

WR 320 Syllabus

Fall 2023, 4 Credits

Instructor: Tom Tasker, PhD

Office: 301K Tykeson Hall

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 11:00 – 12:30 on Zoom, but you’re welcome to come to my office if you’re on campus at that time.

Zoom link: <https://uoregon.zoom.us/my/tomtasker>

Make an appointment or ask a question by email: ttasker@uoregon.edu

I try my best to answer emails within 12 hours of receiving during the week. I check my email once on Sundays during the weekend.

Find up-to-date information about the class in announcements that will appear on the course page. You will also receive announcements through email via Canvas. Be sure to set how you receive notifications from Canvas so that you will be able to manage information in a way that works best for you.

Overview and Objectives

Welcome to Scientific and Technical Writing! This course offers practice in a range of common genres of writing in scientific and technical career fields. Though writing is driven by a number of different rhetorical occasions in these fields, there are foundational skills identifiable and graspable in each. You will be asked to consider the real possible writing contexts for your planned career, and you’ll work closely with your classmates to practice the kind of group collaboration that will be expected of you in your professional life. For the purposes of providing students with opportunities to try their hands at different sorts of professional writing, this course is assignment intensive. Since we’re considering topics to which these different writing genres are suited, the course also involves rigorous research. It’s my hope that, by the end of this course, you will have an arsenal of familiar forms of professional writing as well as the research skillset to familiarize yourself with *any* kind of scientific or professional writing conventions.

Learning Objectives

By completing WR 320, you will increase your confidence in the following:

1. Creating documents that are relevant to the purpose and context in which they are written and appropriate for the audience to which they are addressed.
2. Creating documents that proceed logically and connect ideas effectively, according to genre, purpose and context.
3. Producing written work that displays adherence to the conventions of its context (academic or professional), including control of grammar, spelling, word usage, syntax, and punctuation; use of appropriate tone, style, and diction; uses appropriate formatting, media, design, and documentation of sources.
4. Effectively revising the content and organization of messages both by reevaluating the reasoning and context of the message and responding to critiques from peers and instructors.

Career Readiness

An objective of this course is to provide you hands-on experience in communication skills you can use in the future. Specifically, you will have opportunity to work on the follow career competencies identified by the UO and the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#). You will work on:

Critical Thinking: Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

Communication: Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

Teamwork/Collaboration: Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

Course Materials

You will not need to purchase any materials for this course. We will be using freely available Open Education Resources, available on Canvas, including

- Technical Writing Essentials
- Open Oregon Technical Writing Textbook
- Online Technical Writing
- Craft of Research

All additional material you will read, watch, and listen to will be provided as links and/or pdf files in the weekly overview and in the assigned readings module. Links and advice for how to engage with course materials will be included in weekly overviews in each week's module.

Course Learning Methods: Compassion, Curiosity, Commitment

Success in WR 320 will depend more on your openness to and curiosity than on your previous academic experience or existing knowledge about the topics we will explore together.

Your grade will be determined by the *labor* you put in and your own *engagement* with course material, activities, the writing of your peers, and the course learning goals.

I ask that you:

- Be a compassionate member of our class community — challenge yourself to take risks and support your classmates as they take risks.
- Be curious and open to new methods, ideas, and perspectives. You'll do this by deeply and respectfully reading and responding to assigned articles and the work of your classmates. Sometimes this material will require watching and/or listening.
- Be willing to write, read, and respond to the best of your ability.

I commit to:

- Checking your understanding of key concepts about literacy.
- Deeply and respectfully reading your work and taking your ideas seriously.

- Challenging you to go further and take risks by giving feedback, asking questions, and providing additional material.

Together we will repeat this process until you feel more confident drawing on and responding to different writing situations and imagining how you could apply the scientific and technical writing skills you are building in the future.

What You Will Do

Overview of Course Assignments

Instructions and criteria for evaluation will be provided with each assignment so you know what is required for it to be considered complete. Grading comments will be provided to give feedback and let you know if your work is incomplete and whether it may be revised and resubmitted.

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1. Weekly discussion boards
2. Scientific and Technical Communication Writing Projects

This course is intended to give you experience creating a variety of types of projects that you will likely encounter in professional environments. You will complete work as an individual and as part of a team on the following projects:

- Origin Story -- A narrative that tells the story of how you became the writer you are today as you embark on deepening your scientific and technical writing skills.
- Instructions — A how-to guide for non-experts on a task of your choice.
- Literature review and research proposal
- Procedure Description — Working in teams, you will describe a process (how something works) related to the problem in technical writing. Your work will become part of a class Technical Writing Manual.
- Technical Report — A detailed report of your research solving the problem you pose in your proposal. Completing this assignment will give you experience in creating visual material.
- Presentation — A 5-7 minute version of your Technical Background Report presented to the class.

3. Good Writing Habits

Strong writers develop good writing habits. This series of assignments introduces you to some habits good writers practice. You are required to complete at least two “good habits” assignment in each half of the term for a total of four total for the term.

Options include:

- **Develop A Daily Writing Habit.** Set aside at least 20 minutes a day to write. Keep track of your hours and submit a 500-word description of your experience and a reflective response at midterm and in finals week.

- **Join A Writing Circle.** Find or organize a group of students who commit to weekly accountability check ins. Set a term goal and weekly goals. Report progress on Exit Tickets. Submit a 500-word description of your group, goals, and activities and a reflective response at the end of the term.
- **Go Deeper Into Your Research With A Literature Review.** Follow the directions (on Canvas) for writing a 5-source literature review related to one a Writing Project. Write a 250-word description of your research and synthesis process and 250-word reflection about what you learned.
- **Practice Creating Charts and Graphics.** Follow the directions (on Canvas) for adding at least two additional charts and/or graphic elements to one of your writing projects and write a 500-word description of your process and reflection about what you learned.
- **Get Extra Help From Me.** Meet with me for a 30-minute consultation on your work (offered once in the first half of the term and once in the second half of the term). Write a 250-word description of what happened at the meeting and a 250-word reflection of what you learned from the experience that you will use in future situations. You count this up to two times for a total of 2 “Good Habit” assignments.
- **Final Portfolio Swap.** Follow the directions for sharing your work (on Canvas) and write a 250-word description of your process of exchange and a 250-word reflection of what you learned from the experience that you will use in future situations.
- **Enhance Your Final Portfolio.** Revise and submit an additional document with your portfolio OR include a scientific and technical communication-oriented resume (details on Canvas). Write a 500-word description of your process and reflection about what you learned.

4. Final Portfolio

A portfolio represents the best work that you want to share with others, such as potential employers or graduate school admissions committees. For this final assignment for the class, you will submit the two writing projects that are most relevant to what you want to do immediately following graduation. You will draft a cover letter describing the work you have done and how it demonstrates 2-3 career competencies that employers are most interested in.

Assessment

This overview gives you an idea of the scope of the work you’re expected to complete for the term. Please see the schedule of assignments on Canvas for due dates and for detailed instructions and requirements for each assignment.

Weekly discussion boards 10%

Writing projects 70%

Good writing habits 10%

Presentation and portfolio 10%

Our class is small. I am available to work with you individually to ensure that you are working toward the grade you want to earn for this class!

Late Work Policy

- An automatic 48-hour extension is available for all assigned work.
- You do not need to contact me within the 48-hour period.
- After 48 hours, I can no longer accept your work without hearing from you. It will be considered unsubmitted and incomplete unless we come to an agreement.

Please make every effort to submit group discussion posts on time so your classmates have adequate time to respond.

Shared Responsibilities and Extenuating Circumstances

I will do my best to be clear about assignment expectations and how I will assess your work. **It's your responsibility to contact me when you are confused, overwhelmed, or unsure about class expectations. Talk to me before an assignment is due, not after, if possible.**

That way I can help you talk through your confusion, brainstorm ideas, consider possibilities, give you resources, and discuss your work with you—that's an integral part of my role in our class! I can't make exceptions or extend grading deadlines unless you talk to me *before* the assignment is due.

I am only able to help you be successful in the course if we are in communication!

Use of GenAI application (e.g., ChatGPT)

Students may not use GenAI tools in this course to produce course materials or assignments in whole or in part. All work you submit for this course toward completion of course requirements must be your own original work done specifically for this course and without substantive assistance from others, including GenAI. Work you've completed for previous courses or are developing for other courses this term also should not be submitted for this course. In accordance with UO policy, if I believe you've handed in work created all or in part by GenAI, I will submit a report of suspected academic misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for that office to make a determination of responsibility and, if warranted, assess a grade penalty. If you have any questions or doubts, please ask!

Other Course Policies

Find a complete list of policies for all WR courses Composition Program website at composition.uoregon.edu.