

Technical Writing II

ENG/TEC 349 | Fall 2020 | Online

Illinois State University

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Erika M. Sparby

Email:

Zoom:

Zoom Office Hours:

Required Texts

Williams, *The Non-Designers Design Book* – PDF on ReggieNet

Dumas and Redish, *A Practical Guide to Usability Testing* – PDF on ReggieNet

Other article PDFs posted to ReggieNet

Course Description and Objectives

Technical Writing II is an advanced course design to introduce you to the theories, issues, and practices of technical communication from a rhetorical, cultural studies, and social justice perspective. You will learn about a range of topics, including inclusive document and digital design, cross-cultural usability, tactical technical communication, and more, and you will produce practical and ethical projects to develop your skills in research, analysis, documentation, and communication. There is no such thing as a “typical/everyday user” or “universal design,” and “plain English” is an oppressive concept. Documents must be flexible and localizable to many contexts and audiences.

In this course, you will:

- Learn the hyperpragmatic history of technical communication and understand the importance of the social justice turn to how we shape and disseminate technical documents;
- Understand how institutions shape genres and create hegemonic knowledge, and learn how to subvert them tactically;
- Make ethical and equitable design decisions, understanding why rhetoric is crucial to effective and just technical communication;
- Engage in cross-cultural user research, design, communication, and usability that accounts for audiences of diverse races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, disabilities and other intersecting identity factors;
- Plan, develop, and support a range of self-directed projects;
- Establish writing expertise in a range of technical communication genres.

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.

All projects must be completed to pass the course.

ReggieNet Forum Posts

In lieu of class discussion and activities, you will post to the ReggieNet forum. You must contribute to each discussion topic and perform the activities, both creating your own post and responding to others'.

Drafts and Peer Review

Drafting and reviewing are important technical communication skills. You must submit high-quality, complete drafts on time, and you must give your partners constructive feedback on their drafts.

Instructions and Usability

You will create a 5-page instructions manual for a non-technical audience that will guide them through and teach them a specific procedure. You will practice effective visual design, conduct usability testing, write a usability findings report, and revise your manuals accordingly.

Digital Tactical Revision

You will tactically revise your instructional document and for a global digital platform. You will practice visual and digital design, as well as tactical technical communication. Consider how to provide information and subvert institutional goals. Perform usability testing.

Technical Summary (graduate students only)

To differentiate the graduate learning experience from the undergraduate one, all MA/MS students will sign up to complete a technical summary of the weeks' readings that explains and synthesizes the main ideas for a nonexpert audience.

Grade Distribution

<i>Component</i>	<i>Grad Point Value</i>	<i>Undergrad Point Value</i>
Forum Posts	15	20
Draft/Review	15	20
Instructions	30	30
DT Revision	30	30
Tech Summary	20	-

Grading Scale

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

Grades are earned, not given. I do not respond to requests for higher grades.



Course Policies

The policies in this syllabus are considered contractual at Illinois State University. 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-to-day schedule (with advanced notice), but not the requirements outlined above in the course description and below in the policies.

Online Coursework

This course takes a blended synchronous and asynchronous approach. While you are free to work at your own pace for most of the work, forum posts, drafts/peer review, and project deadlines must be met. I have arranged ReggieNet modules to suggest timelines for staying on top of everything, but I advise you to build a schedule that works best for you and ensures your success in the course.

Homework Submission

1. All homework is on the day listed on the schedule. Follow prompts for times.
2. All homework submissions must be submitted in the appropriate file format.
3. All homework will be submitted to ReggieNet (follow directions on prompts)

Do not email me homework assignments.

Technology

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

- Gain proficiency with your ISU email, ReggieNet, Zoom, and other required course technologies
- Learn other unfamiliar technologies and apps as required by the course
- Back up all files and ensure that they are in the correct format (pdf, docx, etc)
- Ensure a stable internet connection

If you are not able to meet these requirements, contact me so we can determine reasonable accommodations.

Professionalism

You are expected to treat the professor, all class members, audiences you write for, and people you writing about with respect. I do not allow intolerant discourse. If a student engages in a disrespectful or hateful speech act, we will discuss conduct; if it happens a second time, they may be removed from the course.

All ISU students are responsible for upholding the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and avoiding academic dishonesty. 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. Intentional plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course.

All students are expected to produce high quality, polished drafts suitable to public view.

Accessibility

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

Location: 350 Fell Hall
Phone: (309) 438-5853
TTY: (309) 438-8620
Email: ableisu@ilstu.edu

If you need accommodations not covered by SASS, please discuss them with me so we can ensure that you are able to succeed in this course. I will find a way to work with you.