# Technical Writing Course Overview

## Course Details

English 3764: Technical Writing

CRNs #85298, #85300, #85304,& #85305

Fall 2025 (Aug 25–Dec 17)

## Course Texts

All readings are free, from

* open online textbooks.
* pages & files in Canvas.
* external PDFs & websites.

## Teacher

**A person with glasses and blonde hair

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Traci Gardner**

[tengrrl@vt.edu](mailto:tengrrl@vt.edu)

she, her, hers

Straight, cisgender, white. Disabled. Night owl. List maker. Planner addict. Sticker hoarder. Lifetime Girl Scout. Hokie alum. Steelers fan. Poodle lover.

## Accessibility IconAccessibility

Everyone needs special accommodation at some point. I am happy to work with the [Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) staff](https://ssd.vt.edu/) or directly with you to make sure that you have the support you need.

### Need extra time on assignments?

No problem. If you need more time, use the course’s grace period. Check the details on Due Dates & the Late Policy for more details.

### Need a less-distracting environment?

Do your work any place that works for you. All work is done online and independently, so you have complete control over where you work.

### Ready to tell me what you need to do well in the course?

Official testing can be expensive and time-consuming, so I don’t require it. Just tell me what you need, and I’ll try to help.

Send me a private Canvas or email message that tells me what you need as soon as you can. Attach info from the SSD office if you have it. I’ll do what I can to help, but can only apply changes to the future. I cannot apply accommodations retroactively.

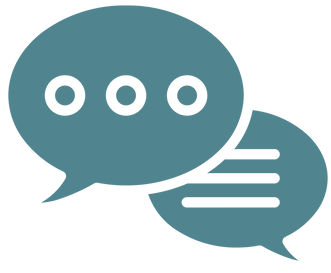
# Contacting Traci

## Email Messages

Send your message to me using your VT.EDU email or the Inbox tool in Canvas.

I will respond as quickly as possible, **usually within 24 to 48 hours on class days. I take holidays and weekends off** and reply on the next class day.

## Public Chat in Real-Time

Use the Zoom Team Chat in Canvas to ask fast questions about the course.

Team Chat is something like an awkward Discord server.

I keep the Chat tool open whenever I am at the computer and available. I’ll post a note there when I’m offline or busy.

## Private Online Meetings

Setup online meetings in Zoom if you need a private conversation. Think of this as meeting me in my office on campus.

NEED MORE HERE » Schedule your meeting at least 24 hours in advance.



This page contains invisible dragons If you can see a dragon, you are magical

# Course Work

## Assignment Basics

This course includes three weighted categories of work, desecribed below.

All work is your individual responsibility. There are some group discussions, but you are graded individually, based on your participation in these activities.



## Kinds of Work in the Course

### Major Projects

**60%**

These are written documents ranging from 1–15 pages.

They ask you to compose memos, instructions, proposals, and informational articles. All major projects have visual design elements.

Grading criteria are in the rubric for each project. There are five Major Projects in the course.

### Weekly Activities

**25%**

These are short exercises, discussions, and assignments, similar to in-class work or homework in a campus-based class. They may ask you to write something, fill out a form, or complete a quiz.

All Weekly Activities are open book.

You usually have two Weekly Activities each week.

### Check-In Surveys

**15%**

These are brief, anonymous polls that ask you how you are doing in the course. Surveys are primarily multiple- choice or true-false. There are no right or wrong answers.

I use your responses to customize the course and write a class newsletter.

There is a Check-In Survey for each week of classes.

# Course Structure



## Course Modules

This course has five modules:

Module 1: Introduction to TW

Module 2: Project Proposal

Module 3: Documentation & Instructions

Module 4: Informational Article

Module 5: Fact Sheet

## What’s in a Module?

Each Module includes everything you need for a unit. Think of it like a backpack that has just the right materials you need for a task.

You’ll find the following materials:

* A Module introduction page
* Links to readings
* Links to all assignments

To access each module, click on Modules in the left menu in Canvas.



## Module Starting Point

Begin with the module introduction page, which provides:

* A brief intro to the subject(s) covered in that module
* A set of module objectives
* Links to readings and assignments

# Module & Project Overview

## Module 1 (Weeks 1–3): Intro to Technical Communication

Blue letters with light blue lines

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Identify a subject from your major and justify its relevance. Analyze potential audiences for technical communication on this topic.

Learn about audience awareness, ethics, and correspondence.

## Module 2 (Weeks 4–6) Proposing Your Project

A couple of people pointing at a graph

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Propose an approach to your subject (could be a solution to a problem, implementation plan, etc.).

Include a brief literature review of scholarly sources, demonstrating research techniques, citation styles, and evaluation of sources.

Incorporate document design principles, plain language techniques, and audience adaptation.

Include visual elements (charts, graphs, etc.).

Learn to distinguish technical from academic writing.

A blue clipboard with a paper clip

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

## Module 3 (Weeks 7–9): Writing Instructions

Create a guide that explains how to learn about your subject. Report on your progress in the course.

A blue and black graph on paper

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

## Module 4 (Weeks 10–12): Informing Your Readers

Write an in-depth information article for non-experts, providing a comprehensive explanation of your subject.

## A blue and black logo AI-generated content may be incorrect.Module 5 (Weeks 13–15): Explaining to the Public

Distill your informational article into a concise, visually- appealing fact sheet

# Course Grading Process

## Like a Performance Review on a Job



In the workplace, no one gives you a 92% on a report or a B+ on a proposal. You’re expected to do your job completely and correctly.

Instead, your manager either approves your work or asks you to revise it by the final deadline.

That’s what we do in this class too.

## How It Works in Canvas

**Complete**

Listed on the Grades page as ✔ or 1

Done right & ready to send out

**Incomplete**

Listed on the Grades page as ✘ or 0

Needs work & can be revised

## What “Complete” Means

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Complete** | **Incomplete** |
| Matches the assignment | ✔ | ✘ |
| Follows VT’s Honor Code & Principles of Community | ✔ | ✘ |
| Meets every rubric item | ✔ | ✘ |
| Includes everything required | ✔ | ✘ |

## Incomplete Isn’t a Failure—It’s a Draft

If your work is marked Incomplete, don’t panic. It just means something needs to be revised.

You can revise and resubmit as often as needed, up until you earn a Complete or the final deadline at 11:59 PM, whichever comes first.

A person writing on a paper

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

## Tracking Your Work in Canvas

A person sitting on a bench looking at a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

You’ll see these marks in Canvas Grades:

✔ or 1 = Complete

✘ or 0 = Incomplete

These aren’t grades. They’re status updates that tell you when your work is finished.

## Where Your Course Grade Comes From

Canvas calculates your course grade by tallying all the work that is Complete in each category of work and assigning a score based on the weight of the category. The math is straightforward:

# of Complete Tasks

Total # of Tasks Available

X

Weight for the Category

Add up the calculations for all the categories, and compare the number to the VT Grade Scale with +/- :

A 93–100  
A- 90–92.99

B+ 87–89.99  
B 83–86.99  
B- 80–82.99

C+ 77–79.99  
C 73–76.99  
C- 70–72.99

D+ 67–69.99  
D 63–66.99  
D- 60–62.99

F 59.99 & below

# Late Policy & Grace Period

## The Basics



**I accept late work for most assignments in this course.**

You don’t need to ask in advance or explain why your work is late.

Take more time when you need it, as often as you need it, and then turn your work in before the grace period ends.

## Target Due Dates

Every assignment in the course has a **Target Due Date**. That’s the date the assignment is due. It’s the date you should aim for so you do not fall behind in the course.

* Applies to all work in the course.
* Ends at 11:59 PM on Fridays.

## Grace Periods

There are two different grace period systems: one for weekly activities and check-in surveys, and another for major projects.

### 3-Day Grace Period

* Applies to all Weekly Activities and Check-In Surveys.
* Lasts 3 week days.
* Ends at 11:59 PM on Wednesdays.

### 6-Day Grace Period

* Applies to all Major Projects and Self-Checks.
* Lasts 6 week days.
* Ends at 11:59 PM on Mondays.

For both systems, once the grace period passes, you can no longer submit the assignment and, therefore, it earns an Incomplete.

## Major Project Revision Due Dates

You can revise Major Projects in the course as long as you meet these requirements:

* You turn in a **Major Project** by the end of the 6-Day Grace Period.
* Your submission meets the expectations for a **good-faith effort** (meaning it responds to the assignment and meets basic requirements like length and format).

You may revise as often as you’d like **until the revision deadline**, which is **two weeks after the Target Due Date** for that project. Exact revision deadlines are listed **in Canvas**.

Because each project builds on the last, revising early projects will help you do better on future ones. Staying on track with your work — and your revisions — will make the entire course easier and more rewarding.

KEY TERMS AT A GLANCE

Late Indication in Canvas

If you turn in your work any time after the Target Due Date, Canvas will mark your work as Late. Don’t worry about this label. There is no grade penalty for work submitted after the Target Due Date.

Incompletes are given only in provable emergency situations--and only if you have completed at least 75% of the coursework. Incompletes will not be given in situations where you might have disappeared early in the class and then reappeared later. Be aware of drop and withdrawal dates.

To Add:

 Schedule

 Late Policy

Major Project Overview?  Where to Get Help