English 232: Technical and Business Writing   Winter 2021

Instructor: Mort Cohn

Course Text: *Technical Communications: A Practical Approach 8ᵗʰ Edition.* William Sanborn Pfeiffer and Kaye Adkins

Course Description (from the College Catalog): *English 232 is a course designed to provide practice in a variety of written and oral communications to meet the requirements of the workplace. Projects may include descriptions, instructions, resumes, proposals, feasibility and other reports. It includes frequent writing both in and out of class, as well as oral presentations, group projects and individual conferences.*

That this course provides greater familiarity with writing and speaking for the workplace is plain enough. Most students would like to enhance their own communication skills, especially in writing--work on mechanics, organization, and persuasiveness. The question remains, how can real progress be achieved in only a few months? The truth is, it cannot be achieved--unless you are willing to fully immerse yourself in the work. There is nothing mystical about the process. People improve their skills by practicing often.

The successful completion of this course will require a considerable amount of work, something on the order of 60 or 70 pages of writing, but please bear in mind that, spread over four months, the work is very manageable, far below the six hours per week (two recommended for every one spent in class) one would expect for homework in a three-credit writing class.

How will we spend our time for the next 14 weeks? In the early going, we'll do a lot of reading and talking through JPAY. We will divide our labors by areas of interest. I will ask each of you to take a measure of ownership over the class, your workload, your level of seriousness, and the support you offer to your peers. I'll do my best to foster a sense of community here. I'll try to be accessible and helpful, but the effort here must be mutual for you to be successful in the class.

The course pack contains articles and reference materials that we will probably use this semester, and I have recorded a series of short videos that are designed to compliment the course. You should still check the JPAY regularly, since my regular emails to you will contain weekly course assignments and updates.

Workload
You will each submit five or six **short writings** (informal essays) that respond to selected readings or class discussions. (These can be handwritten, but if typed, should be single-spaced with one-inch margins.) They do not receive letter grades, but you need to submit all of them--on deadline--to receive credit, and they should still represent your best

writing. These combined, along with **class participation** (split ten and ten percent), account for 20 percent of your semester grade.

Three longer **business writings and projects** or "formals" will receive letter grades and together will constitute 40 percent of your semester grade. The due dates for these will be set by you as individuals, as we will discuss.

There is a **portfolio** requirement for this and all other Jackson College writing courses. It is important to save and gather together all of your writings for the semester, since it documents your work and provides the instructor a chance to see your work as a whole. An incomplete portfolio will result in a failing grade.

There will be an **impromptu midterm** and **final exam**, both worth ten and ten percent. In addition, you will be required to keep an informal academic **journal** during the time you take the course. The journal can be typed or hand-written and should comment on your academic work, your life, or the world-at-large--whatever you are interested in, as long as it represents your best prose. This will provide an additional resource during the composing process. At the end of the semester it should comprise at least 30 pages of prose (approx. 250 words per page--single spaced if written, double spaced if typed with one-inch margins all around) and will be worth ten percent.

Another important part of the class will be the **presentations**. Each student will choose two specific times to do a presentation in front of other students. (If your class is not meeting in a physical classroom or if you are not in a housing unit with other classmates, then we can alter this approach somewhat, as we will discuss.) This is the public speaking component of the course and very important, not only for establishing your voice in the class, but practicing oral business communication. In total, they will be worth ten percent of the semester grade.

Academic journal	10%
Presentations	10%
Major writings	40%
Informal writings and participation	20%
Midterm exam	10%
Final exam	10%
Total	100

Course Objectives: ENG 232 course goals and objectives incorporate specific General Education Outcomes (GEOs) and Essential Competencies established by the JCC Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty. These goals are in concert with four-year colleges and universities and reflect input from the professional communities we serve. GEOs guarantee students achieve goals necessary for graduation credit, transferability, and professional skills needed in many certification programs.

- GEO 1: Writing clearly, concisely, and intelligibly
    - Class discussions, activities and practice will focus on:
        - Refining the writing and peer responding processes
        - Writing with attention to purpose and audience
        - Composing meaningful documents
        - Organizing, developing, and supporting ideas
        - Connecting prior knowledge and new information
        - Integrating sources with proper documentation
        - Employing proper grammar, mechanics and format, with attention to word choice, tone and style
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- Essential Competency 1: Thinking critically
    - Class discussions, activities and practice will focus on:
        - Proposing creative topics and posing challenging questions for writing
        - Employing tactful and diplomatic language
        - Choosing appropriate visual images and graphics
        - Evaluating evidence and assumptions
        - Understanding conclusions, implications and consequences
        - Solving problems

Student Responsibilities

*Students need to make deadlines on papers, either through the designated mail pickups at the facility or through JPAY. We will discuss this.

*Attendance is evaluated by quantity and quality of JPAY emails. (Two thorough responses a week will constitute perfect attendance.) Everyone gets two weeks off without penalty, but with three weeks' worth of absences, your semester grade will be reduced by one letter grade. Upon reaching four weeks' worth of absences, the equivalent of a month of class, you will receive a failing mark.

*Students are required to submit only their *original* prose written during *this* semester. No help from anyone else. No resurrected pieces from high school or a previous semester in college. Otherwise, what's the point?

*Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in the class. Plagiarism or cheating will result in either a failing grade or outright expulsion from the program. We'll discuss this.

*_Every piece of writing is to be saved_ and bound in a folder. (This is what I call the portfolio.) By the end of the term, it will comprise about 70 pages. Save everything.

*Students must complete all of the assigned work. Even papers not receiving grades (informal papers, late papers, etc.) must be included to constitute a full portfolio.

*If any problems arise during the semester, please let me know.