

**ENC 6261, Sec. 0W61 (19279)–Technical Writing, Theory and Practice (3 credits)
Spring 2019 Syllabus**

Instructor: Sonia Stephens

Office location: TCH 256A

E-mail: sonia.stephens@ucf.edu (preferred method)

Meeting date/time: WWW

Phone number: (407) 823-5596 (dept. office)

Meeting location: n/a

Skype: soniahstephens (by appointment)

Office hours: W 1:00-2:30, Th 1:00-2:30, or by appointment, or we can communicate via email or Skype.

Course Description

This course focuses on major issues and trends in technical communication theory and the relevance of current theory to practitioners. You will read and discuss essays by leading technical communication theorists on the history of the discipline, rhetorical perspectives, philosophies and theories, and the impacts of digital tools and technologies. You will also conduct research in the literature and develop an annotated bibliography and a literature review.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course you will have:

- Developed a thorough understanding of technical communication theory and its application both in the workplace and in the academy.
- Formulated and refined your own theoretical stance.
- Developed a research program and positioned your work solidly within the existing literature.
- Written an annotated bibliography.
- Written a literature review.

Required Texts:

- Johnson-Eilola & Selber (eds.). *Solving Problems in Technical Communication*. U. of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Additional journal articles will be accessed through our Webcourses site.

Course Policies

General course policies: I expect regular virtual “attendance.” It is very important that you check in several times a week and complete work and respond to messages promptly. Prolonged periods of inactivity on our course website (i.e., not logging in and using the site to access materials, read modules, or complete assignments) will penalize your final grade. Excessive inactivity may lead to automatic failure. In a web-based course, “attendance” also includes meeting the deadlines for turning in assignments.

I expect professionalism in online discussions. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other derogatory remarks will not be tolerated. My top priority is to provide a safe environment for learning.

All assignments are due by the announced date and time except in the event of a medical or personal emergency, or for one of the following three reasons, which you should notify me about ahead of time:

- Religious holiday (please notify me during the first week of class)
- Authorized UCF/academic events (e.g., athletics, presenting work at an academic conference)
- Legal obligations (e.g., jury duty)

If you have a family or other personal emergency, notify me as soon as possible. Notifying me of a situation or problem after the fact prevents me from making alternative arrangements. If you are a

deployed active duty military student and will need an accommodation for this, contact me as soon as possible to discuss your circumstances.

For non-excused late work, 10% (one letter grade) will be deducted for each 24-hour period late until a grade of F is reached.

E-mail do's & don'ts: We will primarily be communicating via email. I encourage you to email me with any questions or concerns that you have. Webcourses allows you to select how often you want notifications of communication to be sent to your regular KnightsMail account. I suggest that you set it to send you notifications of Webcourses email and class announcements right away, so you can read and reply to them in a timely fashion.

Use common-sense e-mail etiquette to demonstrate your professionalism: e.g., include a salutation, use full sentences and capitalization, and be sure to sign your name. Consider communicating with your instructors or fellow students in an academic setting to be professional communication. Use one e-mail account consistently: if I receive an unsigned e-mail from you and do not recognize the e-mail address, I may not respond to your message.

Financial Aid Activity: In order to document that you began this course for UCF's financial aid reporting, please complete the introductory discussion post on our Webcourses site by *5:00 pm on Friday of Week 1*. Failure to do so will delay your financial aid.

Academic Honesty: All work must be original by you. Undocumented use of another's words, ideas, images, or other media is plagiarism, as is allowing someone else to write or edit your work for you. If you are caught plagiarizing, depending on the severity, you will fail the assignment. You also risk automatically failing the course, disciplinary referral to the appropriate dean, and possible expulsion from UCF. See the UCF Rules of Conduct (osc.sdes.ucf.edu/process/roc) for further information. Papers written for this course may be submitted to Turnitin.com at my discretion.

Course Accessibility Statement: UCF is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate format upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. Students who need accommodations must also be registered with Student Accessibility Services, Ferrell Commons 7F Room 187, phone (407) 823-2371, sas@ucf.edu.

Copyright: The materials used for this course may contain copyright-protected materials. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only.

Mandatory reporting and UCF Cares: As a professor, I have a mandatory reporting responsibility. This means that if you share information with me about sexual misconduct or crimes that may have occurred on campus, I am required to contact the appropriate UCF student support agency. If you prefer to remain anonymous and are seeking resources or support for yourself, a friend, or a classmate, you can also visit UCFCares.com for free services and information about a variety of student concerns. You can reach a UCF Cares staff member at ucfcares@ucf.edu or call (407) 823-5607 between 8am and 5pm. If you are in immediate distress, UCF offers counselors 24/7 at (407) 823-2811 (then press #5).

Campus Safety: Most campus emergencies primarily affect courses that meet in person, but the following policies apply to students in online courses. In case of emergency, call 911. To stay informed about emergency situations, sign up for UCF text alerts at my.ucf.edu ("Student Self Service" > "Personal Information" > "UCF Alert"). If you have a special need related to emergency

situations, please email me or talk to me during office hours. Consider viewing this UCF video about active shooter situations: goo.gl/ygJkky (shortened link).

University Writing Center: The UWC is available for all students to assist with writing. See <http://uwc.ucf.edu/> for details.

Note: Changes to the syllabus or course schedule will be made at my discretion and announced on Webcourses.

Grading

Your grade will be determined by the following (*=Gordon Rule assignment):

- *Discussions (20%):* We will have four online discussions about the course readings, plus a post introducing everyone to one another. You will generally post an initial response, and then thoughtfully respond to at least one classmate's post later by a specified date.
- *Topical research paper* (10%):* This will be the beginning of your investigation of a topic or issue in the field of technical communication that will be continued in subsequent assignments (the annotated bibliography and literature review). You should draw on a minimum of five relevant journal articles for the paper.
- *Midterm exam* (15%):* The midterm exam will be based on the reading assignments from Weeks 1-7. You will be asked to write essays in response to three out of five essay questions given. (In other words, you will be able to choose which three out of the five questions you wish to write on.)
- *Annotated bibliography* (25%):* You will complete a 20-source annotated bibliography on the topic that you will write about in your final literature review.
- *Literature review* (30%):* A literature review is comprehensive survey of scholarly research on a particular topic. The review includes a brief summary and a critical analysis of each work.

Gordon Rule: This course is a Gordon Rule course. It contains 6000 words of evaluated writing as required by the English Department. Assignments which fulfill the Gordon Rule are indicated with an asterisk above. Each has the following characteristics:

1. The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
2. It will provide adequate support for that idea
3. It will be organized clearly and logically
4. It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
5. It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way.

Grade Scale (%): 94-100 = A 93-90 = A- 89-87 = B+ 86-83 = B 82-80 = B- 79-77 = C+
76-73 = C 72-70 = C- 69-67 = D+ 66-63 = D 62-60 = D- >60 = F

No Incompletes or extra credit will be given in this course.

Written Grading Standards:

- An A text is exceptional. It is professional and reflects careful consideration of audience and purpose. It contains required assignment elements, is written in an appropriate and engaging style, arranged logically, memorable, and visually appealing. It is free of mechanical errors.
- A B text is strong. It contains all required elements of the assignment and reflects consideration of the rhetorical situation. It is generally above average in terms of the criteria mentioned above, but falls short of excellence in one or more category. It has only minor mechanical errors.
- A C text is competent. It contains all required elements of the assignment. It is generally average in terms of the major criteria listed above. It has a few mechanical errors.

- Low C or D work is weak. It does not include the required elements of the assignment and it falls below average in terms of one or more of the major criteria.
- F work fails in terms of one or more of these criteria.

Schedule

Week 1 Jan 7-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course and the field • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 4 (Cook et al.) + Connors “Rise of TC instruction” • Do: Introductory discussion post by Friday, 5 pm (financial aid activity) • Drop/swap deadline 1/10; Add deadline 1/11
Week 2 Jan 14-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding technical communication as a field • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Introduction (Johnson-Eilola & Selber) & Ch. 1 (Selfe & Selfe) + Rutter “Rhetoric, humanism”
Week 3 Jan 21-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work patterns and perspectives • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 2 (Hart-Davidson) + Jones et al. “Disrupting the past” • Do: Discussion post • Holiday 1/21
Week 4 Jan 28-Feb 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical perspectives • Read: Dobrin “What’s technical?”; Miller “Humanistic rationale” • Do: Discussion post
Week 5 Feb 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How tools shape work • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 6 (Swarts) • Assignment due: Topical research paper (2/8)
Week 6 Feb 11-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhetoric and communication theory • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 5 (Porter) + Slack et al. “Technical communicator as author” • Do: Discussion post
Week 7 Feb 18-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical practice • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 7 (Scott) + Rose “Design as advocacy”
Week 8 Feb 25-Mar 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and technical communication • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 15 (Blakeslee & Savage) • Assignment due: Midterm exam (3/1)
Week 9 Mar 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for users and information design • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 10 (Ceraso) & Ch. 16 (Schriver)
Week 10 Mar 11-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Break
Week 11 Mar 18-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 18 (Burnett et al.) • Assignment due: Annotated bibliography (3/22) • Withdrawal deadline: 3/21
Week 12 Mar 25-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usability & user-centered design • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 12 (Mirel) + Carliner “Three-part framework”
Week 13 Apr 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the future • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 8 (Mehlenbacher) • Do: Discussion post
Week 14 Apr 8-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority and visual communication • Read: Barton & Barton “Ideology and the Map”; Rawlins & Wilson “Agency and interactive data displays”
Week 15 Apr 15-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New media and the interface • Read: <i>Solving Problems</i> Ch. 17 (Wysocki) + Selfe & Selfe “Politics of the interface”
Week 16 Apr 22-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam week, course wrap-up • Assignment due: Literature review (4/22)