

The header features a dark blue background with a glowing, futuristic circular graphic on the left. The graphic consists of concentric circles, lines, and small glowing nodes, resembling a technical or digital interface. The text is positioned to the right of this graphic.

Technical Writing I

ENG 249 | Fall 2023

Online Course
Illinois State University

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Derek M. Sparby

Email:

Zoom Room:

Zoom Hours: By appointment

Required Texts

Mike Markel and Stuart Selber, *Technical Communication* (13th ed, 2021) (epub)
Requires epub reader

Robin Williams, *Non-Designer's Design Book* (4th ed, 2014) (pdf)

Other readings posted to Canvas

Course Description and Objectives

Technical Writing I introduces you to the key concepts, principles, and practices of technical and professional writing. Special attention is given to the strategies for composing within technical and professional genres, techniques for analyzing audiences and writing situations, and methods for designing documents and organizing information. You will learn project development and management, document design and visual rhetoric, professional editing, and usability testing. You will plan and create a range of projects, including technical documentation, proposals, reports, and memos.

In this course, you will learn how to:

- Understand the roles of professional and technical writers
- Analyze audience, purpose, genre conventions, and rhetorical situations for your communication, and shape your writing accordingly
- Design and organize your writing with usability and readability in mind
- Reflect on and practice with the use of technology for writing and communication
- Develop writing and communication skills required in professional settings.

Grade Distribution

All assignments and projects must be completed to pass the course.

Discussion Posts	15 points
Drafts and Peer Review	15 points
Memo of Introduction	5 points
Claim Letter	10 points
Infographic	10 points
QRC and Usability Test	20 points
Recommendation Report	25 points

Grading Scale

Grade are earned, not given.
I do not respond to requests for higher grades

A	100-90
B	89-90
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 or below

Brief Assignment Descriptions

The assignments in this course are designed to meet the course objectives outlined above. Below are brief descriptions of the assignments; full prompts are available on ReggieNet.

Discussion Posts

In lieu of class discussion and activities, you will post to Discussions on Canvas. You must contribute to each discussion topic and perform the activities, both creating your own post and responding to others'.

Memo of Introduction

This brief memo introduces you to the memo format—one of the most ubiquitous forms of technical communication—while also providing me with basic information about you and your expectations for the course.

Claim Letter

Write a letter about a real experience you have had with bad service, a faulty product, unclear instructions, warranty trouble, poor service, or another similar issue. Make a claim requesting an equitable settlement for the situation. Write the letter to the individual who is best able to address your problem.

Infographic

Using the principles of good design, create an infographic that visualizes data to support an argument. For this assignment, you must demonstrate that you can arrange information in a visually pleasing way to present an argument that appeals to an audience of fellow ISU students.

QRC + Usability Portfolio

Part 1 – Create and a quick reference card (QRC) for a novice audience.
Part 2 – Test your QRC with two sample users; write a memo that explains what you tested for and what you learned; revise the QRC accordingly; collect all materials in a portfolio.

Recommendation Report

Identify a real-life problem that needs to be solved by someone you know (supervisor, co-worker, classmate, etc). Research and write a report that recommends solutions. Include appropriate visual elements to display the data gathered from your research.

Course Policies

The policies in this syllabus are considered contractual at Illinois State University. If you remain in the class after day one, you have agreed to all that is required. I reserve the right to change the day-by-day schedule (with advanced notice), but not the requirements outlined above in the course description and below in the policies.

Online Coursework

This course takes a blended synchronous and asynchronous approach. While you are free to work at your own pace for most of the work, forum posts, drafts/peer review, and project deadlines must be met. If you follow the schedules I've arranged on Canvas, you will find it easier to keep up with coursework; regardless, I advise you to build a schedule that works best for you and ensures your success in the course.

Homework Submission

- All homework is on the day listed on the schedule by 11:59pm.
- All homework submissions must be submitted in the appropriate file format.
- All homework must be submitted to Canvas (follow directions on prompts)

Do not email me homework assignments.

Technology

This course's information exchange is entirely digital, so a basic knowledge of some digital technologies is required. You are expected to

- Gain proficiency with your ISU email account and Canvas functionality
- Learn other unfamiliar technologies and apps as required by the course
- Back up all files and ensure that they are in the correct format (pdf, docx, etc)
- Ensure a stable internet connection

If you are not able to meet these requirements, contact me immediately so we can determine reasonable accommodations.

Professionalism

You are expected to treat the professor, all class members, audiences you write for, and people you writing about with respect. I do not allow intolerant discourse. If a student engages in a disrespectful or hateful speech act, we will discuss conduct; if it happens a second time, they may be removed from the course.

All ISU students are responsible for upholding the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and avoiding academic dishonesty. Submitting an item of academic work that has previously been submitted without fair citation of the original work or authorization by the faculty member supervising the work is prohibited. Intentional plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course.

All students are expected to produce high quality, polished drafts suitable to public view.

Accessibility

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact SASS ([Student Access and Accommodation Services](#)).

Location: 350 Fell Hall

Phone: (309) 438-5853

TTY: (309) 438-8620

Email: ableisu@ilstu.edu

If you need accommodations not covered by SASS, please discuss them with me so we can ensure that you are able to succeed in this course. I will find a way to work with you.