# Summer 2014

**CSS 301 A** *Course time*: M/W 9:00 am — 11:30 am; *Room*: Sarah Simond Green Conservatory  
*Professor*: Nancy Kool, M.A., Ph.C. *• Office*: Truly House (office hours in UWB Bookstore café OR t.b.a.)

*Email:* [nlkool@uw.edu](mailto:nlkool@uw.edu) *•Phone (CSS Office, for emergencies only):* (425) 352-3201 *Office Hours*: M-W 11:30-12:30 OR by appointment

# Course Purpose

If you are already employed as an engineer, you know that exams and grades are replaced with promotions, choice work assignments, raises, and stock options, when it comes to rewarding your competence. Workplace performance is judged not only on your technical abilities, but also on your ability to communicate your knowledge (in writing and speaking) to colleagues, clients, and even the general public.

However, an engineer’s natural competence is to be great at communicating with their peers, and usually poor at communicating with other audiences of people who are not like them. Various communication problems are overly technical descriptions and a tendency to leap from one complex concept to the next without building the readers’ understanding.

# Course Objectives

Therefore, to assist you both personally in your degree and professionally on the job, CSS301, “Technical Writing for Computing Professionals” is part of your core curriculum. The course objectives are for students to:

1. Learn about the fundamentals of technical writing, including   
   \* organization of information and analysis  
   \* prewriting process, including outlines  
   \* precision process.
2. Practice the following:  
   \* different patterns of organization  
   \* addressing different audience  
   \* page layout & design to convey their message  
   \* alternative methods of communication (e.g., graphics, tables).
3. Learn to work in groups, such as  
   \* peer review  
   \* discuss ideas, report out

# ****Course Learning Outcomes****

Upon successful completion of the course students should:

1. Be able to demonstrate the ability to write a Compare and Contrast pattern.
2. Be able to demonstrate the ability to write a Process pattern.
3. Be able to demonstrate the ability to write an Argumentation (persuasive) pattern.
4. Be able to demonstrate the ability to write a Cause/Effect or Problem/Solution pattern.
5. Be able to demonstrate the ability to create several types of writings, clearly, concisely, and timely without assistance from others.
6. Be able to recognize when to apply a variety of technical writing patterns.
7. Be able to apply clear principles of page layout & design to final works.
8. Be able to analyze the communications’ situation (i.e., audience analysis) fully and deliver writing appropriately targeted.

# Course Materials

**REQUIRED READING:** Assigned reading through the UWB library electronic reading

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Williams, Robin. The Non-Designer’s Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice. 3rd Edition © 2008 Peach Pit Press [ISBN 0-321-53404-2]

**OPTIONAL TEXT:** Hacker, Diana. Rules for Writers. (any edition)

**WORD SOFTWARE:** This course is a writing course, not a handwriting class. Therefore, I expect all students to understand how to use Microsoft WORD on Windows or Apple. If you use a MAC, then you still need to be able to use Windows WORD, so that you can type your midterm and final in the computer lab using this software and also make it readable by applying page layout and design principles we learn in class.

**COURSE WEBSITE:** Can be found at <http://courses.washington.edu/css301/anderson/> .The course website is available on the internet at any time. In some cases, you may receive a “file not found” error if a file has not been placed on the web server yet, but it will become available before we talk about that topic.

# Grading

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Writing Assignments (4) [15% each] | 60% |
| Midterm Exam | 20% |
| Final | 20% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |
| For the midterm & final, the exam is based on 100 points, then mapped to a 4.0 scale as follows:  90s (3.5-4.0), 80s (2.7-3.4), 70s (1.8-2.4), 60s (0.7-1.7). Note: a grade in the 70’s is needed to pass an exam. | |
| **Note: Students may not request individual extra credit opportunities.** | |

# Policies

These policies provide an even grading policy and an encouraging learning environment for all.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on paper. Given special situations and by receiving prior permission, you may receive permission to turn in your assignment late.

**DRAFT LETTER GRADES:** The draft assignments will be returned to you with a draft letter grade indicating that if you did not make any further changes to your assignment, but turned it in as is for the final version, then that letter grade would be translated to a 4.0 scale and that is the grade you would receive. This letter helps you determine what effort is required to achieve the grade you desire on the final version. Letter grades translate as follows: A 4.0-3.8, A- 3.7-3.5, B+ 3.4-3.2, B 3.1-2.9, B- 2.8-2.5, C+ 2.4-2.2, C 2.1-1.9, C- 1.8-1.5, D+ 1.4-1.2, D 1.1-.9, D- .8-.5, F .4-0.

**WRITING PROCESS:** The writing process is an important learning goal for this class. Therefore, if you have not turned in a Draft assignment, you can only achieve a maximum of 2.0/4.0 on your grade for that Final assignment.

**RETAIN DRAFTS:** Please turn-in your Final version (one copy) stapled with the Draft version and my comments on top. If you do not have my comments, then you can only achieve a maximum of 3.2/4.0 on your grade for that Final assignment.

**GRADING POLICY:** Your grade is essentially composed from the four assignments and two exams. Within reason, no one grade will determine the grade for the quarter, because there are other factors that will affect your grade. When computing the final grade, I look at each person’s work throughout the quarter, and add in other factors, such as whether you were on time for class, whether you participated in class discussions, whether your grades improved from the first assignment to the last or from the midterm to the final, whether you sought me out for additional assistance with concepts that weren’t clear to you, whether you did the reading homework, etc. So even if there isn’t a percentage of your grade for participation, it’s in there in your final grade, because you can make a 4.0/4.0 in this class, even if you haven’t demonstrated perfection in everything you’ve done, but rather because you’ve demonstrated that you have excelled at your learning. So bottom line? Yes, I curve final grades based on participation and effort.

**MIDTERM/FINAL EXAMS:** The exams are based on material covered in class, assignments, course notes (website), reading homework, grammar homework, and last, readings, in that order. The exams are closed notes, closed book, with the exception that you can bring in one page 8 ½" x 11" double sided with any information on it you need to remember. These exams are not memorization exams, but writing and application exams. You will be required to type for up to two hours to complete the exam, using Microsoft WORD on a Windows computer in a computer lab. Content for the Final will be comprehensive for the whole course, but weighted more heavily on the latter half of the course. A make-up exam will not be given except in extraordinary cases, such as a certified medical condition.

**HOMEWORK** When you’re given homework with the reading, bring it to class completed to aid in discussions.

**GRAMMAR HOMEWORK** is not graded; however, you are responsible for reviewing it. I’ve selected specific class days to handle grammar homework questions, so bring your questions to class that day. But DO IT! You will see its content on the exams; besides your writing should have impeccable grammar.

**FORMAT MATTERS:** Per professional writing standards, the required format for your draft and final papers is 12-point formal font (Calibri or Times New Roman), single-spaced, and single-sided. Please note that these are not Microsoft Word default settings. Drafts not meeting format requirements will not receive detailed comments, and the highest possible grade for final versions in incorrect format is 3.8 (4.0 scale, i.e.,-.2 deduction).

**UWB ALERTS:** I recommend that you sign up for UWB Alerts to be aware of possible school closures due to weather. If class is cancelled due to weather, I will email the class with subsequent arrangements to handle coursework for that missed class.

**MISSED CLASSES:** If you miss class, you are still responsible for turning in assignments on time and getting lecture notes from a classmate. If a paper is due, email me your assignment as an attachment.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** You may type notes in class, but please do not use technology as a distraction.

**BACK UPS:** You are responsible for maintaining electronic back-up copies of all your work.

**UW EMAIL:** You are responsible for checking your UW email account daily.

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT:** Written or other work which you submit must be the product of your own efforts. Plagiarism is one of the most common violations of academic integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty, including dishonesty involving computer technology, are prohibited. You are responsible for knowing what constitutes a violation of the University of Washington Student Code, and you will be held responsible for any such violations whether they were intentional or not, so please pay attention to web information, assignments, and discussions in class regarding these topics. See <http://www.uwb.edu/studentservices/academicconduct> for more information. The library also has an extremely useful website with resources at <http://libguides.uwb.edu/ai>.

**INCOMPLETES:** University rules state “an incomplete is given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work until within two weeks at the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor … the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

**ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS:** If you believe that you have a disability and would like academic accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services at (425)352-5307 or [dss@uwb.edu](mailto:rlundborg@uwb.edu).

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:**Library: <http://library.uwb.edu/> 425-352-5340  
Writing Center: [www.uwb.edu/WritingCenter/](http://www.uwb.edu/WritingCenter/) 425-352-5253  
Quantitative Skills Center: [http://www.uwb.edu/qsc 425-352-3170](http://www.uwb.edu/qsc%20425-352-3170)  
Student Success and Career Services: <http://www.uwb.edu/studentservices/success-services> 425-352-3776  
Student Counseling Services: <http://www.uwb.edu/studentservices/counseling> 425-352-3183

# Daily Schedule

The following table is the schedule for this class; however, changes may occur during the quarter. Any changes will be announced in class and by e-mail. If a schedule change causes undue hardship, see me ASAP.

| M/W | Assignment Due | Reading Due (Library E-Reserves) | In-Class Activities |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **M 6/23** | (In-class activity) Group Manifesto. Email to me before Wednesday’s class. | (Gerson & Gerson) “What’s Technical Communications?” pp 4‑8 and “The Writing Process” pp 24‑43 | Syllabus; Discussion of Technical Writing; Technical Writing Process  Writing Compare and Contrast  Set up peer groups |
| **W 6/25** | Technical Writing Process HW  *Grammar HW#1* | “Organizing your Information” (Markel) pp 136, 138, 139 (top) [about compare/contrast style] | Incorporating Tables; topic sign-up |
| **M 6/30** | Memo HW  *Grammar HW#2* | “Memos” (Holloway) [memo sections] | Punctuation review & practice  Tone in TW; Effective Paragraphs |
| **W 7/2** | **Assign #1 (C/C) Draft**  Process/Instruction HW Bring an instruction manual | “Directions and Instructions” (Holloway) pp 79‑97 | Writing Procedures and Instructions; PROCESS Pattern (w. sign-up; brainstorm scenarios)  Progressive Levels of Disclosure |
| **M 7/7** | Graphics HW  *Grammar HW#3* | “Visual Communications” (Sorby) pp 158-208 | Integrating Graphics & Graphics Misuse |
| **W 7/9** | CRAP HW & Bring the sample you used for question #2  Bring Assignment #1 in electronic form | *Non‑Designer’s Design Book*  [all of it] {Bring book to class | Page Layout & Design; visual clarity & translating CRAP to Word  **Meet in UW1-120** |
| **M 7/14** | **Assign #2 (Proc) Draft DUE** | “Abstracts and Summaries” (Andrews) pp ) pp 281‑293 | Summaries & Abstracts  Citation Theory & Integrating Information; #3 & #4 topic sign-up |
| **W 7/16** | *Grammar HW#4* | “Persuading and Proving” (Andrews) pp 235-259 | **Speaker:**  Beth Sanderson **(Meet in LB1-222)** |
| **M 7/21** | **Assign #1 (C/C) FINAL DUE** |  | Writing Position Papers; Outlines with args; Logic errors |
| **W 7/23** | **Assign #3 (Pos) DRAFT DUE**  Outline on separate page  Bring 3 print sources to class |  | Problem/Solution Papers; in-class work on scenarios |
| **M 7/28** | (Optional) one 8 ½ X 11 sheet with your study notes |  | Open Note **Midterm Meet in UW1-120** |
| **W 7/30** | **Assign #4 (P/S) DRAFT DUE** | “Organizing Your Information” (Markel) pp 129-152 | Analyzing causation & the C/E pattern |
| **M 8/4** | Audience analysis HW | “Analyzing your Audience and Purpose” (Markel) pp 68‑85 | Evaluating audiences |
| **W 8/6** | **Assign #2 (Proc) FINAL DUE** |  | Writing inductively and self-reflectively |
| **M 8/11** | **Assign #3 (Pos) FINAL DUE**  Outline on separate page  Letter HW | “Letters, Memos, and Related Forms” (Holloway) (any section on letters) | Letters vs Memos (practice); delivery mechanism v. pattern |
| **W 8/13** | Ethics HW | “Writing Ethically” (Andrews) pp 38-56 and “Considering Style and Bias” (Jones) pp 215-235 | Ethics at work and in writing  Final review |
| **M 8/18** | (Optional) one 8 ½ X 11 sheet with your study notes |  | **Meet in UW1-121** |
| **W 8/20** | **Assign #4 (P/S) FINAL DUE**  Bring your resume (as is) | “Resumes” (Holloway) pp 175-186 | **Speaker:** Career Center & Resumes  Posters (capstone); Course evaluations |

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**STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS:** CSS 301 is a fast-paced course that also requires a level of professionalism and maturity that may not have been expected in previous writing classes. It often requires you to work independently and to manage your time well. For best results, keep up with scheduled work, even when it is not collected. This will help you to avoid uncomfortable “pile-ups” at the end of the quarter. Furthermore, there is no superfluous, “busy” work in the syllabus: by the end of the quarter, you will be called on to demonstrate your knowledge of what has been covered in the readings and practiced through various homework assignments.

In addition, this course will challenge your accustomed ideas about what writing is and what it does, while confronting you with a host of unfamiliar patterns and specifications. Careful attention to the various requirements, and to the explanations of their purposes, will help to ease your transition.

**THINGS TO AVOID:** Avoiding these issues will maximize your chances to do well in this course (these also fall under the heading of instructor “pet peeves”):

* Coming to class late
* Missing class and then asking, “Did we do anything?” OR “What did we do?”
* Not reading or following instructions, then asking questions easily answered by reading (or re-reading) the instructions (asking for clarification is, in contrast, welcome and appropriate)
* Being passive and/or unprepared for class
* Multi-tasking in class, resulting in missing important information

**PAPER FORMAT:** The only format that will be accepted this quarter is as follows:

* FONT: Calibri or Times New Roman, 12-point (note this is NOT the current Word default)
* STAPLED
* SINGLE-SIDED
* SPACING: Single-spaced, with an extra space between paragraphs (also not the current Word default).