

WR227 Spring 2017

Technical Writing and Technical Communication: How to be a Better Communicator

Instructor: Eric Dickey

CRN: 49061 & 49629

Times: 3:30 – 4:50 p.m. MW

6:00 – 7:20 p.m. TR

Location: BC-205 & BC-225

Office: BC 102c

Office Hours: before and after class MW  
and 5:00 – 6:00 TR

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WELCOME TO WR227!

Technical communications happen all the time in the workplace and in the world. As writers, we transcribe, produce, translate, and interpret information. This class will give you experience in researching topics and communicating ideas precisely, clearly, and efficiently, an essential skill in technical communication. To view the course objectives for WR227:

<https://www.linnbenton.edu/55D763BC-248B-11E3-B3570050568208D5>.

The products you will produce for this class will be directly relevant to your career and academic pursuits. The goal of this class is to help you become better communicators.

As a result of taking WR 227, students will be able to:

1. To introduce you to technical writing conventions so you may prepare a variety of documents appropriate in technical fields, including descriptions, instructions, proposals, and analytical reports. Any of these documents may use primary and secondary research, for a combined length of approximately 16-20 single-spaced pages over the term.
2. To help you design a technical research project and use a systematic research process to collect, analyze, synthesize, and present the information in a format commonly accepted in technical writing.
3. To help you understand how to revise any technical document for thoughtful content, logical organization, clarity and the relevance of your own and others' work.
4. To encourage you to think critically about information you gather and to use primary and secondary information to solve problems.
5. To help you become an independent, self-motivating learner.
6. To increase your awareness of the impact of computers on your personal and professional lives and on society in general (when computer classrooms are available).

### **Text**

Technical Communication: Fourteenth Edition. John M. Lannon and Laura J. Gurak.

ISBN 13: 987-0-13-411849-9.

Editions ten and above can be used. However, the chapter topics and numbers of the older editions do not match the most recent fourteenth edition.

The textbook is available for purchase (new or used) in the LBCC bookstore at both centers and in Albany. The book is also available for short-term loan on reserve at the LBCC library, the main campus Writing Center, and at the Learning Center at the Benton Center. It may

also be available for brief use at the other satellite campuses. You can use earlier editions.

NOTE about the text: This REQUIRED textbook is an essential part of our class and you will refer to it frequently as you develop and incorporate the book's content into your writing projects. However, OWNING THE BOOK IS NOT REQUIRED. You may be able to share a text with a classmate, perhaps even sharing the cost. See me, if you need further assistance. The book discusses writing strategies for technical writing and provides helpful models for all writing assignments. The publisher has developed online resources (including study guides for each chapter which the instructor will share).

A grammar handbook will be useful this term. You can bring your own or check one out from the library. **A literature review of a grammar handbook is required.** Although using online grammar resources is commonplace, most sites are not comprehensive. While I encourage you to use a hard copy book, I will entertain the idea of your reviewing an online resource if you clear it with me ahead of time.

In addition to in-class exercises and participation, assignments, a quiz or two, assessments, and the reading, four major products will determine your grade.

#### **Four major products**

- 5 reviews (2 chapter reviews, 1 grammar book review, 1 resource review, 1 literature review)
- cover letter and résumé
- a presentation
- a proposal complete with cover page, summary, budget and more

An approximate weekly schedule is listed below, and is subject to change. Weekly handouts will be distributed every first class of the week and will offer more details for the week. Weekly handouts will also forecast upcoming assignments.

#### **Grades be based on**

- 15% participation (attendance, in-class participation, other homework)
- 20% reviews (5 reviews, worth 4 points each each)
- 10% cover letter and résumé (worth 5 points each)
- 20% presentation (four to five slides, graded on content and quality)
- 35% proposal (cover letter, title page, budget, budget justification, project summary, narrative, presentation, résumé, letters of support; can be submitted by an individual, or by a group)

## **Track your grade**

Assignment	Total possible points	Your score
Attendance and Homework	15	
Chapter review #1	4	
Chapter review #2	4	
Grammar book review	4	
Resource review	4	
Literature review	4	
Cover letter	5	
Résumé	5	
Presentation	20	
Proposal	35	
Total	100	

## **Reviews**

### *Two chapter reviews*

Every student will review two chapters, write a review, and present their review to the class. Each student is required to check in with other reviewers to assure that different things in the chapters will be highlighted. Include your name on your review, the chapter number and title, and do the following:

1. Write a short paragraph introducing and summarizing the chapter.
2. Write a paragraph detailing a specific aspect of the chapter. Cite a specific pages and passages that help explain your points.
3. Complete one of the exercises at the end of the chapter in the Projects section. Write a paragraph about your experience.
4. Write a concluding your review.

Present your chapter review to the class and discuss the exercise and findings. Chapter reviews should be no more than a single-spaced page. See a sample chapter review on the instructor's website. Your written review will be the basis of your grade. The instructor will provide you with additional information about your chapter the weekend prior to your review.

### *Grammar book review*

As a writer, you will find yourself constantly returning to a source text that helps you with your writing, such as a writing manual. One such source commonly used at LBCC is "They Say / I Say" (Graff and Birkenstein). Other common sources are, "The Writer's Reference" by Diane Hacker, and "The Bedford Handbook" also by Diane Hacker, but you should find one that appeals to you and may have relevance to your major. Include your name and a citation of the book or resource, a paragraph about how the book is structured, what you like/don't like and why. Your review should be no more than a single-spaced page and contain an introduction and conclusion, and should cite specific pages and passages that help explain your points. See the weekly handout for additional assignment requirements.

### *Resource review*

Identify a hard copy of a source text that you may refer to throughout your education or career, such as a book for engineers or a book for nurses. For me, it would be a book for poets, such as a poet's reference book. Include your name and the citation of the source of interest, why and how

you think the source will be of use to you. Your review should be no more than a single-spaced page and contain an introduction and conclusion, and should cite specific pages and passages that help explain your points. See the weekly handout for additional assignment requirements.

### Literature review

For the final project, you will be required to review projects that are similar to your final project. This is called a “literature review” since you are reviewing the existing literature to see what others are doing and saying. Include your name and the citations of the sources, and a short paragraph description summarizing the sources. The review must contain at least three sources but no more than five. It should be no more than a single-spaced page. See the weekly handout for additional assignment requirements.

### **Formatting assignments**

Unless otherwise defined, all assignments are to be single-spaced and use one-inch margins and a Times New Roman font of no larger than 12 points.

### **Grading**

The grading scale follows the traditional 90% = A, 80% = B, 70% = C, etc. Assignments will earn points based on:

- quality and organization
- clarity and conciseness
- usefulness of design and graphics
- how it incorporates the course material
- timeliness of the assignment (assignments turned in after 24 hours will automatically be marked down one letter grade)

### **Student Decorum Statement**

Because college coursework and professional correspondence require focused study and open exchange of ideas, the Department expects the classroom to be a place of courteous interaction, a forum for demonstrating mutual respect between teachers and students. Professional communication requires all of us to listen carefully to each other (whether we agree or not) and to state our positions with clarity and our disagreements with tact. Standards for academic courtesy apply to group work, on-line interaction, and student-teacher interaction as well.

### **Diversity statement**

LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws. Our differences are a source of strength and are an important part of education.

### **Skills Needed to Be Successful in this Class**

Technical skills: Word processing, e-mail, and use of the internet.

Communicating skills: This class is designed to improve your writing and communication skills. Do you like to learn from reading and writing?

Assignment Submission: Please see the Weekly Schedule for these instructions. **Bring hard**

**copies to class on the days they are due to receive the full grade.** While emailed copies are fine, I will very rarely be able to provide comments or feedback on electronic copies. Hard copies will be returned with notes, comments, and your score. If you receive a low grade on an assignment, you can submit revised work. Submitted revisions can increase your grade from a half to a full letter grade.

All assignments must be compatible with Word or saved as PDF. All assignments must follow work-place conventions and standards of professionalism. Please keep a copy of every paper you submit.

### **Emailing the instructor**

In your email, put your name, WR227, and the topic of the message in the subject line of the email (for example, Smith WR227 week 1 assignment). Also include a brief description of the reason you are writing in the message itself. This information will also help me identify the nature of your request and reply more quickly. Please allow 24 hours during business days (Monday through Friday) for a response. Messages sent without a signature and with text such as “wht up in class this wk” most likely won’t receive a response; in addition, e-mails without texts in the messages that are sent only with attachments will most likely end up in my spam filter. I usually respond, even with a simply “thanks” just to let you know that I received your message.

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be taken by a daily sign-in sheet. If you attend regularly, contribute to class discussion, and don’t distract from the learning environment, you will receive full attendance and participation credit. If you are absent due to illness or a verifiable emergency, you must contact me within 24 hours to make further arrangements. You may or may not be able to make up the participation points.

### **Late Work**

Our classroom standards reflect workplace standards; a due date is a deadline and you don’t miss deadlines without informing your supervisor of your progress on the report in advance. If you feel circumstances are working against you, you may make arrangements for an extension PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE. Late work will lose 10% automatically and may suffer additional penalties. If any late assignments are turned in after Week Nine, I cannot guarantee that I will be able to read them before the end of the term, and the assignment may result in earning zero credit for those assignments.

### **Plagiarism**

Do your own work! Using someone else’s work as your own or using information or ideas without proper citations can lead to your failing the assignment or the class. Bibliographies (Works Cited or References) and in-text citations are required whenever you use outside sources, including the Internet. Depending on the severity of the plagiarism, the student may be subject to administrative action. Ask if you are uncertain or have any questions.

### **Course Activities and Practice**

I. Participation: You will be asked to participate in in-class activities to practice concepts you will be learning. Your participation in these activities and your record of attendance will raise or lower your participation grade.

II. Assessments: Usability review workshops are a time for you to get helpful feedback from your colleagues, peers, and classmates. To complete this activity, you will bring drafts of assignments to class. These workshops are designed to develop your growing audience awareness, helping you understand not only how your writing sounds to others but also how it affects or fails to affect others.

III. Projects: Assignments are designed to gradually increase in difficulty and assigned length.

### **Resources**

#### *The Writing Center*

While enrolled in Writing 227, you are encouraged to seek extra help at the Writing Center located on the second floor of Willamette Hall, in the Learning Resource Center above the Library at the Albany campus, and on the second floor of the Benton Center in Corvallis. If needed, they will also be able to direct you to the ESOL lab for additional support. Visit their website at <https://www.linnbenton.edu/writing-center> for hours and information. The Online Writing Lab is also available to submit writing electronically for feedback. Follow the link to the Writing Center homepage. You are encouraged to seek help early in the term. This is a free service to all LB students.

#### *Computer Lab Resources*

You may use either LRC 213 at the Benton Center or Forum 204 at the Albany campus as a drop-in computer lab whenever classes are not scheduled and space is available.

#### *Library Information*

The LBCC library homepage can be found by following the links from: <http://library.linnbenton.edu/home>. The site provides library hours, an online catalogue, as well as many helpful research databases.

#### *Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab)*

While not exclusively, I will be using examples from the Purdue OWL to ameliorate the material we cover in class. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

LETS WORK TOGETHER! Developing technical writing skills for effective individual and teamwork means a great deal of thoughtful effort on your part. Your commitment will enhance your results in class and in your future employment. Email me or visit during office hours to discuss an assignment or your progress at any point in the term. I look forward to working with you this term. Let me know what I can do to make this a successful learning experience for you!

Students who have emergency medical information the instructor should know of, or who might need special arrangements in the event of an evacuation, or students with documented disabilities who have special needs, should make an appointment with the instructor no later than the first week of the term. If additional assistance is required, the student should contact LBCC's Office of Disability Services at (541) 917-4789.

If you are struggling with personal issues, I can help. Come see me. I can connect you with people and available resources.

### **Accessibility**

You should meet with your instructor during the first week of class if:

- you have a documented disability and need accommodations,
- your instructor needs to know medical information about you, or
- you need special arrangements in the event of an emergency.

If you believe you may need accommodation services please contact Center for Accessibility Resources, (541) 917-4789. If you have documented your disability, remember that you must make your request for accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources Online Services web page every term in order to receive accommodations. If you have a documented disability, I will help you in any way I can. Talk to me during the first week of class. If you think you might have a disability, but you are not sure, contact Disability Services, (541) 917-4789. [Here is a lot more useful information about Disability Services and LBCC's disability policies.](#)

### **Incompletes**

If you have completed approximately 80 percent of the course work by the end of the term but are unable, for reasons that are generally not your fault, to complete the rest, I will grant you an incomplete until you are later able to complete.

### **LBCC Non-Discrimination Policy**

Everyone is welcome at LBCC, regardless of whether they are black, white, Latino, native, gay, straight, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, male, female, transgendered, married, single, disabled, a veteran, a non-English speaker, an immigrant, or any number of other categories not listed here. [For the official nondiscrimination policy click here.](#) What is more, LBCC sees our differences as a source of strength and an important part of education.

## **APPROXIMATE WEEKLY SCHEDULE & THEMES:**

- Week 1: What is Technical Communications and where are we going?  
Chapters 1 & 2  
Due Letter to instructor
- Week 2: Know your audience, know your self  
Chapters 3, 4, & 5  
Due write-ups
- Week 3: Professional and personal standards  
Chapters 6, 7, & 8  
Due Grammar book review
- Week 4: Give the people what they want!  
Chapters 9, 10, & 11  
Due Resource review and Job write-ups
- Week 5: Visual and graphic design  
Chapters 12 & 13  
Due Website write-ups and Bibliography
- Week 6: Memos, letters, and more letters  
Chapters 14, 15, & 16  
Due Cover letter and Résumé
- Week 7: Building in assessments  
Chapters 17, 18, & 19  
Due Proposal idea and Literature review
- Week 8: Proposal components  
Chapters 20, 21, & 22  
Due Proposal summary
- Week 9: Presentations  
Chapter 23  
Due Presentations
- Week 10: Online writing voice  
Chapters 24 & 25  
Due Final proposal draft
- Week 11: Finals Week, no class this week.  
Final proposals due week of June 12.