



MANITOBA INSTITUTE OF
TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY

Technical Writing Skills

Course Outline

Course Overview

Course Code: SD-160

Program: Software Developer

Credits: Full Credit

Course Hours: 60 hours

Prerequisites: None.

Academic Year: 2018-2019

Class Times & Information

Location: 200 Henlow

Days: Monday to Friday (40d)

Times: 1:45 – 3:15 (1.5hours/d)

Format: Classroom

Start Date: February 5, 2018

End Date: April 9, 2018

Instructor Overview

Instructor: Johnathan Niziol

Email: Johnathan.niziol@mitt.ca

Course Description

This course focuses on the development of technical writing skills for IT professionals. Students will develop the language skills needed for effective communication with colleagues and clients. Students learn to create documents and use online tools that are required for success in the Software Developer program, as well as in the workplace.

Methods

The methods for instruction will vary, and include:

- Group lecture and/or instruction,
- Demonstrations,
- Research and individual study,
- In-class practice and review,
- Peer support

Materials

Struss, J., Kaufmann L, & Stern T. (2014.) The Blue Book of Grammar and punctuation, 11th edition. San Francisco, CA; Josey-Bass. ISBN: 978-1-118-78556-0

Other readings and handouts as supplied by the instructor.

General Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of technical writing.
2. Identify correct and effective sentence structures and revise poorly worded sentences for clarity, conciseness, and correctness.
3. Write a unified coherent paragraph using a clear topic sentence and specific support given a work related scenario.
4. Define and narrow a topic as well as evaluate, select, and order material to create well organized written documents.
5. Produce written documents, including e-mails, memos, and other technical documents with minimum preparation time.
6. Revise, and edit existing documents to improve content organization, word choice, phrasing, sentence and paragraph structure, spelling, and punctuation.

Course Schedule

Please note that instructors reserve the right to adjust the course schedule without prior notification to meet the changing needs of the class as a whole. It is the responsibility of the student to follow up in cases of missed classes.

Week/Class	Topic(s) with chapters (material) covered	Activities/Assessment
Week 1	Course Introduction, Syllabus Review, Assessment Review, Basic Principles of Communication Introduction to Weekly Email Correspondence Exercise Introduction to English Grammar and Punctuation <u>Resources:</u> <i>Chapter 1: Grammar – Effective Writing (Blue Book)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductory Tutorial• In-class Writing• Discussions• Lecture• Presentation• In-Class Exercise• Weekly Email Communication
Week 2	Technical Language – Sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Clarity- Concreteness- Conciseness- Correctness Practical Application - Writing Task Grammar Quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture• Discussions• Editing/Proofreading Practice• Reading• In-Class Exercise• In-Class Writing Task #1• Grammar Quiz• Weekly Email Communication 1

Week 3	Technical Language – Paragraphs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paragraph Structure - Paragraph Unity - Paragraph Development and Organization - Coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Discussions • Readings • In-Class Exercises • In-Class Writing Task #2 • Weekly Email Communication 2
Week 4	Technology – Grammar and Punctuation Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online grammar tools - Offline grammar tools - Working with these tools Workplace Communication – Memos & Emails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formality, Audience and Tone - Planning the Writing Task - Parts of a Memo - Effective Subject Lines - Clarity - Organizing Content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Discussion • Practice • In-class exercise • Weekly Email Communication 3
Week 5	Workplace Communication – Memos & Emails (cont'd.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formality, Audience and Tone - Planning the Writing Task - Parts of a Memo - Effective Subject Lines - Clarity - Organizing Content Working with a word processor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formatting - Page Headers/Footers - Table of Contents - Titles Pages - Tables - Images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Discussion • Practice • Readings • In-class exercise • In-Class Writing Task #3 (Memo) • Weekly Email Communication 4
Week 6	Working with a word processor (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formatting - Page Headers/Footers - Table of Contents - Titles Pages - Tables - Images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Discussions • In-Class Practice • In-Class Exercise • In-Class Writing Task #4 • Weekly Email Communication 5

	Working with Graphics and Diagrams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types and Uses - Incorporating Graphics into Technical Documents - Flow Charts - Activity Diagrams 	
Week 7	Practical Application – Markdown and README's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document our software - Instructions and Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction and Goals - Determining Audience and Pre-requisite Experience - Formatting - Usability - Definitions, Terminology - Notes, Warnings, Cautions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Discussion • Practice • In-class exercise • Group Work • Assignment #1
Spring Break: March 26th – April 3rd		
Week 8	Instructions and Procedures (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction and Goals - Determining Audience and Pre-requisite Experience - Formatting - Usability - Definitions, Terminology - Notes, Warnings, Cautions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture - Discussion - Reading - Group Work - In-class exercise - Assignment #2

Student Evaluation

Type of Evaluation	Percentage of Grade	Date Due/Assessed
Professionalism and Participation	10%	Ongoing
Weekly Email Communication	15%	
Email 1	3%	Week 2
Email 2	3%	Week 3
Email 3	3%	Week 4
Email 4	3%	Week 5
Email 5	3%	Week 6
Grammar Quiz	10%	Week 2

In-Class Writing Tasks	40%	
Task #1	10%	Week 2
Task #2	10%	Week 3
Task #3	10%	Week 5
Task #4	10%	Week 6
Assignments	25%	
Assignment #1	10%	Week 7
Assignment #2	15%	Week 8

Evaluation Details

Professionalism and Participation

Participation in class is considered to be important and reflects the same requirement in technical training as in the workplace. Positive contribution to class discussion, group work, and other learning activities is required in this course. A participatory and collaborative learning environment enhances everyone's learning experience and well as contributes to individual academic success. Participation and Professionalism will be an ongoing evaluation – students will receive feedback at a halfway point of the course and the end of the course. Please refer to **MITT Participation and Professionalism** rubric provided in the course outline for further details.

Weekly Email Communication

Each week, students are required to write an email based on the criteria indicated by the instructor. The criteria and rubric will be provided on the Monday and emails will be due before the end of the day on Friday of that same week. Emails not received on time will be subject to a loss of marks at 10% per day (including weekends).

Grammar Quiz

The grammar quiz is comprised of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank and short-answer type questions. The quiz is based on class lectures, textbook work, and the handouts provided.

In-Class Writing Tasks

These in-class writing tasks will combine the theory presented in class with practical work allowing students to apply and demonstrate their newly-acquired knowledge and skills. A detailed outline and rubric for each task will be provided by the instructor.

Assignments

The assignments will require students to apply their newly-acquired knowledge to create new documents, with a focus on a specific format. Assignments will be assigned to students early on in the presentation of a topic so new knowledge can be actively applied from in-class experiences immediately to the assignments. The assignment outlines and rubrics will be provided by the instructor in class.

Grading

Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Accumulated Evaluation Percentage
A+	4.5	90 – 100%
A	4.0	80 – 89%
B+	3.5	75 – 79%
B	3.0	70 – 74%
C+	2.5	65 – 69%
C	2.0	60 – 64%
D	1.0	50 – 59%
F	0.0	0 – 49%

Note: A passing grade in this course is 50%.

Course Policies

Online Material

Most handouts, assignments, files and links, including this course outline, will be available online at <https://jniziol.github.io/TechnicalWritingSkills/>. Please bookmark this site and visit it frequently as it will be consistently updated with new information.

Academic Dishonesty

As this course requires students to complete various writing activities and assignments, it is important that students understand the expectations to avoid any act of plagiarism.

- There is no group work in this course, and therefore students are expected to produce work that is their own. Working independently means working quietly at one's desk, unless group discussion is permitted by the instructor.
- In any instance where students are using ideas that are not their own, they must clearly cite their sources using APA format.

For further information about MITT's policy regarding academic dishonesty, refer to the Academic Integrity policy below with links to MITT guidelines.

MITT Academic Policy and Regulation

Students are responsible for reviewing and observing all [MITT Student Policies](#) while engaged in any form of academic activity with the Institute and should refer to the MITT website for all policy information.

Key policies to refer to in relation to this course include:

- [Student Discipline](#)

- [Student Behaviour](#)
- [Student and MITT Expectations](#)
- [Attendance Policy](#)
- [Documentation Requirements](#)
- [Dress Code Policy](#)

Academic Integrity

As per the [MITT Academic Integrity Policy](#), academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable. This policy applies to all courses at MITT and defines all activities and behaviours that might constitute grounds for an academic violation.

MITT expects all students to attend an academic orientation session within their program and to adhere to the principles of academic integrity.

Students found to be in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to disciplinary action as defined by [the MITT Student Discipline Policy](#). Refer to both of these policies for further details.

Retention of Course Outline

Students are advised to retain course outlines for future use in support of applications for employment or transfer of credits.

Information contained in this Course Outline is correct at the time of publication. Continuous improvement is important to MITT and our program delivery. Program and course content may be revised on an ongoing basis to ensure relevance to changing educational and/or labour market needs. As such, this program may be subject to change and the information outlined within should not be viewed as a representation or guarantee of offering.