



JOINT INSTITUTE
交大密西根学院

Fall 2021

VE496 Advanced Technical Communication
WED 12:10-13:50 (+ FRI 14:00-15:40 Week 8, 9 10)
Dong Zhong Yuan E2-203

Irene Wei. Ph.D.
Long Bin Building 435
Wed 14:30-16:30 or by appointment
irene.wei@sjtu.edu.cn
Or text me privately on Feishu

TA: Kexuan Huang
Private message on Feishu
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Course Description:

Engineering graduates require a wide range of skills to function and succeed. The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) recognizes that communication skills are a fundamental engineering skill.

In VE496 we will cover 3 main topics in technical communication:

1. Different kinds of technical communication (audience and purpose)
2. Technical report types and purposes (form and content)
3. Advanced presentation skills (slides and delivery)

Class format includes lecture, discussion, individual practice and group activities.

Selected readings from the following texts:

1. *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* by Mark Markel & Stuart Selber
2. *Engineering Speaking by Design*, by E. Rothwell & M. Cloud
3. *Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences*, by Nancy Durate
4. *Storytelling with Data*, by Cole N. Knafllic
5. Other materials on related topics

Course content and activities aim to help you:

- Refresh already acquired technical communication skills in VG100 and VE300
- Expand your technical communication knowledge base by
- Understand technical writing requirements, including organizational strategies & formats
- Improve presentation skills (design and delivery)

After taking this course, you should be able to:

- Communicate with greater appreciation for contextual and process skills
- Explain how different parts of a technical report cohere to fulfill a specific purpose
- Visualize information and data with greater intention using the appropriate graphs
- Deliver a presentation with effective slides



	Topic	Wednesday	
1	Introduction & big picture awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why engineers need to work on their communication skills• The importance of “contextual” and “process” skills	Sept 15	
2	Working in the technical communication environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic vs. workplace research• Conducting research & writing literature review	22 Form groups	
3		29 Assig. 1 release Group presentation assig. release	
4	Oct 6 holiday		
5	Writing reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying report type• Elements and styles of technical writing	13	
6	Planning and drafting your technical document: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem statements & purpose statements• Abstract & introduction, outlines, and headings	20 Assig. 1 due Assignment 2 release	
7	Writing for your readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definitions, descriptions, instructions• Proposal as a persuasive argument	27 Presentation idea due	
8	Designing your presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure & organization• Thinking visually	Nov 3 Assig. 2 due	5 Friday 14:00-15:40
9	Building & delivering your presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slides: from text to visuals• Delivering a presentation	10	12 Friday 14:00-15:40
10	Building and delivering your presentation	17	19 Friday 14:00-15:40
11	Group presentation	24	
12	Professionalism & course summary	Dec 1 Take-home question release	
13	Course review quiz on Canvas	Dec 8 Take-home question due	

Course assignment and value

18%	In-class work & homework
19%	Assignment #1
19%	Assignment #2
2%	Group presentation idea proposal
4%	Group presentation outline
15%, 8%	Delivery (individual), slides (group)
15%	Take-home question + Canvas quiz

Course grade scale:

A+	100-98	C+	79-77
A	97-93	C	76-73
A-	92-90	C-	72-70
B+	89-87	D+	69-67
B	86-83	D	66-63
B-	82-80		

Bonus presentation (up to 10 points may be counted toward the exam):

- Present a “teaching lesson” on a topic (to be approved)
- 10 minutes maximum, with slides



Course Policies and Expectations:

Office hours: You are welcome to make an appointment with me to discuss course-related questions. The TA hired for this course has limited responsibilities and will hold no office hours. Email me at irene.wei@sjtu.edu.cn or text me privately on Feishu for urgent questions.

Regular attendance in the physical classroom is required. If you expect a schedule conflict during the semester, you should take VE496 section another time.

Classes will be held offline. You are expected to attend classes in person. Every week I will share my lecture notes. But classes will not go online, and lectures will not be recorded unless required by quarantine or a sudden coronavirus outbreak.

Handing in assignments: Instructor will specify required format on Canvas.

Late assignments will result in point deduction. No assignment will be accepted 2 days after the due date

No make-up will be given, except in case of personal emergency, with proper documentation.

Students will receive a zero for any in-class work (including exam) they miss due to unexcused absences.

Electronic devices: Laptops are allowed in class as long as they are being used for educational purposes, such as note-taking. I reserve the right to ban laptops in the classroom.

Honor Code & Plagiarism

If you are found to have plagiarized someone else's work or ideas, your work will receive an automatic "0," and you will be reported to the Honor Council. Depending on the severity of the case, you may receive an "F" in the course and/or be expelled from the school.