



Hello--Welcome to the course! I know the following document is long. Please don't let this scare you, but please read through it. I believe in being very clear at the start of a course, especially with a distance education course.

English 2311.001IN  
Technical & Business Writing  
Fall 2021  
Internet

**Instructor:** James Tabor

**Office:** College of the Mainland Main Campus, LRC 235

**Telephone:** 1-888-258-8859, ext 8576; 409-933-8576; 409-933-8214

**E-mail:** jtabor@com.edu

**Student (Office) Hours:**

- Santa Fe High School Campus— MW 7:00am-7:30am
- College of the Mainland Main Campus —T 9:00am-9:30am, 1:30pm-4:30pm; Th 9:00am-9:30am, 1:30pm-4:00pm.

**Required Textbook:**

Houp, Kenneth W., Thomas E. Pearsall, Elizabeth Tebeaux, and Sam Dragga. *Reporting Technical Information*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN: 0-19-517879-3

The above textbook can also be found on reserve at the COM library circulation desk.

**Suggested Textbook:**

Some kind of student handbook—one that covers grammar **and** MLA documentation. Two of our major assignments will involve research sources. I will try to provide the best online resources I can find, but a good handbook is always helpful.

**Course Description:**

Intensive study of and practice in professional settings. Focus on the types of documents necessary to make decisions and take action on the job, such as proposals, reports, instructions, policies and procedures, e-mail messages, letters, and descriptions of products and services. Practice individual and collaborative processes involved in the creation of ethical and efficient documents.

**Course Prerequisite:**

You will not receive credit for this course unless you have already completed Composition I (English 1301) with a grade of “C” or higher. If you have not passed Composition I, you must inform me immediately to avoid further problems. Students may not enroll in Composition I and Technical Writing concurrently.

### Course Requirements:

Students will be required to compose five (5) major writing assignments and create a recorded oral presentation.

1. The first two assignments will be portfolios consisting of three smaller documents. The first will consist of a letter of inquiry, a letter of response, and a short memorandum.
2. The second major assignment will consist of a cover letter and résumé tailored for a specific job opening.
3. The third major assignment will consist of a hardware description that describes a piece of equipment for a non-specialist audience, and a process description that describes a process in narrative (story) form.
4. The recommendation report will research compare three or more similar products or services and make a recommendation for some specific application (such as for a business need).
5. The proposal will be dedicated to solving a real or hypothetical problem. This document will also show how to best implement the solution.
6. The oral presentation will consist of a formal presentation of the proposal in front of an audience of at least two (2) people. The presentation will be uploaded to [Google Drive](#) and submitted to the professor.

### Detailed Grading Formula:

· Business Letters and Memos	10%
· Résumés and Cover Letters	10%
· Hardware Descriptions and Process Narratives	20%
· Recommendation Reports	20%
· Proposals	20%
· Oral Presentation	5%
· Weekly Discussions and Course Policies Quiz	15%

### Grading Scale:

- **A 90-100%** =exceptional work; superior in both style and content
- **B 80-89%** =above average work; superior in content
- **C 70-79%** =average work, good enough but not extraordinary
- **D 60-69%** =below average work; unsatisfactory in mechanics, style, content
- **F 50-59%** =failing work; deficient in mechanics, style and content

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Major assignments, weekly discussions and internet activities.

**Late Work:**

If you fail to submit a major assignment on the due date, you must turn in the assignment by the end of the next class week or I will not accept it and a grade of "0" will be recorded. I will only extend this deadline in cases involving military service, religious holidays, or *documented* emergencies. Late assignments will not receive written feedback.

Assignments turned in late due to non-attachment are subject to the late policy, so please be sure your file is attached.

Daily Discussion deadlines will not be extended for any circumstance.

**Extra Credit:**

I do not assign or accept extra credit assignments. I encourage everyone to do well on the major assignments.

**Attendance:**

Students should sign on at least twice each week to participate in discussions with classmates. Each student should post to the discussion board weekly.

**Communication Policy:**

You are welcome to call, e-mail, or come see me during my office hours.

If you e-mail me, please use the Messages embedded in our Blackboard shell. I will try to respond to your messages within a 24-hour timeframe during the work week. Messages sent during the weekend may not receive a response until the following Monday.

All electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM or Blackboard email. Due to [FERPA](#) restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means.

**Student Learner Outcomes:**

Students completing English 2311 will be able to

1. Recognize, analyze, and accommodate diverse audiences.
2. Produce documents appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre.

3. Analyze the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication.
4. Locate, evaluate, and incorporate pertinent information.
5. Develop verbal, visual, and multimedia materials as necessary, in individual and/or collaborative projects, as appropriate.
6. Edit for appropriate style, including attention to word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling.
7. Design and test documents for easy reading and navigation.

<b>Student Learner Outcome</b>	<b>Maps to Core Objective</b>	<b>Assessed via this Assignment</b>
1. Recognize, analyze, and accommodate diverse audiences.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Portfolio 1
2. Produce documents appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre.	Communication Skills (CS)	Portfolio 2
3. Analyze the ethical responsibilities involved in technical communication.	Personal Responsibility (PR)	Online Discussion Activity
4. Locate, evaluate, and incorporate pertinent information.	Unmapped	Recommendation Report
5. Develop verbal, visual, and multimedia materials in individual and/ or collaborative projects as appropriate.	Teamwork (TW)	Oral Presentation
6. Edit for appropriate style, including attention to word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling.	Unmapped	Recommendation Report
7. Design and test documents for easy reading and navigation.	Unmapped	Portfolio 3

**General Education Core Objectives:**

Students successfully completing this course will demonstrate competency in the following Core Objectives:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills:** Students will demonstrate creative thinking, innovation, and the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information.
2. **Communication Skills:** Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
3. **Social Responsibility:** Students will demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. **Personal Responsibility:** Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own, and relate consequences to ethical decision-making.

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

"Plagiarism" means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit." Violation of the Scholastic Honesty code will result in a "0" for the assignment and any chance of a rewrite will not be allowed. The document will also be turned over to Kris Kimbark, College of the Mainland's Judicial Coordinator for further disciplinary action. Repeat offenders will receive an "F" for the course and may face probation or dismissal from the college system.

### **Avoiding Plagiarism:**

The following resources were created to help students understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

- [How to Cite and Avoid Plagiarism](#) (A very good *YouTube* lecture series that covers subtle to egregious forms of plagiarism. I recommend it for all students.)
- [You Quote It, You Note It!](#) (Sponsored by Acadia University's library, this website also covers what plagiarism is and is not, but in an interactive way.)

### **Concerns/Questions Statement:**

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact the Department Chair, Brian Anderson, at 409-933-8186 or [banderson@com.edu](mailto:banderson@com.edu).

### **Peer Review Policy:**

We will have five (5) peer review sessions and participation is required. Students who fail to meet the required deadlines or participate in peer review will receive a 10-point grade deduction on the assignment being reviewed.

**Technology Outage Policy:**

I do not consider personal technology problems to be a valid reason for missing deadlines. If you are experiencing difficulties with Blackboard, you are advised to contact the [Technical Support Team](#) for troubleshooting and solutions.

Every semester students experience total or near-total computer failures. If this happens to you, you have two (2) options: use a [backup computer](#) or drop the class. Computer labs are available on campus if your personal computer becomes disabled during the semester.

Never fail to make a backup of each assignment as you create or edit it—purchase a jump/flash drive. Don't depend on the "original," whether it's on your hard drive or elsewhere.

If a campus-wide outage occurs, however, all students will have the opportunity to submit assignments at a later designated due date. I will post the new due date as an announcement, along with making the necessary changes to my course calendar.

**Tips for Success:**

The textbook's companion site offers numerous resources for students, including sample documents, websites and exercises to aid in the understanding of technical writing. The content of the website works in reference to each chapter in your book. You may want to join the website to take advantage of some of the material offered. I highly recommend this resource to you: [www.oup.com/us/houp](http://www.oup.com/us/houp).

Most of my examples are in PDF format. If you can't read PDF files, go to [the Adobe Reader website](#) for a free download.

Students will need to have a computer microphone and camera for the oral presentation. [Google Drive](#) is free, so there is no additional cost!

[Google Chrome](#) is the preferred browser for Blackboard.

**Course Outline:**

A course outline has been provided for you. See the additional document in the Syllabus area of our Blackboard shell.

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**Institutional Policies and Procedures****Grade Appeal Process:**

Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook. An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal. [https://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student\\_Handbook\\_2019-2020v5.pdf](https://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student_Handbook_2019-2020v5.pdf)

**Academic Success & Support Services:**

College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college career. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

**ADA Statement:**

Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact Holly Bankston at 409-933-8520 or hbankston@com.edu. The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the Student Success Center.

**Counseling Statement:**

Any student that is needing counseling services is requested to please contact Holly Bankston in the student success center at 409-933-8520 or hbankston@com.edu. Counseling services are available on campus in the student center for free and students can also email counseling@com.edu to setup their appointment. Appointments are strongly encouraged; however, some concerns may be addressed on a walk-in basis.

**Textbook Purchasing Statement:**

A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

**Withdrawals:**

I do not drop students. Students may withdraw themselves from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a "W" grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are only permitted to withdraw six times during their college career by State law. The last day to withdraw for the 1st 8-week session is March 3rd, April 26th for 16 week courses, and May 5th for the 2nd 8 week session.

**FN Grading:**

The FN grade is issued in cases of failure due to a lack of attendance, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.



**Early Alert Program:**

The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention is very important to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

**Classroom Conduct Policy:**

College of the Mainland requires that students enrolled at COM be familiar with the Standards of Student Conduct, which can be found in the [online Student Handbook](#). Students should act in a professional manner at all times. Disruptive students will be held accountable according to college policy. Any violations of the Code of Conduct will result in a referral to the Dean of Students and may result in dismissal from this class.

**COVID-19 Statement:**

All students, faculty, and staff are expected to familiarize themselves with materials and information contained on the College of the Mainland's Coronavirus Information site at [www.com.edu/coronavirus](http://www.com.edu/coronavirus). In compliance with Governor Abbott's May 18 Executive Order, face coverings/masks will no longer be required on COM campus. Protocols and college signage are being updated. We will no longer enforce any COM protocol that requires face coverings. We continue to encourage all members of the COM community to distance when possible, use hygiene measures, and get vaccinated to protect against COVID-19. Please visit [com.edu/coronavirus](http://com.edu/coronavirus) for future updates.

**Course Outline English  
2311, Fall 2021**

Week 1: August 23-29

Overview of course and introductions.

Chapter 1: An Overview of Technical Writing, pp. 3-12

1. Take the course policies quiz.
2. Post a brief introduction of yourself to discussion board. Tell us who you are, why you're taking the class, what is your field of study, "what you want to be when you grow up," etc.—anything you feel would be useful to help us know you.
3. Read Chapter 1. Submit your response to this week's discussion question to the Week 1 Discussion board:
  - Find at least two documents online that you believe to be technical. In your discussion post, provide the web address to those documents (please provide the direct address, not just the address to the main page). Give the title of the documents/articles. Are the documents written and designed for a specialist or a general audience? Why do you think so? Look at the language and design of each document. Each description should be



at least 100 words (200 words total).

**Due by August 29 at 11:59 pm**

- Course policies quiz.
- Your introduction posted the Introduction discussion board.
- Your initial response to this week's discussion questions.

Week 2: August 30-September 5

Letters and Memos

Chapter 2: Composing, pp. 15-27

Chapter 3: Writing for Your Readers, pp. 29-51

1. Carefully read the criteria for Portfolio 1
2. Read Chapters 2 and 3. Submit your response to this week's discussion questions to the Week 2 discussion boards.
  - I'd like for you to consider how you construct documents (essays, reports, etc.). After reading Chapter 2, discuss your own writing process. Does it vary from project to project? If so, in what ways? Compose a response of at least 100 words.
  - Look at Situation 6 on p. 45 Read the three e-mails and explain how Bill has shifted his message to reflect awareness of the different positions and needs of his readers. How does the perspective of each reader determine what Bill says in each e-mail? Compose a response of at least 100 words.

**Due by September 5 at 11:59pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion activities.

Week 3: September 6-12

Letters and Memos Continued

Peer Review for Portfolio 1

Chapter 12: Planning Correspondence and E-mail, pp. 315-339

1. Submit your response to this week's discussion question to the Week 3 Discussion board.
  - Discuss the differences among letters, memos, and e-mail messages. In formulating, your response, think about structure, content audience, etc. Compose a response of at least 100 words.
2. Submit a rough draft of Portfolio 1 to the assigned discussion area. You must submit the letter of inquiry, the letter of response, and the memorandum by the deadline below to avoid a grade penalty (see peer review policy in course policies).
3. Peer assist with your assigned classmate(s)' submissions for Portfolio 1. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates. A checklist will be provided in the discussion area.

**Due by September 9 at 11:59pm**

- Your rough draft of Portfolio 1 submitted to the assigned discussion board.

**Due by September 12 at 11:59pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion question.
- Your peer assistance for Portfolio 1, posted as a reply to the pieces with which you are assisting.

Week 4: September 13-29

The Job Hunt

Chapter 20: Understanding the Strategies and Communications of the Job Search, pp. 541-571

1. Turn in Portfolio 1
2. Carefully read the criteria for Portfolio 2
3. Read Chapter 20. Submit your response to this week's discussion activities to the Week 4 Discussion Board:
  - Locate and Provide the URLs to three job boards that you feel are useful for locating jobs.
  - Using these job boards, list and describe five positions in your field. What skills, experience, and background does each position require? What is the salary range for each position?
  - Develop a list of five (5) questions that you might ask about a company during a job interview.

**Due by September 19 at 11:59 pm**

- Portfolio 1 (in Word or Rich Text format)
- Your response to this week's discussion activities.

Week 5: September 20-26

Peer Review for Portfolio 2

No chapter readings this week. Work on your rough draft.

1. Submit a rough draft of Portfolio 2 to the assigned discussion area. You must submit the cover letter and resume to the discussion area for full credit.
2. Peer assist with your assigned classmate(s)' submissions for Portfolio 2. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates. A checklist will be provided in the discussion area.

**Due by September 23 at 11:59pm**

- Your rough draft of Portfolio 2 submitted to the assigned discussion board.

**Due by September 26 at 11:59pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion question.
- Your peer assistance for Portfolio 2, posted as a reply to student(s) you are assisting.

Week 6: September 27-October 3

Introduce Hardware Descriptions and Process Narratives

Chapter 17: Formulating Instructions, Procedures, and Policies, pp. 475-501

1. Turn in Portfolio 2.
2. Carefully read the criteria for Portfolio 3.
3. Submit your response to this week's discussion topic to the Week 6 Discussion Board:
  - After reading Chapter 17 and my notes on hardware descriptions and process narratives, search the internet and find an example of a good hardware description and a good process narrative (try to avoid instructions). Discuss each document in terms of complexity, level of formality, and overall document design. Discuss any problems the audience may encounter while reading the documents as well. Each description should be at least 100 words (200 words total).

**Due by October 3 at 11:59 pm**

- Portfolio 2 (In Word or Rich Text format)
- Response to this week's discussion activities

Week 7: October 4-10

Hardware Descriptions and Process Narratives Contd.

Chapter 8: Designing and Formatting Documents, pp. 155-187 (Really pay attention to the section titled "Helping Readers Locate Information" as this will be important for all future major assignments. Stop when you get to "Designing Web Sites.")

1. Submit your response to today's discussion question to the Day 6 Discussion Board:
  - Discuss the document design of the memo on page 199. How is it successful? How is it not? What could be done to improve its effectiveness? Utilize the knowledge gleaned from this and previous chapters when formulating your response.

**Due by October 10 at 11:59pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion question

Week 8: October 11-17

Thoughts on Collaborative Work Peer Review Chapter 18:

Writing Collaboratively, pp. 503-509

1. Submit your response to this week's discussion question to the Week 8 Discussion Board:
  - Since this is an on-line course I know it is just a little tough to have you guys write collaboratively. But I would like to read about your perspectives on collaborative work. Do you enjoy working as part of a team, or do you like to work as an individual? Have you found past collaborative work to be rewarding or frustrating? Why? If you would like, discuss a particular instance in your own experience when group work influenced your opinion. Your response should be at least 100 words.
2. Submit a rough draft for Portfolio 3 to the assigned discussion area.
3. Peer assist with your assigned classmate(s)' submissions for Portfolio 3. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates. A checklist will be provided in the discussion area.

**Due by October 14 at 11:59pm**

- Your rough draft of Portfolio 3 posted to the assigned discussion area.

**Due by October 17 at 11:59pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion question.
- Your peer assistance for Portfolio 3, posted as a reply to the student(s) you are assisting.

Week 9: October 18-24

Recommendation Reports

Chapter 14: Developing Analytical Reports: Recommendation Reports and Feasibility Studies, pp. 375-397

1. Turn in Portfolio 3 (in Word or Rich Text format)
2. Review criteria for Recommendation Report
3. Look at Exercise 4 on pages 398-399. In a response of at least 100 words, who do you think would be the best candidate for the manager's position at Cooper's Department Store and why? Compose a response of at least 100 words.

**Due by October 24 at 11:59pm**

- Portfolio 3 (In Word or Rich Text format)
- Response to this week's discussion activities

Week 10: October 25-October 31

Reports, Cont'd

Chapter 15: Developing Empirical Research Reports, pp. 401-425

1. Submit your response to today's discussion question to the Week 10 Discussion Board:
  - Using the internet, find an example of an empirical research report in your field or a related field. In what ways it similar or different from the sample reports in this chapter? Provide the full web address to the discussion board, not just the address to the main page. Compose a response of at least 100 words.

**Due by October 31 at 11:59pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion activity.

Week 11: November 1-7

Ethics

Peer Review

Chapter 5: Writing Ethically, pp. 85-97

1. Submit your response to this week's discussion question to the Week 11 Discussion Board:
  - Discuss the situation from exercise 6 on pages 100-101 of your textbook. Use the bulleted question as a guide for your discussion. You do not need to compose a memo. Compose a response of at least 100 words.
2. Submit a rough draft of the Recommendation Report to the assigned discussion area.
3. Peer assist with your assigned classmate(s)' submission for the Recommendation Report. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates. A checklist will be provided in the discussion area.

**Due by November 4 at 11:59pm**

- Your rough draft of the Recommendation Report submitted to the assigned discussion board.

**Due by November 7 at 11:59 pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion question.
- Your peer assistance for the Recommendation Report, posted as a reply to the pieces with which you are assisting.

Week 12: November 8-14

Proposals

Chapter 16: Writing Proposals and Progress Reports, pp. 427-473 (Just skim the section on progress reports)

1. Turn in Recommendation Report
2. Carefully read the criteria for the Proposal Assignment.
3. Submit your response to this week's discussion topic to the Week 12 Discussion Board:
  - Write a Summary of Chapter 16, indicating which parts you thought were particularly helpful, and how you may be able to use this information in your career. Compose a response of at least 100 words.

**Due by November 14 at 11:59 pm**

- Recommendation Report Due (in Word or Rich Text format)
- Your response to this week's discussion activity

Week 13: November 15-21

Introduction to Oral Presentations Creating Tables and Figures

Chapter 11: Creating Tables and Figures, pp. 267-311

1. Submit your response to this week's discussion questions to the Week 13 Discussion Board:
  - Analyze the effectiveness of the line graph and accompanying table in Figure 11- 28 on page 309 of your textbook. How would you revise the two illustrations to clarify the visual display of information?
  - Analyze the ethics of figure 11-29 on page 310 of your textbook. How would you revise this display to minimize the possibility of deception?
  - Examine the situation in exercise 12-8 on pages 311-312 of your textbook. What would you do? Why? How?
2. Carefully read the criteria for the Oral Presentation Assignment in the Assignments module.
3. Create an account with [Google Drive](#) and become familiar with its features.
4. Purchase a computer microphone (if necessary)

**Due by November 21 at 11:59pm**

- Your response to this week's discussion activity

Week 14: November 22-28

**College of the Mainland Closed November 25-28: Thanksgiving Holiday!**

Begin Peer Review

1. Submit a rough draft of your proposal to the assigned discussion area.

**Due by November 24 at 11:59pm**

- Your rough draft of the proposal submitted to the assigned discussion board.  
**Sorry, I know this is a Wednesday! I backed up the due date because of the holiday.**



Week 15: November 29-December 5

Work Week

Chapter 19: Preparing Oral Reports, pp. 511-537 (optional)

1. Review oral presentation notes and examples in the learning module.

**Due by November 30 at 11:59pm**

- Your peer assistance for the proposal, posted as a reply to the pieces with which you are assisting. (Deadline extended due to Thanksgiving holiday.)

**Due by December 5 at 11:59pm**

- Finalized Proposal Assignment (in Word or Rich Text format)

Week 16: December 6-7

**Due by December 7 at 11:59pm**

- Oral Presentations (sent as a URL address from Google Drive).

**Final Grades will be reported by Friday, December 10 in WebAdvisor.**