center on campus, you can get help with your writing through e-tutoring. Use the links below:

**Online e-tutoring for Edmonds CC students:** if you can’t make it to the Learning Support Center on campus, you can get help with your writing via e-tutoring. This is a fabulous resource, and I definitely recommend using it! On the EdCC website, go to <http://www.edcc.edu/lsc/> and click on the link in about the middle of the page and follow the instructions.

**Description of Assignments and Assessments**

Detailed assignment sheets and explicit grading criteria will be provided in each unit.