



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.

Course: English 2311.00116: Technical & Business Writing

Semester: Summer I 2025 (10-week class)

Class Time: Internet

Instructor: James Tabor

Office: LRC B235

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00pm-4:00pm or by appointment in the Virtual Office area. See the link in the toolbar.

Please be aware that **I am working from home this semester**, so it is best to contact me through the email or visit me during office hours. Face-to face meetings are by appointment only.

Telephone: 1-888-258-8859, ext 8576 or 409-933-8576 (Again, I do not plan to be in my office. Best to contact me through email or through office hours.)

E-mail: jtabor@com.edu

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.

Required Textbook:

A copy of the textbook has been provided for you in the Content area of our Brightspace D2L shell.

Suggested Textbook:

Some kind of student handbook—one that covers grammar **and** MLA 9 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 Requirements:

Students will be required to compose five (5) major writing assignments. Weekly discussions and quizzes will also be assigned.

1. The first assignment will be a portfolio consisting of a letter of inquiry, a letter of response, and a short memorandum.
2. The second 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.
3. The recommendation report will research and compare two or more similar products or services and make a recommendation for some specific application (such as for a business need).
4. The proposal will be dedicated to solving a real problem within your workplace, your neighborhood, or at College of the Mainland. This document will also show how to best implement the solution.
5. The final major assignment will consist of a cover letter and résumé tailored for a specific job opening.
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 or YouTube and submitted to the professor.

Detailed Grading Formula:

· Portfolio 1: Business Letters and Memos	10%
· Portfolio 2: Hardware Descriptions and Process Narratives	15%
· Recommendation Reports	20%
· Proposals	25%
· Oral Presentation	5%
· Portfolio 3: Résumés and Cover Letters	10%
· Weekly Homework	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.

Weekly homework deadlines will not be extended for any circumstance.

Extra Credit:

I will give you five extra points on each major writing assignment that is thoroughly reviewed at COM's tutoring center or through Tutor.com.

After your session, COM's tutoring center will send you a confirmation e-mail thanking you for the visit. Take a screenshot of that confirmation sheet and upload it with when you submit the assignment.

For Tutor.com, take a screenshot of your tutoring session with comments from the tutor. Upload this image when you are submitting the assignment.

Attendance:

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

Communication Policy:

Since I will not be on campus much this semester, it is best to email or visit me during virtual office hours.

If you e-mail me, I will try to respond to your messages within a 24-hour timeframe during the work week. E-mails sent during the weekend may not receive a response until the following Monday.

All electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM 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.

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Recognize, analyze, and accommodate diverse audiences.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Business Letters and Memos Assignment
2. Produce documents appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre.	Communication Skills (CS)	Cover Letters and Resumés Assignment
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	Hardware Description and Process Narrative Assignment

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 and Collusion: “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.”

AI/LLM: Unless a professor gives you permission to use AI in an assignment, doing so is scholastic dishonesty according to COM’s Student Conduct policy, which forbids students from “Falsifying documentation submitted for purposes of obtaining a grade or course credit” ([link](#)). Your assignments in this class are intended to show me what your skills are in writing, researching, and critical thinking, and your grades reflect the skill level you are at. Using AI in an attempt to make it look like your skills or ideas are better than they actually are is academic dishonesty.

Violation of the Scholastic Honesty code will result in a “0” for the assignment and any chance of a rewrite will not be allowed. Repeat offenders may face probation or dismissal from the college system. What I’ve noticed from past experience is that many students who plagiarize, collude, or use AI do so because they are having problems with the assignment. *Please*, if you are tempted to do this, resist the urge and talk to me about the problems. We’ll work something out.

All major assignments will be scanned with a software called Turnitin, which detects plagiarism and AI use.

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.)

Peer Review Policy:

We will have four (4) 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 and Internet Access Policy:

Technology Outages: 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 is 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.

Internet Access: I realize this is vacation time for many people; however, if you are going out of town this summer, *you are responsible for having internet access and completing the assigned tasks on time*. You can frequently find Wi-Fi at a local Starbuck's, Walmart, or McDonald's. If you are going on a cruise, get the internet package.

Let me be clear: I will not "work with you" on this matter. If you plan to be out of town for an extended period of time without internet access, drop the course.

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.

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!

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.

Course Outline:

See attached document.

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 https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student_Handbook_2024-2025_v2.pdf. *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.*

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 Kimberly Lachney, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator:

- Phone: 409-933-8919
- Email: AccessibilityServices@com.edu
- Location: COM Doyle Family Administration Building, Student Success Center

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.

Withdrawal Policy:

Students may withdraw 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.

I do not drop students. Students are responsible for their own withdrawal from this course. If you fail to withdraw and you are not doing the work, you will probably receive a grade of F. The last date to withdraw from the 1st 5-week session is June 30. The last date to withdraw from the 10-week session is July 29. The last date to withdraw for the 2nd 5-week session is August 1.

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 Office for Student Conduct and may result in dismissal from this class.

Resources to Help with Stress:

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at deanofstudents@com.edu or communityresources@com.edu.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy.

Course Outline English 2311, Summer I 2025

Week 1: June 2-8

Overview of course and introductions

Introduction to Letters and Memos

Begin reading the assigned textbook in the Content area of our course shell. See below for chapter readings.

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

Chapter 2: Composing, pp. 15-27

1. Review course policies and outline.
2. Take the course policies quiz found in the toolbar on the left-hand side of the screen.
3. Carefully read the criteria for Portfolio 1.
4. 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 to know you.
5. Read Chapters 1 and 2 and take reading quiz.
6. Submit your response to this week's discussion questions to the assigned areas:
 - a) Read Chapter 1 **before** answering the following question. Find at least two documents online that you **believe** to be technical in nature. 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. Who do you think the audience is for these documents? Why do you think so? Provide a response of at least 100 words.
 - b) You have your own unique writing process. After reading Chapter 2, discuss your process. Does it vary from project to project? If so, in what ways? Provide a response of at least 100 words.

Due by June 8 at 11:59pm:

- Course policies and Chapters 1 & 2 quiz.
- Your introduction posted to the Introductions discussion area.
- Your responses to this week's discussion questions.

Week 2: June 9-15

Letters and Memos Continued
Correspondence and E-mail
Peer Review

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

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

1. Submit a rough draft of Portfolio 1 to the assigned discussion area by Thursday night. You must submit both letters and the memo to avoid a grade penalty (see course policy for peer review).
2. Peer assist with your assigned classmate's portfolio. Peer groups and a checklist will be posted in the designated discussion area Thursday. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates.
3. Take the quizzes over Chapters 3 & 12
4. Submit your response to this week's discussion questions to the assigned Week 2 discussion boards:
 - a) 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? Provide a response of at least 100 words
 - b) Based on your reading of chapter 12, discuss the differences among letters, memos, and e-mail messages. In formulating, your response, think about structure, content audience, etc. Provide a response of at least 100 words.

Due by Thursday, June 12 at 11:59pm:

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

Due by Sunday, June 15 at 11:59pm:

- Reading quizzes over assigned chapters.
- Your response to Week 2's discussion questions.
- Your peer assistance for Portfolio 1, posted as a reply to the pieces with which you are assisting.

Week 3: June 16-22**College of the Mainland Campus Closed Thursday, June 19 in observance of the Juneteenth holiday.**

Introduce Hardware Descriptions and Process Narratives

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. Turn in your final draft of Portfolio 1 through the Major Assignments module.
2. Carefully read the criteria for Portfolio 2.
3. Take the reading quiz over Chapter 8.
4. Submit your response to this week's discussion question to the assigned discussion boards:
 - a) 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. Provide a response of at least 100 words.
 - b) Submit your ideas for the hardware description and process narrative to the discussion board. What piece of hardware are you thinking about describing? What process are you thinking about describing? Are you having problems coming up with ideas? Comment on each other's ideas as well. No word minimum required.

Due by Sunday, June 22 at 11:59pm:

- **Portfolio 1 due (submitted in Word or Rich Text format).**
- Reading quiz over assigned chapter
- Your original response to Week 3's discussion activities.

Week 4: June 23-29

Peer Review

No chapter readings this week. Work on your Portfolio 2 rough draft.

1. Submit a rough draft of the Portfolio 2 to the assigned discussion area by Thursday night. You must submit complete drafts to avoid a grade penalty.
2. Peer assist with your assigned classmate's portfolio. Peer groups and checklists will be posted in the designated discussion area Thursday. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates.

Due by Thursday, June 26 at 11:59pm:

- Submit a rough draft of Portfolio 2 to the assigned discussion area.

Due by Sunday, June 29 at 11:59pm:

- Your peer assistance for Portfolio 2, posted as a reply to the pieces with which you are assisting.

Week 5: June 30-Jul 6**College of the Mainland Campus Closed Friday, July 4 in observance of Independence Day**

Introduce Recommendation Reports and Empirical Research Reports

Chapter 14: Developing Analytical Reports: Recommendation Reports and Feasibility Studies, pp. 375-399.

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

1. Submit your final draft of Portfolio 2 through the Major Assignments module.
2. Carefully read the criteria for the Recommendation Report assignment.
3. Take quizzes over Chapters 14 & 15.
4. Submit your response to today's discussion question to the Week 5 discussion boards:
 - a) 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?
 - b) 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. Provide a response of at least 100 words.

Due by Sunday, July 6 at 11:59pm:

- **Portfolio 2 (submitted in Word or Rich Text format).**
- Reading quizzes over assigned chapters.
- Your response to Week 5's discussion activities.

Week 6: July 7-13

Peer Review

No Chapter Readings. Work on your rough drafts.

1. Submit a rough draft of your recommendation report to the assigned discussion area by Wednesday night. You must submit a complete draft to avoid a grade penalty.
2. Peer assist with your assigned classmate's portfolio. Peer groups and a checklist will be posted in the designated discussion area Thursday. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates.

Due by Thursday, July 10 at 11:59pm:

- Your rough draft of your recommendation report posted to the assigned discussion area.

Due by Sunday, July 13 at 11:59pm:

- Your peer assistance for the recommendation report, posted as a reply to the pieces with which you are assisting.

Week 7: July 14-20

Introduction to Proposals

Writing Ethically

Chapter 5: Writing Ethically, pp. 85-101

Chapter 16: Writing Proposals and Progress Reports, pp. 427-473 (Pages 427-447 are the most important. Just skim the section titled "Progress Reports" and everything thereafter.)

1. Turn in the final draft of your recommendation report through the Major Assignments module.
2. Take reading quiz over Chapter 16.
3. Submit your response to today's discussion question to the Week 7 Discussion Board:
 - a) 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. Provide a response of at least 100 words.
 - b) 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. Provide a response of at least 100 words.

Due by Sunday, July 20 at 11:59pm:

- **Recommendation report (submitted in Word or Rich Text Format).**
- Reading quiz over assigned chapter.
- Your response to this week's discussion activities.

Week 8: July 21-27

Peer Review

Introduction to Oral Presentations

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

1. Submit a rough draft of your proposal to the assigned discussion area by Wednesday night.
2. Peer assist with your assigned classmate(s)' submissions for the proposal. Your peer review should include helpful comments for revision for your classmates. A checklist will be provided in the discussion area.
3. Carefully read the criteria for the oral presentation in the Major Assignments module.
4. Review oral presentation notes and examples in the learning module.
5. Create a [Google Drive Account](#) and become familiar with its features.
6. Purchase a computer camera and microphone (if necessary).

Due by Thursday, July 24 at 11:59pm:

- Your rough draft proposal, posted in the assigned discussion area.

Due by Sunday, July 27 at 11:59pm:

- Your peer assistance for the proposal, posted as a reply to the pieces with which you are assisting.

Week 9: July 28-August 3

Introduction to the Job Hunt

Chapter 20: Understanding the Strategies and Communications of the Job Search, pp. 541-571 (Read this chapter if you have the time this week. I know you may be busy finalizing your proposals and creating your presentations. I have a corresponding discussion assignment that I will post this week but will not be due until the end of next week.

1. Turn in finalized proposal and oral presentation.
2. Carefully read the criteria for Portfolio 3.

Due by Sunday, August 3 at 11:59pm:

- **Proposal and oral presentation due.**
- Your response to this week's discussion assignment.

Week 10: August 4-7

The Job Hunt, Cont'd

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

1. Read Chapter 20. Submit your response to this week's discussion activities to the Week 10 discussion board:
 - a) Locate and Provide the URLs to three job boards that you feel are useful for locating jobs.
 - b) 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?
 - c) Develop a list of five questions that you might ask about a company during a job interview.

Due by Thursday, August 7 at 11:59pm:

- **Portfolio 3 (submitted in Word or Rich Text Format).**
- Your response to this week's discussion activity