ENGL 3764: Technical Writing

This document contains the complete **ENGL 3764: Technical Writing** (virtual campus) syllabus for the **Spring 2016** semester.

1. Instructor Information

Instructor: John Doe
Office: 323 Shanks Hall
Office Hours: Tue 1:00 PM–3:00 PM via Skype (handle: john-doe)
Email: john-doe@vt.edu (preferred method of contact)
Phone: (540) 123-1000

2. Textbook and Resources

This course has a required textbook and several required resources.

2.1. Required Textbook

Markel, M. (2013). *Practical strategies for technical communication*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's. ISBN-13: 978-1457609404.

2.2. Required Resources

There are additional resources required for this course:

- This course is conducted through the **Canvas** course management system, which you can access at: **https://canvas.vt.edu**.
- Some lessons are conducted through interactive multimedia modules that require Adobe Flash to be installed on your computer. You will access these modules through Canvas, which should automatically verify that you have the appropriate version of Flash installed.
- Some classes require you to view tutorials on **Lynda.com**. Lynda.com is available for free to Virginia Tech students through **http://www.olcs.lt.vt.edu/lynda/**.
- To ensure your technical documents are formatted professionally, you must have a professional word-processing tool. Since Microsoft Word is the most common tool used in professional environments, I recommend it as your primary tool for this course. You will be required to submit most of your work as **PDF** files, which Word can manage for you.

2.3. Optional Book

In addition to the required textbook and resources, I also recommend the latest copy of your favorite grammar book or similar writing reference, such as *A Writer's Reference* by Diana Hacker.

3. Overview

Technical writing encompasses a wide range of writing genres including reports, proposals, correspondence (memos and letters), user documentation (instructions), and many others. The distribution media for these documents are equally vast including print, email, web (including different device types), and more.

This course will introduce you to these genres and distribution media and give you the opportunity to explore and write documents of different genres in a constructive environment. You will learn how to assess your audience, plan technical writing projects, research subject matter, structure and organize content, write document drafts, edit existing content, and prepare final documents.

Classes will include a mixture of lecture, examples, workshops, and exercises to help you understand the craft and allow you to practice your newly acquired technical writing skills. Smaller exercises will help you build specific skills that you can directly apply to your larger writing projects, which will include writing technical documents of different genres.

This is a writing-intensive course that will require you to write every day, but you will leave the course feeling confident in your writing skills and in your ability to write within technical and professional environments.

4. Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze the rhetorical situation, including the problem that creates the need for written communication.
- Analyze the audience or users of the written communication, including knowledge, experience, and work environment; consider needs of global audiences and people with disabilities.
- Conduct research appropriate to workplace problem solving, such as literature review, evaluation of online resources, interview, and site inspection.
- Interpret research findings with understanding of ethical and human implications.
- Select and apply appropriate ways of ordering information for specific effects, including hierarchical, chronological, and spatial arrangements.
- Use conventions of various workplace genres, such as proposals, instructions, correspondence, reports, and slide decks, with understanding of how the genre conventions can be used as heuristics and as principles of arrangement.
- Design visual representations of quantitative information to enhance accurate interpretation.
- Manage writing projects by planning and completing tasks according to a schedule.
- Collaborate with classmates in planning, researching, writing, revising, and presenting information.
- Write accurately and clearly.

- Apply principles of effective visual design for print and electronic presentation.
- Present technical information orally.

5. Student Perceptions of Teaching

Though we will conduct course evaluations at the end of the course, I would like to start discussing Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) now. My goal is to continually improve this course, including myself as its teacher. The only way I can be successful with this goal is to receive honest feedback from you, the student taking this course. When we near the end of the course, I will remind you about SPOT and provide more information for completing evaluations. In the meantime, I encourage you to make note of any ideas for improvement as you think of them over the duration of the course. Likewise, if you think something is particularly effective, it is worth noting so that I make sure I keep it in future curricula. Of course, you should also feel free to bring suggestions directly to me during the semester.

6. Grading

You can track your grades at any time in Canvas. Grading for this course is based on the following components:

- **Projects** (2 of them) account for **30%** of your grade (**15%** each).
- **Papers** (3 of them) account for **15%** of your grade (**5%** each).
- One **oral presentation** (recorded and delivered digitally) accounts for **10%** of your grade.
- **Tests** (2 of them on punctuation and grammar) account for **10%** (total) of your grade.
- **Quizzes** (15 of them, open book) account for **15%** of your grade (**1%** each).
- **Exercises** (approximately 8–12 of them), **professionalism**, and **participation** account for **10%** of your grade.
- **Virtual workshops** (3 of them) account for **10%** of your grade.

As you can see, no one component alone can give you a passing grade. All components are important and carry enough weight to affect your final grade. Your **final grade** (discussed in section *6.3. Final Grade Calculation*) is the **sum total of the point scores** calculated from the grades of all components.

6.1. Qualitative Grading

Because projects and papers are qualitative, I grade them using **letter grades**. However, because the final grade is based on a quantitative score, I must convert the letter grade to an equivalent numeric grade to use in each component's scoring formula. The following table shows the equivalent numeric grade I use for each letter grade:

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade
A+	100
A	96

A-	92
B+	89
B	86
B-	82
C+	79
C	76
C-	72
D+	69
D	66
D-	62
F	0

6.2. Component Grade Calculations

Out of a possible **100**, your final grade is the total number of points earned from all components.

6.2.1. Projects

Projects are the most extensive assignments, requiring you to work thoroughly through the entire technical writing process. There are **two** projects:

- A formal report (group project), which is a **proposal** or **recommendation report** (your choice) on a subject your group selects
- A **white paper** on a subject you know well

I will provide you with specific information for completing these projects in Canvas.

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Point Score = (Numeric Grade of Project) X (Project Grade Weight)
Grade Weight	**30%** total (**15%** for each project)
Grading Criteria	Grading is based on the total overall reading experience of the project, considering the factors discussed in section *8.4.3. Grading and Feedback*.
Due Dates	Due dates for projects are specified in section *7. Writing Assignment Deadlines* and are posted with the corresponding project assignment in Canvas. You will upload projects to the corresponding Canvas assignment, which is programmed to stop allowing uploads at the exact deadline.
Late Submissions	Late submissions are not accepted. You must submit each project by its deadline to receive a passing grade for that project. Any late project (even if only by a minute) automatically receives a **0** for a grade.
Grading Example	John's group earns an **A-** on the formal report. An **A-** is equivalent to **92**, and the formal

	report project accounts for **15%** of the final grade. Therefore, John's point score for this project is **13.8** (92 grade x .15 weight). Then John earns a **B+** on the white paper. A **B+** is equivalent to **89**, and the white paper project accounts for **15%** of the final grade. Therefore, John's point score for the final project is **13.4** (89 grade x .15 weight, rounded). The total point score for projects is **27.2** (the sum of both point scores). This score is the number that gets added to the total point score for John's final grade.

6.2.2. Papers

Papers are shorter than projects and, while requiring you to follow a thorough technical writing process, are easier to complete in a shorter time period because you will already know much of the subject matter. There are **three** papers:

- **Description document** of a topic, object, or process
- **Instruction set** on a subject you select
- **Business letter** that functions as a cover letter for your professional résumé

I will provide you with specific information for completing these papers in Canvas.

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Point Score = (Average Numeric Grade of All Papers) X (Papers Grade Weight %)
Grade Weight	**15%** total (**5%** for each paper)
Grading Criteria	Grading is based on the total overall reading experience of the paper, considering the factors discussed in section *8.4.3. Grading and Feedback*.
Due Dates	Due dates for papers are specified in section *7. Writing Assignment Deadlines* and are posted with the corresponding paper assignment in Canvas. You will upload papers to the corresponding Canvas assignment, which is programmed to stop allowing uploads at the exact deadline.
Late Submissions	Late submissions are not accepted. You must submit each paper by its deadline to receive a passing grade for that project. Any late paper (even if only by a minute) automatically receives a **0** for a grade.
Grading Example	John earns the following grades on his papers: **B** (**86**) for his description document, **B** (**86**) for his instruction set, and **B-** (**82**) for his business letter. The point scores for the papers are: **4.3** (86 grade x .05 weight), **4.3** (86 grade x .05 weight), and **4.1** (82 grade x .05 weight). Therefore, the total point score for papers is **12.7** (the sum of all three point scores). This score is the number that gets added to the total point score for John's final grade.

6.2.3. Oral Presentation

There is one oral presentation, which you will record and deliver digitally. I will provide you with specific information for creating and delivering the presentation in Canvas.

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Point Score = (Numeric Grade of Presentation) X (Presentation Grade Weight)
Grade Weight	**10%**
Grading Criteria	Grading is based on the total overall viewing experience of the project, considering the factors discussed in section *8.4.3. Grading and Feedback*.
Due Date	The due date for the presentation is specified in section *7. Writing Assignment Deadlines* and is posted with the corresponding assignment in Canvas. You will upload your presentation to the corresponding Canvas assignment, which is programmed to stop allowing uploads at the exact deadline.
Late Submissions	Late submissions are not accepted. You must submit the presentation by its deadline to receive a passing grade for it. If the presentation is late (even if only by a minute), it automatically receives a **0** for a grade.
Grading Example	John earns a **B-** on the presentation. A **B-** is equivalent to **82**, and the presentation accounts for **10%** of the final grade. Therefore, John's point score for the presentation is **8.2** (82 grade x .10 weight, rounded). This score is the number that gets added to the total point score for John's final grade.

6.2.4. Grammar Tests

There are two timed, Canvas-based tests on grammar and punctuation. Both tests are the same in content type and are due by the same deadline. The intent is that you will take the first, shorter test to allow you to determine if you need to review the reading material and lessons before continuing with the second test.

BE SURE TO TAKE TEST 1 FIRST (I RECOMMEND AT LEAST ONE OR TWO DAYS BEFORE TEST 2). You will receive your grade, answers, and feedback for test 1 **as soon as you submit it** (it is automated in Canvas), thus allowing you to determine if you need more time to continue preparing between tests. You will not receive answers and feedback for test 2 until **after the deadline** for the test passes (though you will be able to see your grade in Gradebook as soon as you submit the test).

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Point Score = (Average Numeric Grade of Tests) X (Test Grade Weight %)
Grade Weight	**10%** total, broken down as follows: • **4%** for the shorter (10 questions) test • **6%** for the longer (15 questions) test
Format	Both tests are multiple choice and are timed to give you two minutes per question on average: • **20 minutes** for the shorter (10 questions) test • **30 minutes** for the longer (15 questions) test Tests become available to take on Canvas one lesson before their deadline, and you can take them any time during those days. Because the tests are timed, it is up to you to make sure you start each test at a time and place you know will allow you to complete

	the test with no interruptions. You will receive your grade, answers, and feedback for test 1 as soon as you submit it (it is automated in Canvas), thus allowing you to determine if you need more time to continue preparing between tests. You will receive answers and feedback for test 2 after the deadline for the test passes (your grade will be available in Gradebook as soon as you submit the test).
Grading Criteria	Grading is based on the percentage of correct answers on each test.
Due Dates	Due dates for tests are posted with the corresponding test in Canvas. Both tests are due by the same deadline.
Late Tests	You cannot take a test after it closes in Canvas. A missed test will receive a **0** for a grade.
Grading Example	John earns a **70** on the first test, which has a **4%** grade weight. Therefore, John's point score for first test is **2.8** (70 grade x .04 weight). Then John earns a **90** on the second test, which has a **6%** grade weight. Therefore, John's point score for second test is **5.4** (90 grade x .06 weight). The total point score for tests is **8.2** (the sum of both point scores). This score is the number that gets added to the total point score for John's final grade.

6.2.5. Quizzes

There is an open-book, Canvas-based quiz that corresponds to each assigned textbook reading (except for punctuation and grammar, which are measured by the grammar tests discussed in section *6.2.4. Grammar Tests*). To keep reading assignments and quizzes current to the upcoming lesson, each quiz does not become available in Canvas until **one lesson prior** to the lesson for which the quiz and corresponding reading assignment are due. You will not receive answers and feedback for a quiz until **after the deadline** for the quiz passes, though you will be able to see your grade in the Canvas Gradebook as soon as you submit the quiz (it is automated in Canvas). The only exception is for the first several quizzes, for which you will see feedback and answers after you submit the quiz.

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Point Score = (Average Numeric Grade of All Quizzes) X (Quizzes Grade Weight %)
Grade Weight	**15%** total (**1%** for each quiz)
Format	To keep reading assignments and quizzes current to the upcoming lesson, quizzes do not become available until one lesson prior to the lesson for which the quiz and corresponding reading assignment is due. Quizzes are untimed, allowing you to work on them much like homework assignments. You will receive answers and feedback for a quiz after the deadline for the quiz passes (you will be able to see your grade in Gradebook as soon as you submit the quiz). The only exception is for the first several quizzes, for which you will see feedback and answers after you submit the quiz.
Grading Criteria	Grading is based on the percentage of correct answers on each quiz.
Due Dates	The exact due date for each quiz is posted with the quiz in Canvas. Quiz due dates are also listed with their corresponding reading assignment due date in section *10. Schedule*. Because it will take you time to get caught up with the initial readings, the first several quizzes will have an extended deadline, as posted with that quiz in Canvas.
Late Quizzes	You cannot take a quiz after it closes in Canvas. A missed quiz will receive a **0** for a grade.
Grading Example	John misses one quiz (**0**) and then earns a **70** on four quizzes, an **80** on five quizzes, and a

90 on five quizzes. Each quiz score gets multiplied by its grade weight (.01). Therefore, the total point score for quizzes is **11.3** (the sum of all 15 quiz scores). This score is the number that gets added to the total point score for John's final grade.

6.2.6. Virtual Workshops

Virtual workshops are designated lessons in which we conduct group-based peer reviews and edits of a project or paper that is due in the near future. There are **three** workshops.

I will provide you with specific information for preparing for and completing these workshops in Canvas.

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Point Score = (Completion Percentage of All Workshops) X (Exercise Grade Weight)
Grade Weight	**10%** total
Grading Criteria	If you successfully complete the workshop, you receive the **full credit** for that workshop. If you do not complete the workshop, you receive **no credit** for that workshop. To successfully complete a workshop you must perform all of the following workshop tasks: - Share your draft copy of your project/paper with your assigned teammates on the due date for the workshop draft. - Perform a review of your assigned teammates' project/paper. - Provide your edits and a summary memo to your teammates by the deadline. Because this course is in an asynchronous online format, students will be working at their own time and pace. However, you must respond to your teammates in a timely manner to give them time to complete their work. If you do not deliver all workshop deliverables by their deadlines, you risk receiving **no credit** for the workshop. Depending on the effort you put into the workshop, I may adjust the number of points.
Due Dates	Workshop dates for each project/paper are specified in section *7. Writing Assignment Deadlines* and are posted with the corresponding workshop assignment in Canvas.
Late Submissions	Late submissions are not accepted. You must deliver each workshop deliverable by the deadline given for the workshop to receive credit. Any workshop for which you are late or do not participate is automatically assigned **no credit**.
Grading Example	John completes only **1** workshop successfully because he does not share his project draft for review for the other two workshops. Therefore, John's point score for workshops is **6.7** (2/3 successful workshops). This is the number that gets added to the total point score for John's final grade.

6.2.7. Exercises, Professionalism, and Participation

Exercises are typically short assignments in the form of group exercises, individual exercises, or other exercises based on class lectures. The number of exercises over the entire semester may vary but will total approximately 8 to 12. You will perform (or at least start) most exercises as part of a lesson in Canvas, and some of the exercises may be group-based.

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Point Score = (Completion Percentage of All Exercises) X (Exercise Grade Weight)
Grade Weight	**10%**
Grading Criteria	Exercises do **not** receive a grade other than **completed** or **not completed**. However, simply throwing words down on a page is not enough for an exercise to be **completed**. I have to see that you applied yourself during the exercise for it to be **completed**. If you do not do well on an exercise, but I can tell you tried, your exercise will be marked as **completed**.
Due Dates	The deadline for an exercise is posted with the exercise assignment in Canvas. Typically the deadline will be the start of the following lesson. You will upload most exercises to the corresponding Canvas assignment, which is programmed to stop allowing uploads at the exact deadline.
Late Submissions	Late submissions are not accepted. You must submit each exercise by the deadline given with the exercise for the exercise to be marked as **completed**. Any late exercise (even if only by a minute) is automatically marked as **not completed**.
Grade Penalties	Your class etiquette and professionalism is reflected in your exercises and participation grade. I reserve the right to lower this grade, based on any problems as discussed in section *8.3. Etiquette and Professionalism*.
Grading Example	At the end of the semester we have had **10** total exercises. John completed **8** exercises for a completion percentage of **80.0** (8 completed ÷ 10 exercises, as a percentage number). John was engaged and punctual with work the entire semester, so there was no cause to lower his grade. Therefore, John's point score for exercises and participation is **8.0** (80.0 average x .10 weight). This is the number that gets added to the total point score for John's final grade.

6.3. Final Grade Calculation

Your final grade is the sum of all point scores for all components, converted to a letter grade.

Scoring Methodology and Policies

Scoring Formula	Final Point Score* = Sum of All Component Scores *The final score gets converted to a letter grade.*
Score-to-Grade Conversion	The final score is converted to a letter grade, as follows: Total Score / Grade 93-100 / A 90-92 / A- 87-89 / B+ 83-86 / B 80-82 / B- 77-79 / C+

73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	F

Rounding	Canvas rounds decimals for the final point score to the next whole number, where **.5** and above rounds up and below **.5** rounds down. For example, if your final point score were **89.4**, you would receive an **89** (**B+** letter grade). If your final point score were **89.5**, you would receive a **90** (**A-** letter grade). I **NEVER** round a whole number final point score up, regardless of how close to the cusp it is. For example, I would **not** round an **89** (**B+**) up to a **90** (**A-**).
Example	John earns the following point scores for each component: • Projects: **27.2** • Papers: **12.7** • Oral presentation: **8.2** • Tests: **8.2** • Quizzes: **11.3** • Workshops: **6.7** • Exercises and participation: **8.0** The sum total of these point scores is **82.3**, which gets rounded **down** to a whole number of **82**. This numeric grade corresponds to a **B-** letter grade, which would be John's final grade for the course.

7. Writing Assignment Deadlines

The following table provides a chronological listing of when writing assignments for projects and papers are due. For each workshop, the deadline for delivering your review to your teammates is also listed (all workshop reviews are due by the Friday of the workshop week).

Assignment	Deadline (Eastern Time Zone)	Draft
Paper 1: Description Document	Tuesday **2/2/16** at **2:00 PM**	Workshop
	Tuesday **2/9/16** at **2:00 PM**	Return Workshop Reviews
	Tuesday **2/16/16** at **2:00 PM**	Final
Paper 2: Instruction Set	Tuesday **2/23/16** at **2:00 PM**	Workshop
	Tuesday **3/1/16** at **2:00 PM**	Return Workshop Reviews
	Tuesday **3/15/16** at **2:00 PM**	Final
Project 1: Formal Report (Group)	Tuesday **4/5/16** at **2:00 PM**	Final (No Workshop)
Paper 3: Cover Letter	Tuesday **4/12/16** at **2:00 PM**	Final (No Workshop)

Project 2: White Paper	Tuesday **4/19/16** at **2:00 PM**	Workshop
	Tuesday **4/26/16** at **2:00 PM**	Return Workshop Reviews
	Tuesday **5/3/16** at **2:00 PM**	Final
Oral Presentation	Tuesday **5/3/16** at **2:00 PM**	Final

This table does not include the deadlines for all work that you must complete. Deadlines for reading assignments, quizzes, and tests are listed in section *10. Schedule*. All deadlines are also available in Canvas.

8. Policies

The only way for me to manage this course fairly and objectively is to follow the policies of this syllabus consistently and unequivocally for every student, regardless of circumstances.

8.1. Changes to this Syllabus

I reserve the right to make modifications to any part of this syllabus throughout the course. When a change to the syllabus is necessary, I will post the updated syllabus and notify all students of the change as soon as possible. Typically, section *10. Schedule* is the only section that might require modification.

8.2. Attendance

Because this course is in an asynchronous online format, there is no concept of attendance. You conduct your studies at your own time and pace (within the parameters of our deadlines). The lesson schedule and deadlines are posted well in advance of their actual dates. Therefore, you have time to complete work by all deadlines even if you are sick for a day or two.

8.3. Etiquette and Professionalism

I expect everyone to treat each other with courtesy, respect, and professionalism, especially when working in workshops, project groups, and exercise groups. If you have a disagreement with another person in your group, try to resolve it respectfully and professionally. If you cannot resolve the disagreement, then ask me to join the conversation, and I will help you resolve the issue. Your class etiquette and professionalism are reflected in your exercises and participation grade (discussed in section *6.2.7. Exercises, Professionalism, and Participation*).

8.3.1. Principles of Community

As practicing professionals and students, we will all adhere to the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, which you can find at **www.diversity.vt.edu/principles-of-community/principles.html**.

8.4. Assignments

In addition to reading assignments (discussed in section *10. Schedule*), there are quizzes/tests, projects, papers, workshops, and exercises that you must submit for a grade or completion credit (discussed in section *6. Grading*).

8.4.1. Format and Method for Submission

You will take all quizzes and tests through Canvas. You must submit all projects, papers, and exercises as a **PDF document through Canvas** unless otherwise directed in class.

8.4.2. Deadlines

Section *7. Writing Assignment Deadlines* contains the date and time each writing assignment is due (including workshops). Deadlines for tests and quizzes are posted with each test/quiz in Canvas and are also listed with their corresponding assignment due dates in section *10. Schedule*. Deadlines for exercises are due by the deadline posted within the corresponding exercise assignment in Canvas.

Canvas stops allowing assignment uploads at the deadline for the assignment. All deadline date and times are based on the **eastern time zone**. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your assignment, as you never know when a slow network connection or other problem might cause your submission to miss the deadline.

If you have a problem accessing Canvas, I will allow you to email the assignment to me. In such a case, I will use the time I receive your email to determine whether or not an assignment has met its deadline.

I strongly encourage you to submit your assignments early. <u>DO NOT WAIT</u> until the deadline.

8.4.3. Grading and Feedback

As you will discover in this course, no formula exists that can be applied to a technical document to determine its quality. For example, a technical document could have useful and accurate content, but it would be all for naught if the document were riddled with numerous grammatical errors and typos that made it too distracting to read. Therefore, grades for papers and projects are based on the total overall reading experience, considering the following factors (in no specific order):

- Substance and conventions of the genre based on class lessons and textbook readings
- Required content as specified in the assignment description
- Grammar, spelling, and typographical errors
- Quality of writing and appropriate use of lists, tables, and other content structures
- Appropriateness to the document's applicable audience
- Information design and flow of prose/exposition, including use of headings and subheadings
- Professional tone
- Page and graphic design, images, and other graphical aids

Just as you submit projects and papers electronically, I will return grades, corrections, and notes on them electronically unless I specify otherwise in class.

Grading Guidelines

The following grading guidelines can help you understand the qualitative properties of documents against their corresponding grade range:

Grade Range	Document Properties
A (90-100)	The document is **great to outstanding**, given the following properties: • As a whole, the document demonstrates your creativity and mastery of the objectives and material, and it meets or exceeds the assignment requirements. • Tone, content, design, and organization are consistent and ideally suited for the audience and purpose. • There are no typographical errors, such as (but not limited to) missing words, repeating words, obvious spelling errors and transpositions, and obviously missed punctuation (for example, no period at the end of a sentence). • There are minimal errors in grammar, mechanics, or formatting. • To be outstanding (an **A+** as opposed to an **A** or **A-**), the document must be completely error free. In a professional work environment, your supervisor would feel confident sending out the document as is.
B (80-89)	The document is **good to very good**, given the following properties: • As a whole, the document demonstrates your understanding of the objectives and material as well as your ability to use templates and patterns effectively. It meets the assignment requirements. • Tone, content, design, and organization are appropriate for the audience and purpose. There may be a minor and easily correctable error or inconsistency. • There may be a few minor and easily correctable typographical errors or errors in grammar, mechanics, or formatting. In a professional work environment, your supervisor would ask you to make a few changes before you send out the document.
C (70-79)	The document is **fair to adequate**, given the following properties: • As a whole, the document indicates that you understand some, but not all, of the objectives and material. It meets most of the assignment requirements. • Most, but not all, elements of tone, content, design, and organization are appropriate for the audience and purpose. There might be inconsistencies that undermine the cohesion of the document. • Typographical errors or errors in grammar, mechanics, or formatting are distracting and unprofessional, but they do not render the document unreadable. In a professional work environment, your supervisor would want to review your changes before sending out the document.
D (60-69)	The document is **poor**, given any of the following properties: • The document does not reflect your understanding of the objectives or

	material. It meets only some of the assignment requirements.
	• There is at least one major flaw in tone, content, design, or organization that makes the document ineffective as a whole.
	• There is one or more major or critical typographical error or error in grammar, mechanics, or formatting.
	In a professional work environment, your supervisor would question your ability to work on this project.
F (0)	The document is **unacceptable**, given any of the following properties:
	• The document does not reflect your understanding of the objectives or material, and it does not meet the assignment requirements.
	• The document does not demonstrate your ability to write adequate and original content.
	• The tone, content, design, and/or organization are inappropriate for the audience and purpose.
	• Typographical errors or errors in grammar, mechanics, or formatting affect the reader's ability to understand the document.
	In a professional work environment, your supervisor would question your ability to do your job.

8.4.4. Use of Written Work by the Department of English

The Department of English may use your written work in its assessment of its teaching and learning goals. In such cases, your name will be removed and your work assessed anonymously. Your work will not be shared with any individual outside of the department. It will be used strictly to help the department offer students the best possible academic experience.

8.5. Academic Honesty

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states:

> "As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do."

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code.

For additional information about the Honor Code, please visit: **honorsystem.vt.edu**.

8.6. Online Classes

I will post materials for each lesson weekly on **Tuesdays** at **2:00 PM**. If the posting day falls on a day when university classes are not in session, I will post the lesson the following day. I send an announcement through Canvas for each lesson, and I post each lesson under the Canvas **Lesson** menu.

You will conduct your studies at your own time and pace (within the parameters of our deadlines). Most class lessons have multiple components that may include written, audio, and video lectures, handouts, assignments, and other related items. I will order and explain each component so that you can follow them in their intended sequence for that lesson.

Some lessons include "in-class" exercises. You have until the start of the following class to submit any corresponding in-class exercise, unless I specify otherwise with the exercise. You must submit in-class exercises as a **PDF document through Canvas** unless otherwise directed in class.

For group work, I will assign students to groups and post the groupings in Canvas. Generally speaking, groups will have the same teammates for the entire semester unless I see a need to make a change. It is up to each student to contact the other student(s) in the group (through Canvas, email, etc.). To be fair to your fellow classmates, make contact with each other as soon as possible after the groupings are posted. Notify me as soon as possible if you are unable to contact a classmate assigned to your group. If you are constantly unavailable to your fellow classmates for group exercises, your class participation factor will suffer, as discussed in section *6.2.7. Exercises, Professionalism, and Participation*.

9. Disability Accommodations

If you require special arrangements because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible so that I can help facilitate any needed accommodations. You must also provide documentation of your disability to the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office. More information is available at **ssd.vt.edu**.

10. Schedule

The schedule in this section highlights the preparation, readings, quizzes/tests, topics, and work due for each class lesson of the semester. You can also keep an eye on upcoming project, paper, and test deadlines by referring to section *7. Writing Assignment Deadlines*. Exercises are considered part of the classwork and are thus not listed here as deadlines.

So that class lessons are meaningful, and so that you will have thoughts or questions to contribute, you must complete the corresponding preparation, readings, and quizzes **before** the class. These items are listed under **Due** for the corresponding class. Always look at due items well in advance of the class to give yourself adequate time to prepare and take quizzes prior to the class.

10.1. Introduction; Correspondence; Start Grammar and Punctuation Review

Lesson 1: Tuesday 1/19/16

Due	**Chapter 1:** Introduction to Technical Communication
	Chapter 9: Writing Correspondence
	Appendix B: Editing and Proofreading Your Documents (no quiz; instead grammar tests due by 2/9)
	Website articles: Readings on writing in the workplace (no quiz)
Topics	Course and student introductions
	Syllabus and projects
	Backing up your work
	Writing in the workplace
	Introduction to technical writing
	Letters and memos
	Structure and content of correspondence
	Start grammar and punctuation review

10.2. Writing Style; Definitions and Descriptions; Reviews and Copyedits

Lesson 2: Tuesday 1/26/16

Due	**Chapter 6:** Writing for Your Readers
	Chapter 14: Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions (pp. 358–374)
Topics	Writing style
	Definitions and descriptions
	Structure and content of definitions and descriptions
	Technical edits and reviews

10.3. Description Document Workshop; Ethics and Legal Considerations

Lesson 3: Tuesday 2/2/16

Due	**Chapter 2:** Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations
	Appendix A: Documenting Your Sources (no quiz)
	Paper 1 (workshop draft): Description document
	Last chance: All reading and quizzes to date
Topics	**Workshop:** Description document (Paper 1)
	Ethical and legal considerations
	Reusing other authors' content and illustrations
	Finish grammar and punctuation review

10.4. Graphical Aids; Instructions and Safety Information

Lesson 4: Tuesday 2/9/16

Due	**Tests:** Punctuation and grammar (parts 1 and 2)
	Chapter 8: Creating Graphics
	Chapter 14: Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions (pp. 375–386)
	Paper 1 (workshop feedback): Edits and memos on description documents
Topics	Prose vs. graphics
	Graphic types
	Software illustrations
	Instructions
	Structure and content of instructions
	Notes, cautions, and warnings

10.5. Page Layout and Visual Design; Recommendation Reports

Lesson 5: Tuesday 2/16/16

Due	**Chapter 7:** Designing Documents and Web Sites
	Chapter 13: Writing Recommendation Reports
	Paper 1 (final): Description document
Topics	Visual and page design
	Web design
	Recommendation reports
	Structure and content of recommendation reports
	Problem-solving model

10.6. Instruction Set Workshop; Proposals

Lesson 6: Tuesday 2/23/16

Due	**Chapter 11:** Writing Proposals
	Paper 2 (workshop draft): Instruction set
Topics	**Workshop:** Instruction set (Paper 2)
	Proposals
	Structure and content of proposals
	Request for proposals (RFP)
	Differences between proposals and recommendation reports

10.7. Collaboration and Social Media; Project 1 Group Brainstorm

Lesson 2: Tuesday 1/26/16

Due	**Chapter 3:** Writing Collaboratively and Using Social Media
	Paper 1 (workshop feedback): Edits and memos on instruction set
Topics	Meet your workgroup
	Collaboration on projects
	Social media
	Definitions and descriptions
	Structure and content of definitions and descriptions
	Technical edits and reviews
	Project 1 group brainstorm

Tuesday 3/8/16: No Lesson (Spring Break)

10.8. Audience and Purpose; Research

Lesson 8: Tuesday 3/15/16

Due	**Chapter 4:** Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose
	Chapter 5: Researching Your Subject
	Paper 2 (final): Instruction set
Topics	Audience assessment
	Research
	Documentation planning
	Project 1 group decision

10.9. Online Content; Project 1 Group Work

Lesson 9: Tuesday 3/22/16

Due	**Lynda.com tutorials:** Online content (no quiz)
Topics	Online content
	HTML
	CSS
	XML
	Continue group work on Project 1 (formal report)

10.10. Job-Application Materials; Project 1 Group Work

Lesson 10: Tuesday 3/29/16

Due	**Chapter 10:** Writing Job-Application Materials
Topics	Cover letters
	Résumés
	Thank you letters
	Portfolios
	Putting the whole job-application materials package together
	Continue group work on Project 1 (formal report)

10.11. White Papers

Lesson 11: Tuesday 4/5/16

Due	**Website articles:** White papers (no quiz)
	Project 1 (group final): Formal report (no workshop)
Topics	White papers
	Structure and content of white papers

10.12. Making Presentations; Localization and Translation

Lesson 12: Tuesday 4/12/16

Due	**Chapter 15:** Making Oral Presentations (no quiz)
	Website articles: Localization and translation (no quiz)
	Paper 3 (final): Cover letter for job-application materials (no workshop)
Topics	Making oral presentations
	Creating supporting material for presentations
	Globalization
	Localization
	Translation

10.13. White Paper Workshop

Lesson 13: Tuesday 4/19/16

Due	**Project 2 (workshop draft):** White paper
Topics	**Workshop:** White paper (Project 2)

10.14. Informational Reports

Lesson 14: Tuesday 4/26/16

Due	**Chapter 12:** Writing Informational Reports
	Project 2 (workshop feedback): Edits and memos on white papers
Topics	Informational reports
	Structure and content of informational reports

10.15. Wrap-up

Lesson 15: Tuesday 5/3/16

Due	**Project 2 (final):** White paper
	Oral presentation (final): Digital presentation of white paper topic
Topics	Real-world practical examples and experiences
	Open questions and discussions

<u>Note: No Final Exam</u>