

Histories and Theories of Technical Communication

ENG 449 | Fall 2021 |
Illinois State University

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Erika M. Sparby (she/they)

Email:

Course Website:

Office:

Office Hours:

Required Texts

Rebecca Walton, Kristen R. Moore, and Natasha N. Jones, *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn* (Routledge's ATTW series, 2019)

Other readings as assigned on ReggieNet

Course Description and Objectives

This course provides a broad introduction to the histories of technical communication—as a profession and an academic discipline—and the leading theories in major research studies. The course begins by examining the multiple historical roots of technical communication (rhetorical, cultural, technological, and scientific) and how these histories reflect particular power dynamics and values that shape contemporary practice, politics, and knowledge paradigms in technical communication studies. Then we will turn our attention toward current and emerging issues in the discipline and professional fields in terms of theory, practice, and professionalization with particular emphasis on how technical communication practices influence—and are influenced by—material realities in diverse rhetorical contexts (local, regional, global, and transcultural). Specifically, we will draw upon cultural and rhetorical theories and methodologies to study how technical, scientific, medical, visual, and digital rhetorics simultaneously reveal and sponsor ideologies that construct, maintain, and deconstruct hierarchies that oppress and empower living beings.

Some of the historical and contemporary disciplinary and professional concerns we'll consider this semester include professionalization; power & legitimacy; ethics; risk communication; cultural studies, civic action & social justice; feminism & gender; sexuality; race & ethnicity; bodies & (dis)abilities; digital and visual rhetorics; health, medicine, & the environment.

Grade Distribution

Attendance/Participation	15 points
TPC Journal Review	20 points
Class Facilitation	10 points
Weekly Journal	15 points
Final Project	20 points
Final Presentation	20 points

Grading Scale

A	100-90
B	89-90
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 or below

Brief Assignment Descriptions

The assignments in this course are designed to meet the course objectives outlined above. Below are brief descriptions of the assignments; full prompts are available on ReggieNet.

Attendance/Participation

Your Attendance/Participation grade relies on:

1. *Attendance*. Attend class regularly and arrive on time.
2. *Participation*. Do readings and homework; engage in discussions and activities.

TPC Journal Review

You will choose from a list of TPC journals and write a brief description of the journal, a publication profile based on the past 5 years of journal issues, and a review of two selected articles published in the journal. Two pages, memo format, APA style.

Class Facilitation

Once during the semester, you will facilitate discussion of the readings for 30-45 mins. Stimulate productive discussions, provide visual aids, synthesize conversations, and create opportunities for all to contribute.

Weekly Journal

Each Week, you will write a journal entry in Discussions responding to the week's readings. Engage directly with the texts: connect them to each other, to other course readings (or readings from other courses), and/or to your own work.

Final Project

For this project, write a conference proposal or respond to a CFP about a topic covered in this course. Typically, these types of projects will be about 500 words, but must demonstrate a clear pathway for research and findings. I strongly encourage you to apply to a real conference or find and respond to a real CFP.

Final Presentation

Present your final project to the class. This could take the form of the proposed conference presentation, or it could be an overview of the planned CFP project. Presentations should be ~15 minutes and expand on the information included in the final project. The key is demonstrating a clear, in-progress research trajectory.

Course Policies

The policies in this syllabus are considered contractual at ISU. If you remain in the class after day one, you have agreed to all that is required. I reserve the right to change the day-by-day schedule (with advanced notice), but not the requirements outlined above in the course description and below in the policies.

Professionalism

During class discussions and in your writing, you are expected to treat others with respect. This pertains to all class members, the professor, and the audiences you write for and people you write about. I do not tolerate intolerant discourses. If a student engages in disrespectful or hateful speech, we will discuss conduct; if it happens a second time, the offender will be removed from the course altogether. You are expected to produce professional, high-quality documents that are appropriate for specific writing situations.

All ISU students are responsible for upholding the Code of Academic Integrity and the Student Code of Conduct available online. Submitting an item of academic work that has previously been submitted without fair citation of the original work or authorization by the faculty member supervising the work is prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course.

Homework Submission

- All coursework will be submitted by the start of class on the date the prompt lists.
- Late work is accepted for two days after the due date, but you will lose points from the final grade if no extension has been granted.
- Technological mishaps are not accepted as excuses for late work.

Technology

This course's information exchange is heavily digital, so a basic knowledge of some digital technologies is required.

- You are expected to back up all files;
- You are expected to have proficiency with your ISU email account and ReggieNet functionality;
- You are expected to become proficient with unfamiliar computer technologies and apps.

Accessibility

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact SAAS (Student Access and Accommodation Services).

Location: 350 Fell Hall

Phone: (309) 438-5853

TTY: (309) 438-8620

Website: <http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/>

Email: ableisu@ilstu.edu

Mental Health

Things kind of suck right now, so if you need mental health support, don't hesitate to get it. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed, or are struggling with personal issues, call or visit Student Counseling Services (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential.

Location: 320 Student Services Building

Phone: (309) 438-3655

Mandatory Face Coverings

To protect the health and safety of all students, faculty, and staff, wearing face coverings while indoors is **mandatory** at Illinois State University. This classroom is no exception. To attend class, you must be properly wearing a suitable face covering that completely covers your mouth and nose. "Suitable" refers to an approved disposable or cloth covering that restricts the flow of respiratory air and water droplets. Sheer, lace, netting, or other thin fabrics are not suitable.

I will try to keep some disposable masks on hand, but you are responsible for remembering your own face covering. If you attempt to attend class but are turned away for not having a face covering, this will count as an unexcused absence and will negatively affect your grade.

If you are still in need of a good reusable face covering that allows for easy breathing and talking, I recommend the ones from [Adidas](#).

For additional protection, I also recommend using a [filter](#) or putting a [KN95 mask](#) underneath your cloth covering.

Campus Safety and Security

ISU is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please take a few moments to ensure you are signed up for [ISU Emergency Alerts](#). Also, note the information posted in each classroom about emergency shelters and evacuation assembly areas (indicated in classrooms). Additional safety information is available on the [Campus Safety and Security website](#).

Video Recording

Notice of Recording a Class Session by the Instructor

The University wants to make students aware that a course may be recorded by the faculty member for later use. Please understand that each faculty member makes an individual decision on whether recording and/or sharing their class materials is warranted. Any recordings that a faculty member makes available are for use by students enrolled in the class and are for the purpose of individual or group study only. The recordings may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments.

Regarding students making their own recordings

Students may not use audio or video devices to record classroom lectures or discussions. Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact the [Student Access and Accommodation Services](#). Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#). Students who wish to use audio or video devices to record classroom lectures or discussions must obtain written permission from the instructor. Such recordings are to be used solely for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the class. They may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact the [Student Access and Accommodation Services](#). Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Multicultural Center

The Illinois State community awaits the completion of the new Multicultural Center at 301 S. Main Street, staff of the center are already working across campus to empower students to learn about and embrace their intersecting identities and position the campus community to champion antiracism, equity, and justice.

Sexual Assault Survivor's Resources

The University is committed to both supporting students' well-being and safety and acting to ensure the safety of our campus community. All university faculty and staff are mandated by Federal law to report acts of sexual violence/assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment so the University can respond. Only Student Counseling Services and the university psychiatrist are not required to report. Victims of such incidents are free to choose their level of involvement in University and/or police investigations. There is an extensive network of support resources for survivors of such incidents; talking with someone about what happened aids recovery and adjustment.

- [YWCA Stepping Stones 24-hour crisis hotline](#): (309) 556-7000. This free, confidential service focuses on empowering survivors, their families, and their friends on the path of healing, building relationships with professionals and agencies that will be part of the process, and educating the community about sexual assault.
- Reporting options: ISU Police 911 or (309) 438-8631
- Non-criminal reporting options: Equal Opportunity Office (309) 438-3383 or EqualOpportunity.IllinoisState.edu
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services (Student Counseling Services): (309) 438-3655

Student Well-Being

Resources are available to ensure that you keep yourself healthy if you need help.

- [The School Street Food Pantry](#). Students suffering from food insecurity can get groceries at the School Street Food Pantry.
- [Covid Testing](#): Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of on-campus testing.

Mental Health

Things kind of suck right now, so if you need mental health support, don't hesitate to get it. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed, or are struggling with personal issues, call or visit Student Counseling Services (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential.

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WGSS Graduate Certificate

This course counts toward the [Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Graduate Certificate](#). The certificate is an option for students interested in doing additional course work in WGSS in concert with their M.A. or Ph.D. degree work. The certificate requires a 12-hour course of study. Students must complete either WGS 490 or ENG 460 and three WGSS approved electives. For more information, or to enroll in the certificate, please contact Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, our WGSS advisor at: WGSAdvisor@IllinoisState.edu.

