

## WR326.01, Technical Writing

Spring 2020 | MW 4:30-5:45 | Maryland Hall Room 240

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MH 043L office hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00, Thursdays 1:00-3:00

CCSJ office hours: Tuesdays 12:00-5:00, Thursdays 3:00-5:00 (email me about meeting)

When you email me, please write our course number in the subject line, followed by your name and the topic of your message. This syllabus is subject to change, but I will notify you of changes in class and through the course website. By remaining in this class, you agree to the requirements in this syllabus.

### *Required Texts and Course Materials*

- *Technical Communication Today 6<sup>th</sup> ed.*, by Richard Johnson-Sheehan
- Course Websites: [allenbrizee.com](http://allenbrizee.com)
- Govans Heritage and Community Action: <https://govansheritage.org/>

Please bring *Technical Communication Today* to class every day or have access to it online.

### *Course Description*

From the Loyola University Maryland Catalog: WR326 is an advanced course in technical writing. Students use rhetorical theories and industry standard technology to create traditional and multimedia documents. Areas of study include grant and proposal writing, research methods, online instructions, websites, and various forms of social media. Subject matter also includes ethics and the role of technical writers as project managers and decision makers in the workplace.

In this section, you will develop your ability to communicate complex information to diverse audiences so that they can make decisions and accomplish tasks. Therefore, we will work together to learn more about an author's rhetorical situation (purpose, audience, context, topic), especially as it relates to civic and workplace writing. We will read a mixture of sources from rhetorical theory, technical communication, and user experience (UX) scholarship to inform our efforts.

To assess and revise our documents, we will conduct usability testing; this testing will allow you to practice collecting, coding, and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data. You will use this data to refine your documents and follow the iterative, reader-centered approach. My goal for this class is help you become better writers but also insightful problem-solvers who use your abilities to make educated and ethical decisions in the workplace. These are lofty but attainable goals—it is no accident that Loyola considers *eloquentia perfecta* (perfect eloquence) as a primary undergraduate learning outcome.

In this class, you will have the option of choosing the traditional track where you will work individually, or you may collaborate in a team on the **service-learning** track. If you choose the service-learning track, you will work with two community partners, GEDCO/CARES Career Connections and the Radnor-Winston Improvement Association, both located on York Road. While the service-learning track is optional, I strongly suggest you choose it as this approach provides you with the experience that most closely resembles your work after graduation, and it gives you the opportunity to bring about positive change in Baltimore.

## *Course Learning Aims*

Over the course of the semester, students in Technical Writing will read widely across genres, cultures, disciplines and media

- to develop knowledge of the world beyond the self;
- to develop a language of cultivated response;
- to discern rhetorical and stylistic strategies that best suit particular arguments, situations, and audiences; and
- to develop an appreciation of language

In order to produce finished, polished texts that show competence in the standards of English usage and style, you will:

- write widely across genres and for a variety of purposes, showing an ability to adjust your style appropriately to audience and situation;
- develop a distinctive voice with original ideas through frequent practice;
- situate yourself in a larger intellectual conversation in developing and researching your ideas;
- write multiple drafts of extended works in order to extend the rhetorical strategies you began in Effective Writing;
- develop an ability to critique other's writing constructively and to use the same to effectively work collaboratively through frequent group exercise (workshops) and conferences; and
- learn to use technology to the best advantage of your writing through daily exposure, understanding both the various forms of media and their rhetorical effects

### **The Service-Learning Track**

As noted above, this is a service-learning optional course, which means that you have the opportunity to work with two community partners to satisfy some of the requirements for this class. The service-learning team will work with GEDCO/CARES to help their unemployed or underemployed clients find and apply for jobs. In addition, service-learning students will collaborate with the Radnor-Winston Improvement Association to conduct research on the history of the Govans neighborhood, the neighborhood Loyola calls home. This research will be added to an exciting new Digital Humanities and Engagement initiative, Govans Heritage and Community Action: <https://govansheritage.org/>. While service-learning students will complete the first project individually, they will submit a rough draft of the Govans History Report in lieu of Project 2 and the final draft of this work for Project 3. Lastly, service-learning students will write three critical reflections due at different points during the term.

Service at GEDCO/CARES begins early in the term and occurs on a weekly basis. Service-learning students will collaborate with the Radnor-Winston organization throughout the term as needed. Service-learning work should meet the 20-hour minimum over the course of the entire term, which includes work with both GEDCO/CARES and Radnor-Winston. Please reference the Project assignment sheets for more details. This service-learning project is part of Loyola's York Road Initiative (YRI): <http://www.loyola.edu/departments/ccsj/york-road-initiative>. You may read more about writing students' involvement in the YRI on my professional website here: <https://www.allenbrizee.com/projects/>. This project meets Loyola's criteria for a service-learning course and aligns with undergraduate learning aims.

### **The Traditional Track**

Students not participating in the service-learning project will work individually on Projects 1, 2, and 3. Project 1 is a set of instructions; Project 2 is a technical summary; Project 3 is a usability report. You may read more about these projects on their assignment sheets.

## Course Policies

### Attendance and Tardiness

Because we only meet twice per week, missing three days will cause your class participation grade to drop. If you miss four days, expect to fail. Arriving late to class three times is considered one absence. However, please do not come to class if you think you have something contagious. Medical excuses allow you to make up missed work but will not excuse absence. If you are absent, contact me or another student to stay current. **Please note Loyola's schedule for spring break and the Easter holiday and make arrangements now.** You are required to take the tests scheduled for those days in class.

### Submitting Assignments

Deadlines are important in academia and in the workplace. This semester, each assignment will have a specified due date, and unless stated otherwise, will be due in class on that date. If you must turn in late work, contact me, and I may grant an extension. Unless you have an extension, late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade each day they are late (this includes weekends).

### Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty—cheating, lying, plagiarism, etc.—will result in failure of the assignment in question and will result in failure of the course. **At the top of your projects, type this statement: "I understand and will uphold the ideals of academic honesty as stated in the Honor Code."** The Honor Code states that all students of the Loyola Community have been equally entrusted by their peers to conduct themselves honestly on all academic assignments and tests. Loyola students have a collective and individual responsibility for the ethical welfare of their academic community.

**All outside resources or information used should be clearly acknowledged.** If there is any doubt or question regarding the use and documentation of outside sources for academic assignments, your instructor should be consulted. Also, please note that the writing you produce in this course should be new and original work that has not been submitted for other courses. In addition, when you submit the final draft of your work, you are responsible for ensuring that your work is complete and fulfills the requirements of the assignment. You may not use revision options as extensions. Lastly, receiving peer feedback is encouraged, but this feedback should be limited to the peers in this course. **Help from roommates, siblings, parents, online tutoring, or non-Loyola instruction is not permitted.** Please refer to the Honor Code for more information: <http://www.loyola.edu/academics/honor-code>.

### Class Preparation and Participation

Come to class having read and thought about the assignments. We will begin each class with writing or a question-answer session. Also, we will be taking class minutes, rotating this responsibility throughout the term. Your participation in these tasks and discussions affects your grade. Use the end-of-chapter exercises and questions in *Technical Communication Today* as prompts for class discussion. I will let you know when you need to actually complete the exercises. Lastly, you will present twice during the term: once to summarize one chapter from our text or an article we read for class and once at the end of the semester on your capstone assignment. Please take the summary presentations seriously and be prepared. They are good practice for the end-of-term presentation.

### Cell Phones, Laptops, and Computer Lab Etiquette

Turn off your phone ringers at the door. Use cell phones for medical or family emergencies only. **Laptops may be used in class since e-versions of our text are available, but you are expected to limit your online work to resources related to the class. If I find that you are checking email, Instagram, ESPN, etc., I will ask you to leave the class, and you will receive an absence.**

## Course Requirements

### Informal Writing and Exams

Informal writing includes in-class reflection and homework, as well as presenting chapter summaries and taking class minutes. Reflection assignments allow you to think back on and write about class reading and your experiences. Reflections follow the What? So what? What now? model. Homework will be assigned weekly; subject matter for homework will depend on what we are studying at the time, but assignments include rhetorical analysis, summaries, etc. To help you practice for your end-of-term presentations, you will present chapter summaries. To help you gain experiences taking careful notes for the workplace, you will also take class minutes. I will distribute sign-up sheets for these activities.

This course includes three exams: a mid-term, a grammar and mechanics exam, and a final exam. To help you pass the mid-term and final exams, you should keep up with the readings, attend class, and participate in discussions. To help you pass the grammar and mechanics exam, you should participate in the in-class exercises, complete Purdue OWL exercises on areas in which you struggle, and study the Big Seven handout and Punctuation Pattern Sheet available on the course website. **Attendance at your scheduled final exam time is required to pass. Please obtain university permission and let me know in advance if you need to reschedule your exam due to exam scheduling conflict.**

### Formal Writing/Major Assignments

Major projects (3) are titled, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font (or similar font), with 1-inch margins. Proper MLA, APA, or CMS documentation must be used. **You must complete all major assignments to pass the class.** You may rewrite one individual project for an average between your original and your revised grade. Your revised project is due with Project 3 on the day of our final exam.

The three major assignments are as follows:

1. Project 1: Set of Instructions (individual work) – using text and visuals, compose a set of instructions for a complex process your peers can complete in class.
2. Project 2: Technical Summary or Rough Draft of Govans History Report (team or individual work) – Read a lengthy and complex article in your field written for subject matter experts (SMEs) and “translate” it for a lay audience. Service-learning students will submit a rough draft of their Govans research report.
3. Project 3: The Capstone Project (team or individual work) – The deliverables for the service-learning or individual semester project. Service-learning students will submit the final draft of the Govans research report. All other students will submit a usability report on their technical summary from Project 2.

I grade work based on the system below, which is informed by four of the five canons of rhetoric:

CONCEPT	STRUCTURE	DESIGN	STYLE & G/M
High level concerns: purpose, audience, effective research, knowledge of topic	Strong thesis, logical and detailed argument or exploration, effective paragraph organization	Document design, adherence to HATS, professional pages, accurate visuals	Sentence-level organization, prose, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, citation

The rough draft for Project 1 is worth 2 points, and the rough drafts for Projects 2 and 3 are worth 4 points. The grading scales (in points) for the formal writing assignments are as follows:

**Project 1 (10 points)**

10-9.3 A	7.6-7.3 C
9.2-9 A-	7.2-7 C-
8.9-8.7 B+	6.9-6.7 D+
8.6-8.3 B	6.6 D
8.2-8 B-	6.5-0 F
7.9-7.7 C+	

**Projects 2 & 3 (20 points)**

20-18.6 A	15.2-14.6 C
18.4-18 A-	14.39-14 C-
17.8-17.4 B+	13.79-13.4 D+
17.2-16.59 B	13.20 D
16.4-16 B-	13-0 F
15.8-15.4 C+	

**Rough Drafts**

You are required to bring rough drafts to the writing workshops. Failure to bring rough drafts to the writing workshops will automatically deduct the rough draft points from your final draft grade.

**Conferences**

During the semester, we will meet individually to discuss your work. Failure to attend our scheduled conference day is considered an absence.

**Extra Credit**

Extra credit assignments are available throughout the semester and are available on the course website.

*Assignment and Course Grading*

The tables below detail assignment grade weight and the course grading scale. You may track your grades by filling in the grades you receive in the far-right column. I also encourage you to meet with me to discuss your progress in this class.

**Assignment Grade Weight**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Titles</b>	<b>Point Value (%)</b>	<b>Your Grade Here</b>
Three Formal Assignments	Project 1: Instructions	10	
	Project 2: Technical Summary or Draft of Govans Research Report	20	
	Project 3: Capstone Project (Usability Report or Govans Research Report)	20 points total (10 for document, 10 for presentation)	
Exams & Homework	Mid-Term Exam	10	
	G/M Exam	10	
	Final Exam	10	
	Homework: Job Search Documents	5	
	Chapter Summaries and Class Minutes	5	
Class Participation	Attendance, In-class Participation (leading your class discussion), Professionalism	10	
		<b>100 Points Total (%)</b>	

### Course Grading Scale

Course Points (%)	Grade	Loyola Grade Points
100-93	A	4.00
92-90	A-	3.67
89-87	B+	3.33
86-83	B	3.00
82-80	B-	2.67
79-77	C+	2.33
76-73	C	2.00
72-70	C-	1.67
69-67	D+	1.33
66	D	1.00
65-0	F	0.00

#### *Students with Disabilities*

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS), Newman Towers West 107, at [DSS@loyola.edu](mailto:DSS@loyola.edu) or call (410) 617-2750/2062. If you have registered with DSS and have requested an accommodations letter (and DSS has sent the letter to your professors via email), please schedule a meeting to discuss your accommodations.

#### *Loyola University Title IX Statement*

Loyola University Maryland is committed to a learning and working environment free from sexual and gender-based misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual verbal abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. Reports of such offenses are taken seriously, and Loyola encourages students experiencing sexual misconduct to report the incident in accordance with the University's policy on Reporting Misconduct (pages 36-37). Loyola is also committed to an environment free of other forms of harassment and discrimination. For information about policies and reporting resources, please visit the harassment and discrimination policy available on Loyola's website.

#### *Student Athletes*

If you are a student athlete, please provide me with your travel and game schedule indicating when you will need to miss class to participate in athletic events. While travel for athletics is an excused absence, you will need to make up any missed work.

#### *The Loyola Writing Center*

The Writing Center is located in Maryland Hall 057. To make an appointment, call 410-617-5415, email [lwc@loyola.edu](mailto:lwc@loyola.edu), or visit their website: <http://www.loyola.edu/departments/writing-center>.

#### *Class Schedule*

Reading and writing assignments and exercises are due on the day they appear on the schedule on the course website. **Please make arrangements now for the semester breaks.**