

LMC 3403: Technical Communication

INSTRUCTOR

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OFFICE LOCATION

OFFICE HOURS

COURSE OVERVIEW

LMC 3403 builds on the competencies that students developed in English 1101 and 1102, often with a special emphasis on communicating in scientific, business, and technological fields. Students learn to create workplace genres, ranging from traditional print documents such as reports, proposals, and memos to electronic forms such as email and Web sites; students also learn how to skillfully assess the rhetorical situation underlying each of these genres.

This section will study cases of companies or entities who faced crises of communication (public criticism, inaccessibility, or a global pandemic). We will examine, analyze, and evaluate the rhetorical choices made in response to the event. As the course progresses, you will learn how to professionally navigate a variety of rhetorical situations, report on potential problems and solutions, and clearly communicate changes to clients.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Markel, Mike, and Stuart A. Selber. Technical Communication 13th ed. Macmillan/Bedford St. Martin's. 2021.

Other readings will be made available on Canvas or through the GT Library.

UNIT 1: IDENTIFYING A PROBLEM

Major unit assignment: Choose between a public petition or an informational report to your colleagues. Writing as if you are part of the rhetorical situation of your choice, identify a problem with the design, development, or distribution of a product. In your petition or report, you must clearly explain the problem, make your case for addressing the problem, and persuade others to assist you.

Week 1: Introductions and the Rhetorical Situation

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 1: Introduction to Technical Communication

Week 2: Foundations of Technical Communication

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 3: Writing Technical Documents

Technical Communication chapter 5: Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose

Technical Communication chapter 10: Writing Correct and Effective Sentences

Week 3: Case Study – Destiny 2 and “Weightgate”

Readings:

Read the case study documents, including fan complaints and Bungie’s response, posted on Canvas

Technical Communication chapter 8: Communicating Persuasively and chapter 17: Writing Informational Reports

Week 4: Ethics and Technical Writing

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 2: Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations

Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do chapter 1: Doing the Right Thing (available through GT library, linked on Canvas)

UNIT TWO: ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY

Major unit assignment: Review the accessibility practices of the entity, group, or business that you researched for the unit one assignment. Write a recommendation report evaluating current practices and identifying areas for improvement. As you conduct your review, keep in mind any accessibility practices that affect your research topic, as your proposal in unit three will be “born accessible.”

Week 5: Accessibility and Ethics

Readings:

Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do chapter 9: What Do We Owe One Another? (available through GT library, linked on Canvas)

Keywords for Technical Communication: Accessibility (linked on Canvas)

Week 6: Case Study

Readings:

Read the case study documents regarding Target's website accessibility lawsuit on Canvas

Technical Communication chapter 18: Writing Recommendation Reports

Week 7: Conducting Research

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 6: Researching Your Subject

Technical Communication chapter 7: Organizing Your Information

Week 8: Evaluation and Advocacy

Readings:

Disability Studies Quarterly: Universal Design: Places to Start (linked on Canvas)

Technical Communication chapter 13: Evaluating and Testing Technical Documents

UNIT THREE: FINDING SOLUTIONS

Major unit assignment: Review the accessibility practices of the entity, group, or business that you researched for the unit one assignment. Write a recommendation report evaluating current practices and identifying areas for improvement. As you conduct your review, keep in mind any accessibility practices that affect your research topic, as your proposal in unit three will be “born accessible.”

Week 9: Case Study – Zoom and the Pandemic

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 16: Writing Proposals

Read case study documents posted on Canvas

Week 10: Identifying Solutions

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 9: Emphasizing Important Information

Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do? chapter 4: Hired Help / Markets and Morals

Week 11: Speaking Out

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 11: Designing Print and Online Documents

Technical Communication chapter 14: Corresponding in Print and Online

UNIT FOUR: COMMUNICATING TO THE CLIENT

Major unit assignment: Instructional Document

If your proposal in unit three is accepted and enacted, you will need to communicate the changes you have made to existing consumers. Keeping in mind the rhetorical situation of your project, present the class with either a descriptive or instructional document that helps consumers navigate new procedures.

Week 12: Writing to Consumers

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 20: Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions

Keywords in Technical and Professional Communication: Plain Language and Public (Canvas)

Week 13: Collaboration and Collegiality

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 4: Writing Collaboratively

Keywords in Technical and Professional Communication: Visual and Design (Canvas)

Week 14: Presentation

Readings:

Technical Communication chapter 12: Creating Graphics

Technical Communication chapter 21: Making Oral Presentations