

To all Canadian STC members

This document is a proposed curriculum for aspiring technical communicators. This is a work in progress—we welcome your comments.

We want to know

- Your overall reaction to the curriculum
- What we missed
- What we did well
- Other resources you have found valuable

Let your local Canadian Interests Committee member know what you think.

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Report of the Canadian Interests Committee

This document is in four parts:

- Background
- Overview of the curriculum
- Brief course descriptions, course contents, recommended text, and evaluation methods for the first year
- Brief course descriptions, course content, recommended text and evaluation methods for courses for the second year of the curriculum

Background

The Canadian Interests Committee formed in 1990 to provide a forum for discussing issues facing technical communicators in Canada.

The focus of our discussions since we began has been the lack of training opportunities—only two colleges, in Ontario, offered technical communication programs in Canada in 1990

Our first step was to survey all Canadian universities and colleges concerning technical communication programs. The results of the survey confirmed our worst fears. The outlook for training was dismal indeed.

In October 1995, over Thanksgiving weekend, the committee met face to face for the first time in Winnipeg. In three intensive days of discussion, we came to consensus over the need for some kind of guidelines for technical communication programs. By this time, some courses were being offered in some post-secondary institutions, including a new degree program at Mount Royal College in Calgary. But many people were not served at all by programs, and many others were served inadequately. Even when programs were running, there was a lack of qualified instructors.

At the same time, the Technical Communication in Western Canada (TeCiWeC) project was coming to an end. As part of the project, employers in western Canada were surveyed about their attitudes to technical communication and technical communicators. The strong message was that, although employers could identify technical communication activities in their companies, they could not see the value technical communicators could add to their companies. Even if they were willing to hire them, they had no means of evaluating the credentials of those claiming to be technical communicators. They wanted us to have formal training in technical communication.

What should a technical communication program cover? Again, our committee has reached amazing consensus. The result is this curriculum.

The curriculum

- Responds to the needs of entry-level and practising technical communicators
- Provides a base for the development of technical communication programs at post-secondary institutions
- Assists employers in assessing the qualifications of technical communicators
- Creates recognition of technical communicators as qualified professionals

This curriculum is intended to serve several purposes for technical communicators.

- If you are interested in taking a technical communication program provided locally, you can evaluate the program to see if it adequately prepares you for the profession.
- If you are interested in technical communication as a profession, you can create your own program out of existing courses at local universities or through distance education. You won't get a certificate or a degree, but you can ensure you get appropriate training.
- If you are a practising technical communicator, you can evaluate your own professional development against this program.

Overview of curriculum

This is a two-year program. The prerequisite to the program is an undergraduate degree, in any discipline.

- The first five courses should be taken full time. Students should be eligible for entry level jobs after the first full year, but are expected to continue studying for the final certificate part time while they work as technical communicators.
- The second set of courses are electives, intended to be taken part time, while students are employed full time as technical writers. They could take from two to five years to complete. Successful students would qualify for positions as intermediate or senior writers when they have completed the electives.

First year—core courses (full time, five full courses)

Course title	Course hours*
Introducing technical communication	half course
Writing and editing I	full course
Using the tools	half course
Writing manuals	full course
Designing documents	full course
Understanding your audience	full course

Electives (part time, 2-5 years) six courses from the following

Course title	Course hours*
Writing and editing II	half course
Working in organizations	half course
Writing reports	half course
Developing problem solving and analytical skills	half course
Designing online information	half course
Managing projects	half course
Designing and giving technical presentations	half course
Writing persuasive documents	half course
Advanced information design	half course
Issues in technical communication	half course

**A half course is the equivalent of 35 to 40 instructional hours. A full course is the equivalent of 60 to 80 instructional hours.*

First year—core courses (full time)

The curriculum outlines courses and suggests books which could be used as texts or supplementary reading. Students should begin to familiarize themselves with as many of the works as possible, and to begin their own professional libraries. To start, students should own

- A good dictionary (*Gage Canadian* is recommended for Canadian writers, but they should also have a good *Oxford* and a good *Webster's*, the best they can afford.)
- A thesaurus
- A style guide, such as *The Canadian Style*

References include style guides, technical writing textbooks, and other articles and books commonly in use across Canada in technical communication programs and by practising technical communicators. Many of these are recommended for several courses in the curriculum.

Some references are annotated for your information.

Introducing technical communication (half course)

Students are introduced to the principles of technical communication. The instructor should include guest speakers from representative industries, companies or government departments which employ technical writers. These speakers should be able to describe what is expected of technical communicators in the business world. Students should write and present reports on the presentations.

Content

- Defining technical communication
- Understanding the documentation development cycle
- Analysing audiences and tasks
- Acquiring information
 - Interviewing
 - Analysing specifications, project repositories, and other artifacts
- Organizing information and outlining

Resources

Andrews, Deborah C. and Blicke, Margaret D. 1982. *Technical Writing—Principles and Forms*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co. ISBN 0 02 303470-X

Beck, Dr. Charles E. and Walters, Nancy J. 1992. "Theory and the profession. Ghost Writers: The Hidden Profession." *Technical Communication*: 39: 290–293. (The authors present a case for the end of anonymity in technical writing. Readers like to know who wrote the book, which partially accounts for the success of secondary texts over primary texts for software.)

- Bell, Paula. 1985. *Hightech writing: how to write for the electronics industry*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (This is a useful reference work for technical writers. It is full of practical advice on producing documents. It does not, however, talk about the *process* of technical communication.)
- Blicq, Ron S. 1992. *Technically-Write!: Communicating in a technological era*. 4th ed. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall. (This is a textbook geared towards technical people who have to do their own technical writing. It provides excellent examples of different types of reports and documents technical professionals can expect to write. It discusses the *process* of writing better than most textbooks.)
- Booher, Dianna, and Hill, Tom H. 1989. *Writing for Technical Professionals*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. (This is a reference manual for people writing technical documents. It describes process of writing and the products. It also describes the editorial relationship between managers and technical professionals.)
- Cain, B. Edward. 1988. *The basics of technical communicating*. Washington, DC: American Chemical Society. (This is a text on how to write, geared toward chemists. It provides an interesting introductory discussion on *What is technical communication?*)
- Cilengir, Erika N. 1992. "Controlling Technology Through Communication: Redefining the Role of the Technical Communicator." *Technical Communication* 39: 166–174. (Technical communicators are public advocates, providing laypersons with knowledge of technology, and user advocates, putting the user in charge of technology.)
- Freelance Editors Association of Canada. *Editing Canadian English* ISBN 0-88894-540-X. (Out of print, but worthwhile if you can find a copy.)
- Gage Canadian Dictionary*, 1997.
- Mills, Gordon H. and Walter, John A. 1977. *Technical Writing*, Fourth Edition; Holt, Rinehart and Winston. ISBN: 0 03 089905-2.
- Pinelli, Thomas E. and Barclay, Rebecca O. 1992. "Introduction, Special Issue: Research in Technical Communication." *Technical Communication* 39: 524–532. (The authors discuss definitions of disciplines and profession. Technical communication is not a discipline because it is inter-disciplinary. It is not a profession, because it lacks a critical mass of research and monopoly rights to practice.)
- Pirsig, Robert M. 1975. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Bantam Books.
- Rodman, Lilita. 1991. *Technical Communication: strategy and process*. Harcourt Brace Johanovich Canada Inc. (A good basic textbook, used in the engineering program at the University of Manitoba. It is directed towards technical professionals who have to write as part of their jobs.)
- Rubens, Philip, general editor. 1992. *Science and technical writing: a manual of style*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. (This textbook

provides excellent reference material, such as examples of basic usage for simplified English, indexing, using graphics.)

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (It provides etymologies, all the different pronunciations of a word, and the phonetic key is on each page, archaic words, British words. It also provides important information about usage, and illustrations. Check the entry under proofreaders' marks!).

Woolever, Kristin R. and Loeb, Helen M. *Writing for the Computer Industry*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. (Used at Simon Fraser University as a basic text.)

Evaluation Assignments and final exam

Using the tools (half course)

Students are introduced to the principles of using computers to do their work: wordprocessing, desktop publishing, platforms, operating systems, networks, etc. They are not expected to be experts in any of these areas when the course is completed, but they are expected to be able to evaluate tools, to understand compatibility of tools, and to choose and use the appropriate tools.

Content Students explore the following:

- Wordprocessing and desktop publishing packages—these will vary according to the resources of the institution, but should include exposure to Word or WordPerfect and Ventura Publisher, Framemaker or PageMaker
- Platforms, operating systems, networks, peripherals: how they work, advantages and disadvantages of various types
- Spreadsheets and databases
- Tools for development of online documentation (brief introduction only)

Resources Manuals from chosen software products

Evaluation Assignments and final exam

Writing and editing I (full course)

Students learn grammar, elements of style, and plain writing. They are expected to undertake formal grammar lessons and exercises and to illustrate their skills in writing short documents.

Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of speech • Sentence types and structures • Punctuation, capitalization and numbers • Acronyms and initialisms • Common writing errors • Style and voice • Inclusive language • Writing lists and instructions • Techniques and mechanics of writing well • Letters and memos • Principles of plain writing • Tone
Resources	<p>Bernstein, Theodore M. 1971. <i>Miss Thistlebottom's Hobgoblins: The Careful Writer's Guide to the Taboos, Bugbears and Outmoded Rules of English Usage</i>. New York: Simon and Schuster. ISBN 0-671-50404-5. (Somewhat tongue in cheek, but a useful antidote to Fowler.)</p> <p>Brusaw, Charles T., Alred, Gerald J. and Oliu, Walter E. 1976. <i>Handbook of Technical Writing</i>. St. Martin's Press, New York. ISBN 0-312-05733-4 (This is an excellent resource and could be used as a text in a classroom.)</p> <p>Burchfield, R.W., editor. 1996. <i>The New Fowler's Modern English Usage</i>, Oxford: Clarendon Press. ISBN 0-19-869126-2.</p> <p><i>The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing</i>, 1995. Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, Dundurn Press.</p> <p><i>The Chicago Manual of Style</i>, University of Chicago Press. (Latest edition)</p> <p>McFarlane, J.A. and Clements, Warren. 1991. <i>The Globe and Mail Style Book</i>, InfoGlobe.</p> <p>Miller, Casey and Swift, Kate. 1988. <i>The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing</i>, New York: Harper and Row.</p> <p><i>Plain Language Clear and Simple</i>, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, Catalogue No. Ci53-3/3-1991E.</p> <p>Strunk, William Jr., and White, E.B. 1979. <i>The Elements of Style</i>, MacMillan Publishing Company.</p> <p>Weiss, Edmond H. 1990. <i>Writing Remedies: Practical Exercises for Technical Writing</i>, Phoenix: Oryx Press. ISBN 0-89774-638-4</p>
Evaluation	Assignments and final exam

Writing manuals (full course)

Students write a short (15 to 20 page) manual, preferably for a work environment. They choose either a user manual, a policies or procedures

manual, or a training manual. They follow the document development cycle through analysis, outlining, writing, revising, testing, and production.

Content

- Types of manuals
- Barriers to good manuals
- The Document Development Cycle
 - Audience and task analysis
 - Outlining
 - Design document (deliverable, subject to instructor and peer review)
 - Developing the first draft (deliverable, subject to instructor and peer review)
 - Usability draft (deliverable, subject to instructor and peer review)
 - Revising
- Conducting interviews
- Working with technical experts
- Technical review, walkthroughs
- Usability testing
- Developing a table of contents
- Indexing
- Revisions
- Glossary
- Maintenance

Resources

Weiss, Edmond H. 1991. *How to write usable user documentation*. 2nd ed. Oryx Press. ISBN 0 89495 052-5 (The author describes his theory of the two-page spread, and discusses many of the issues surrounding technical writing and quality documentation.)

Evaluation

Completed manual, with all interim deliverables

Designing documents (full course)

Students learn how best to present different types of information. They learn to analyse the information and to lay out pages for a printed or online document.

Content

- Styles and style sheets
- Typography
- Page layout
- Text and graphic integration
- Perception and colour
- International symbols, icons
- Selecting and integrating text and graphics

- Selecting appropriate graphic forms
- Electronic drawing tools
- Clip art

Resources

Horton, William. 1994. *The Icon Book*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN 0-471-59900-X (paper), 0-471-59901-8 (book/disk), 0-471-02497-X (disk)

Williams, Robin. 1992. *The PC is not a typewriter*. Peachpit Press, Berkeley, California. ISBN 0-938151-49-5

— *The Mac is not a Typewriter*. Peachpit Press, Berkeley, California.

Evaluation

Assignments and final exam

Understanding your audience (full course)

Students learn the basic principles of how people learn, how to assess the needs of the user of the product or the audience of their document, and how to confirm the effectiveness of the communication.

Content

- Defining product and audience
- Assessing needs
- How people process information
- Principles of adult learning
- How people learn using different media
- Evaluation instruments
- Usability testing
- Learning styles

Resources

Andrews, Deborah C. and Blicke, Margaret D. 1982. *Technical Writing - Principles and Forms*. MacMillan Publishing Co. New York, ISBN: 0 02 303470-X

Coe, Marlana. 1996. *Human Factors for Technical Communicators*. John Wiley and Sons. ISBN 0-471-03530-0

Knowles, Malcolm S. 1990. *The adult learner: A neglected species*. 4th ed., Houston: Gulf Pub. Co.

Evaluation

Assignments and final exam

Electives (part time, 2-5 years)

Students should select six courses from the following list of courses. These electives may be taken part time, while students are employed full time as technical communicators.

Writing and editing II (half course)

Students are introduced to substantive editing. They learn to edit the work of others and to edit in teams.

Content

- Roles of writers, editors and reviewers
- Types and levels of edit
- Responsibilities of editors: moral, ethical, copyright, legal
- Editing and proofreading symbols
- Writing to a style guide
- Developing and applying style guides, regulations, standards
- Editing online and on paper
- Evaluating and being evaluated by peers
- Evaluating whole documents
- Editing individually and in groups
- Editing documents with several authors
- Compassionate editing

Resources

Bush, Don. 1993. "The Friendly Editor." *Technical Communication* 40: 292-295. (The author provides observations on editing. The audience often doesn't care about niceties of grammar, punctuation and consistency, but they do want clear, precise writing. Clear copy is shorter.)

Correctional Services of Canada. *On Equal Terms: How to Eliminate Sexism in Communication*. 340 Laurier Ave. W., Ottawa ON. 613-995-5356. ISBN 0-662-53294-5 (This book, written in both official languages, is excellent. It is about ten years old, however, and may be out of print.)

Elbow, Peter. 1981. *Writing with power*. Oxford University Press.

Hacker, Diana. 1993. *A Canadian Pocket Style Manual*. Nelson Press. ISBN 0-17-604879-0.

O'Connor, Maeve. 1986. *How to Copyedit Scientific Books and Journals*. Philadelphia: ISI Press. ISBN 0-89495-06409

Rude, Carolyn D. 1991. *Technical Editing*. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California. ISBN 0-534-15000-4.

Whalen, Elizabeth. 1992. "The Editing Equation: A Reply to Authors Who Ask, 'How Come You Changed My Stuff?'" *Technical Communication* 39: 329-333. (Editing works best when authors and editors

communicate. Good editing = Concern for readers + Support for authors + Value for company.)

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well, an informal guide to writing nonfiction*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

—. *Writing to Learn*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

Evaluation

Assignments and final exam

Working in organizations (half course)

The student learns how to become more effective personally and to become a valued member of the workplace.

Content

- Listening actively
- Working in groups, team building
- Writing for those who come after: documenting your documents
- Speaking one-on-one and in small groups
- Persuading and negotiating
- Managing conflict
- Identifying training opportunities
- Applying workplace codes and regulations
- Recognizing cultural differences
- Behaving and dressing appropriately
- Applying ethical standards
- Setting goals
- Keeping current—professional organizations and contacts
- Contributing to the community

Resources

Connor, Patrick E. and Lake, Linda K. 1988. *Managing Organizational Change*. New York: Praeger. (This text examines change, and how organizations can cope with the endless change in our society, particularly technological change. Although a little academic in style, this book provides some useful advice for people embarking on a major project for change.)

Crosby, Philip B. 1979. *Quality is free: the art of making quality certain*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. (The author's classic work is still worth reading. His assertion is that quality is free; what costs money is redoing jobs that weren't done right the first time. He describes his difficulties in getting management to listen to his message.)

Drucker, Peter F. 1992. *Managing for the future: The 1990s and Beyond*. New York: Truman Talley Books. (This text is a collection of essays which appeared in a variety of publications in the 1980s. This is very thought-provoking reading. Although he doesn't discuss technical

communication, what he has to say about modern business applies to technical communicators. Not only that, he is a very forceful writer.)

Gabor, Andrea. 1990. *The Man Who Discovered Quality*. New York: Times Books. (The author describes the work of W. Edwards Deming, and how various American firms, including Ford and Xerox, were able to turn their companies around using Deming's theories.)

Juran, J.M. 1989. *Juran on leadership for quality: an executive handbook*. New York: The Free Press. (The author presents his theory of quality, the Juran Trilogy, which is quality planning, quality control and quality improvement.)

Keirse, David, and Bates, Marilyn. 1978. *Please Understand Me*. Prometheus Nemesis Books, Del Mar California.

Northcraft, G.B. and M.A. Neale. 1994. *Organizational Behavior: A Management Challenge*. Orlando: The Dryden Press, Orlando. ISBN: 0-03-074611-6

Evaluation Assignments and final exam

Report writing (half course)

Reports present ideas and facts to decision makers. Students learn how to create a variety of reports required to describe, propose, implement and control a process, product or event.

Content

- Analysis and planning—audience, task and information analysis, concentrating on a management audience's characteristics and needs
 - General report structure—Telling a successful story: working from stated problem to recommended solution.
- Collecting information
 - Primary and secondary sources
 - Qualitative and quantitative data
- Definitions, descriptions and process explanations
 - Purpose
 - Structure
 - Language
 - Incorporating in reports
- Report components
 - Usual sections of reports, from title page to appendices
 - Interactions and transitions between sections
- Types of reports—Study the purpose of each report type, the type of information included, and how it is organized
 - Informal and formal
 - Proposals and feasibility reports
 - Research reports

- Specifications
- Task reports
- Short reports (progress reports, incident reports, meeting minutes, etc.)
- Evaluating reports
 - Usability checklist
 - Transitions and continuity
 - Causes of poor reports

Resources

- Houp, K.W. and Pearsall, T.E. 1992. *Reporting Technical Information*. MacMillan. ISBN 0-02-393341-0 (paper)
- Sides, Charles H. 1991. *How to write and present technical information*. 2nd ed. Oryx Press. (This book offers commonsense advice on how to write reports and papers that do not fail.)
- Van Alstyne, J.S. and Maddison, G.R. 1994. *Professional and Technical Writing Strategies: Communicating in Technology and Science*. Prentice Hall. ISBN 0-13-138952-2

Evaluation

Assignments and a formal report.

Problem solving and analytical skills (half course)

Students analyse problems similar to those they are likely to encounter in a writing project and in a working environment. Such problems may be with people, tools and resources, writing, and technology. These problems are explored through role playing, class discussion, and other methods. Students learn to make informed decisions and evaluate results.

Content

- Problem solving and analytical skills
 - Defining the problem—tools, people, writing, or technology—and the issues, facts and feelings
 - Determining whose problem it is
 - Evaluating and implementing possible solutions
 - Evaluating the result
- Parts/whole analysis
 - Understanding the technology when it seems overwhelming: how to divide the whole into logical parts
 - Analyzing your audience and their needs as opposed to what the designers want the audience to know
- Introduction to logic
- Critical thinking
- Decision making—choosing the best solution and implementing it

Problems to analyse

- Problems with tools you use to do your work, such as finding out too late that your software can't handle large documents or the specific requirements of your project
- Problems with people, such as dealing with harassment, sexual or otherwise, dealing with technical experts who, deliberately or not, consistently give poor or inaccurate technical advice, evaluating other technical writers whose performance is poor, working with difficult team members
- Problems with writing, such as being asked to write a manual you know won't work because the organization is wrong or the audience is wrong, choosing (or being given) the wrong software to write with, revising poorly written documents, working with cumbersome style guides or no style guides
- Problems with process, such as getting information or determining the best style according to the audience and the project.
- Problems with the technology, such as taking on a project beyond your technical capabilities, or a project that is simply incomprehensible

Resources

Ethics problems from *Technical Communication* and *Intercom*.

Crosby, Philip B. 1992. *Completeness: Quality for the 21st century*. New York: Penguin Books. (The author discusses quality management, which is a matter of determining exactly what customers (both internal and external) want, describing what has to be accomplished to give that to the customer, and then meeting those requirements every time. It is a matter of philosophy, not technique.)

De Bono, Edward. 1970. *Lateral thinking: a textbook of creativity*. London: Ward Lock Educational.

—1985. *Six Thinking Hats*. Toronto: Key Porter Books.

Nelkin, Dorothy. 1987. *Selling science: how the press covers science and technology*. W.H. Freeman and Company, New York. (The author provides a history of science journalism. She contends simplification of scientific issues shouldn't mean sensationalism. She shows how the coverage of science by journalists reflects social and political trends.)

Norman, Donald A. 1988. "Infuriating by design." *Psychology Today*, March, 1988: 53-55. (The author discusses products whose poor design creates degrees of annoyance in our everyday lives.)

Tannen, Deborah. 1994. *Talking From 9 to 5: How Women and Men's Conversational Styles Affect Who Gets Heard, Who Gets Credit, and What Gets Done at Work*. William Morrow and Company. New York. ISBN 0-688-11243-9

Evaluation

Class participation, essays, and final exam

Online information design (half course)

Moving to online requires that materials be designed, structured, and written differently than paper-based materials. Students learn the principles of online information design.

Content

- Review audience, task and information analysis to determine what affects the design of online documents
- Understanding how people read, perceive and interact with online documents
- Types of online information
 - Help and beyond to full online documentation
 - HTML
 - SGML
 - Multimedia
- Designing the documents
 - Mindmapping techniques
 - Storyboarding
 - Document specifications
 - Prototyping
 - Design guidelines
 - Creating information templates
- Organizing for retrieval: browse sequences, table of contents, index, visual navigational aids, and hypertext links
- Writing for online
 - Chunking
 - Modularizing information
 - Write single-source (paper and online) materials
- Effective use of graphics
- Distribution
 - Part of an application
 - CD-ROM
 - Internet
 - Intranet
- Evaluating the document
 - Methods for testing online documentation
 - Usability checklist

Resources

- Galitz, Wilbert. 1985. *Handbook of Screen Format Design*. Wellesley, MA: QED Information Sciences Inc.
- Horton, William. 1989. *Designing and writing online documentation*. John Wiley and Sons. ISBN 0-471-50772-5 (pbk)
- Powell, James E. 1990. *Designing User Interfaces*. San Marcos, CA: Microtrend Books. ISBN 0-915391-40-6

Shneiderman, Ben. 1987. *Designing the User interface: Strategies for effective human-computer interaction*. Addison-Wesley publishing Company. ISBN 0-201-16505-8.

Evaluation Assignments and a small online document.

Project management (half course)

Students learn how to manage an entire documentation project.

Content

- Standard project processes and cycles
- Developing a project plan
 - Scope
 - Objectives
 - Schedule
 - Specifications for documents
 - Project standards
 - Deliverables
- Managing change
 - Determining what are acceptable changes
 - Managing slipped schedules
 - Handling change when the milestones or the budget doesn't change
 - Being realistic when budget or milestones or both should change
- Managing expectations
 - Realistic expectations—the schedule can be accomplished
 - Getting management to agree
 - Responsibilities of management
 - Getting agreement among project participants
 - Responsibilities of project participants
- Scheduling
 - Tasks—review standard time to completion for paper, online, other
 - Milestones
 - Dependencies
 - Critical phases
 - Potential problem areas
- Computer project management tools
- Working with contractors
- Production
 - The production cycle, paper and online
 - Whole document appearance—covers, binders, etc.
 - Coordinating production
 - Document assembly
 - Working with service bureaus
 - Controlling distribution

- Review
 - Budgeted against actual
 - What worked well
 - What didn't work well
 - User feedback
 - Project report

Resources

- Brusaw, Charles T., Alred, Gerald J. and Oliu, Walter E. 1976. *Handbook of Technical Writing*. St. Martin's Press, New York. ISBN 0-312-05733-4
- Frame, J. Davidson. 1987. *Managing projects in organizations: How to make the best use of time, techniques and people*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. (The author discusses project management as a way of dealing with constantly changing needs in organizations.)
- Hackos, Joanne. 1994. *Managing your documentation projects*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Randolph, W. Alan, and Posner, Barry Z. 1988. *Effective project planning and management: getting the job done*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. (The authors present ten steps to effective project planning. It is easy to read and practical. Although they don't talk about technical communicators, the authors provide a convincing rationale for including technical communicators in project teams.)
- Wiley, Dr. Ann L. 1993a. "The Quest for Quality." *Technical Communication* 40: 164-165. (The author suggests meeting skills for technical communicators.)
- Wiley, Dr. Ann L. 1993b. "The Quest for Quality." *Technical Communication* 40: 332-333. (The author compares the project management process to a jazz band.)

Evaluation

Assignments, project plan and schedule from a project, and a final exam. The project plan and schedule could be combined with another course.

Effective technical presentations (half course)

Students learn the presentation basics—how to present, and how to use software to create good presentation materials.

Content

- Designing presentation materials—slides, overheads
- Preparing presentations
 - Purpose
 - Scope
 - Size
- Delivering presentations
- Giving feedback

- Types of presentations—informative, demonstration, training, persuasive
- Using presentation software such as Powerpoint
- Using slides and overheads
- Conducting meetings

Resources Frequently *Intercom* carries an article on some aspect of effective presentations.

Toastmasters' International

Evaluation Completed 1/2 hour presentation

Writing persuasive documents (half course)

Students learn to write proposals and other persuasive documents, either to win work for themselves as independent contractors, or to help their companies get business. They also learn the basics of marketing writing.

Content

- Proposals
 - Purpose: to solve a problem
 - Types: unsolicited, in response to requests, price quotes, solutions to complex problems, simple price, multi-volume full, formal proposal; government, large companies and others
 - Costs
 - Managing proposal teams
- The Request for Proposals (RFP)
 - Major components
 - Need to comply with terms of RFP
 - Knowing the evaluators of the proposal helps
- How a proposal is produced
 - Decision to propose
 - Formation of team, including the writers
 - Writing
 - Review process by proposing company
- The technical section for technical proposals: how to solve the problem
- The management section: how the project is to be managed
- The cost section
- The executive summary
 - Summarizes all of the proposal
 - Audience is top management, probably non-technical
- The cover letter
 - Thanks for the opportunity to bid or respond
 - Reference to any feature that might give you the edge
 - Turn any non-compliance into something positive

- Marketing yourself: to one employer or several
 - Creating portfolios and marketing materials
 - Making cold calls
 - Preparing and giving presentations
 - Preparing letters, resumés and sales brochures

Resources	<p>Bly, Robert W. 1991. <i>Selling your services : proven strategies for getting clients to hire you (or your firm)</i>. New York: H. Holt.</p> <p>Sides, Charles H. 1992. "Should You Know How to Do Marketing, Advertising, and Public Relations Writing?" <i>Technical Communication</i> 39: 367-375. (The author shows crossovers into other kinds of writing: audience analysis, sense of the visual effects of a document)</p> <p>Society for Technical Communication Anthology Series No.1; <i>Proposals and their preparation</i>. STC Publications, 1973. ISBN 0 914548 06-9</p>
Evaluation	Assignments and final exam

Advanced information design (half course)

Students look at current research in information design.

Resources	Journals, dissertations, and other materials, as determined by course leader.
Evaluation	Assignments and final exam, or successful presentation of a seminar on a selected topic.

Issues in technical communication (half course)

In this course, which should be run as a seminar, students examine current issues in technical communication, such as dealing with technical experts, creating credibility for technical communication in their companies, certification, ethics.

Resources	Readings from journals, as determined by seminar leader.
Evaluation	Successful presentation of a seminar on a selected topic.