Syllabus for English 3140-009/Fall 2016
Communicating in a Technical World

What Other Students Say About This Course:

“I liked the incorporation of a fictional story that followed the course throughout the semester, kept things interesting.”

“Made an otherwise boring course enjoyable.”

“This course was definitely much more fun and more interesting than it could have been. I loved that we used the novels as a theme for everything we did, and how we were able to incorporate it with what we were learning. Dr. Nalley is a very kind professor and I feel that she graded very fairly. The course was organized very well. As a very Type A person, I liked that the syllabus broke down what we were doing day by day.”

“This was a very fun and creative course. There was very good discussion in class. Various activities kept the class interesting. It was never boring. Given plenty of time to do projects much like real world technical writing. We formed a proposal and research project much like you would do for a job.”

My contact: Kathleen Nalley
snolley@clemson.edu
511 Strode
Hours: 8-9:25 a.m., T/Th, and by appointment. I’m also always in 411 Daniel between classes at 10:45-11:00 and 1:45-2:00, T/Th.

Class Location/Meeting Times: T/Th 9:30-10:45 a.m./204 Daniel
COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, you will learn to evaluate audience, purpose, context, and constraints of various technical communication practices and write and design technical communication projects. This particular class will be quite different from other tech writing courses in that we will be 1) focused on strengthening critical thinking skills in every aspect of our course, and 2) we will be using Ernest Clines’ Ready Player One as the conceptual framework of our tech writing genre projects.

Emphasis is placed on teamwork, evaluation, reflection, and communication problem-solving strategies. Planning, working in groups, and evaluating rhetorical situations will feature prominently, and you will be able to take advantage of in-class workshops and peer reviews to get feedback on your projects. Additionally, you will spend considerable time presenting your work to the class.

Additionally, this class is participating in Clemson’s “CT2” campus-wide Quality Enhancement Plan to target undergraduate critical thinking, an invaluable skill for you to develop during your college career (employers highly value this skill!). We will focus on consciously practicing critical thinking skills throughout the semester: in our discussions, assignments, reviews, and reflections. You will complete two versions of the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) and submit an artifact of your progress in critical thinking at the end of the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
(INCLUSIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS):

1. You will explore complex challenges and analyze multidimensional problems: you will analyze and evaluate diverse audiences, purposes, contexts, and constraints, and write and design technical documents that provide content specific to an audience’s needs.

2. You will extrapolate from one conceptual context to others: you will explore and use appropriate technologies to facilitate communication goals. You will be using themes and issues explored in Ready Player One as a conceptual framework for projects.

3. You will synthesize alternative solutions to multidimensional challenges: you will collaborate with peers to evaluate one another’s work and articulate the projects’ strengths and weaknesses in an effort to appropriately and effectively revise.

4. You will communicate complex ideas effectively: you will present and defend your approaches to subject matter in regards to audience, purpose, context, and constraints. You will effectively communicate complex ideas in various technical communications genres.
COURSE CONTENT

We will use the online learning management system, Canvas, for our course (in lieu of Blackboard).

YOU MUST ALWAYS USE THE LINK PROVIDED IN THE ORIGINAL INVITATION TO CANVAS OR YOU CAN USE WWW.CLEMSON.INSTRUCTURE.COM. DO NOT GOOGLE CANVAS AND TRY TO LOG IN. You must use the Clemson portal, otherwise Canvas will not recognize your login, and you will lose access!

1. Required Text Reading: You will have weekly reading assignments in your textbook, Practical Strategies for Technical Communication, second edition, by Mike Markel, as indicated on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. You can certainly purchase this book from the bookstore, but an e-book will be available to you through Canvas. Additionally, you will read Ernest Cline’s Ready Player One, from which our group project will be conceptually based.

2. Individual Assignments: As stated on the schedule, you will complete several individual assignments related to your textbook reading. These
assignments give you practice writing within a specific tech writing genre prior to our group project.

3. **Group Project:** You will complete one substantial group project during the course of this class. This will involve working within small groups to accomplish several tech writing goals. More info to come in class.

4. **In-class Work Labs:** You will participate in in-class work labs, wherein you will work within groups to brainstorm, research, write, design, review, edit, and present your group project. Of course, all work cannot be completed in class, so **meeting as a group outside of class will be critical to the success of your project.**

5. **Group Presentation:** You will be required to give several in-class presentations of your work. The final presentation on our schedule reflects your group’s presentation of projects; each member must participate in the presentation. **Note: Failure to come to class on presentation days will result in a zero for your project grade, regardless of the effort you put into the project.**

6. **Reflections:** Throughout the semester, we will reflect upon the work completed, specifically focusing on ideas for further development and how what we learned can be applied in other disciplines.
GRADIENT POLICY:
Final semester grades will be determined based upon the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments:</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project:</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation:</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT2 Test Completion:</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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*A = 90-100  
B = 80-89  
C = 70-79  
D = 60-69  
F = 59 or less*

*NOTE* I will not round up to the next point bracket. I will not add additional points to your grade for any reason. Grades must be earned.
CLASS POLICIES

Absences: You are allowed a maximum of three absences. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused. For every absence over the maximum, your final grade will be reduced by one letter grade per absence (i.e., You have 5 absences, so the highest possible grade you could make in the class is a C.). There are several compelling reasons for your attendance. One, this class is participatory by nature; absences affect the wellbeing of the entire class. Two, assignments will be explained in class. Three, missing class sessions is likely to put you very far behind, not only in your comprehension of the texts, but also in your grades. And, four, this class will be fun, and you will be totally missing out. With that said, please note: I WILL NOT drop any assignment, writing, or quiz grades. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get class notes, etc., from a fellow classmate. Do NOT email me asking what you missed in class; rather, contact a classmate. Further, absences will affect your class participation grade, as if you are not in class, you cannot participate. Missed in-class writing exercises, activities, and assignments cannot be made up, so be mindful of attendance.

Weather Cancellations: Any assignments due at the time of a class cancellation due to inclement weather will be due at the next class meeting unless contacted by the instructor. Any extension or postponement of assignments or exams must be granted by the instructor via email or Canvas within 24 hours of the weather related cancellation.

Electronic Devices: Laptops, iPads, Kindles, etc., are allowed in class, as your textbook readings, assignments, etc., are available online. One work lab days, you must have your laptop. These devices should only be used for coursework. Cell phones should be turned off and put away while in class. If you choose to use any device for texting, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, or any other online activity during class, your ultimate class participation grade will reflect this without warning. If I have to tell you to put up a cell phone, you can trust that this will be reflected in your grade.

Collaborative Work: Collaborative work is a required component of this course. Students are expected to work collaboratively by participating vigorously in discussions to contribute to the intellectual climate of the classroom. You are expected to talk a lot in this class. Failure to do so will be reflected in your class participation grade. Further, students will participate in a group project toward the end of the semester, and each person’s ability to collaborate within the group is vital.

Late Work: Assignments must be ready, proofed, revised, and turned in on their due dates. If you elect to turn in an assignment late, it will be marked down one grade per day late, up to four days. After four days, the grade will be recorded as zero. Missed in-class writing exercises, activities, and assignments cannot be made up, so be mindful of attendance.

Waiting: If I am not in class 10 minutes after our start time, you may leave.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES
In addition to the policies as stated above, this class will adhere to the following:
• All assignments are due at the beginning of class or by their due date on Canvas. Hand in all assignments to the instructor, and/or upload to Canvas as indicated. Do NOT leave an assignment on your desk, under my door, in my box, etc.
• **Consistent attendance, punctuality and participation are expected.** If you have a serious and compelling reason for absences, please speak with me in private. In-class activities may not be made up.
• All assignments must be word-processed. Handwritten assignments WILL NOT be accepted unless indicated.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**
To view a list of all University student policies, please see [http://www.clemson.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-handbook/universitypolicies/index.html](http://www.clemson.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-handbook/universitypolicies/index.html).

**PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**
As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson’s vision of this institution as a “high seminary of learning.” Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form. When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies. If you have any questions whatsoever about what constitutes plagiarism, see me before you turn in final drafts of your work. Students are not allowed to submit work from other classes for credit in this course.

**DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENT:** Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the professor know, and make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu, or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center building. Appointments are strongly encouraged – drop-ins will be seen if at all possible, but there could be a significant wait due to scheduled appointments. Students who receive Academic Access Letters are strongly encouraged to request, obtain and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to follow this process each semester. You can access further information here: [http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/sds/](http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/sds/).

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY TITLE IX (SEXUAL HARASSMENT):** Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran’s status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities,
admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/. Mr. Jerry Knighton is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator. He also is the Director of Access and Equity. His office is located at 111 Holtzendorff Hall, 864.656.3181 (voice) or 864.565.0899 (TDD).

SCHEDULE

*NOTE* Have works read and be ready to discuss by the due dates on the schedule!

Week 1 (8/18): Welcome to Technical Writing!
- Th: Syllabus/Class Overview/Introductions/CT2 Test #1

- T: Intro to tech comm and activity/Chpt. 1-3 textbook
- Th: Intro to crit thinking and activity/Discussion #1 Due!

Week 3 (8/30-9/1): Audience and Purpose
- T: Analyzing Audience and Purpose/Chpt. 4-5 textbook/Discussion #2 Due!
- Th: Writing for Clarity/Chpt. 6 textbook

Week 4 (9/6-9/8): MODULE 2: Resumes and Cover Letters
- T: Resumes and Cover Letters/Chpt. 10 textbook
- Th: Interview Questions and Work Lab/Discussion #3 Due!

Week 5 (9/13-9/15):
- T: Mock Interview
- Th: Reflection/Writing Job Goals/CT Activity

Week 6 (9/20-9/22): MODULE 3: Infographics and Ready Player One
- T: Infographics/Chpt. 8 textbook
- Th: Ready Player One Discussion (have book read by this date!)

Week 7 (9/27-9/29): MODULE 4: Proposals
- T: Ready Player One Assignment and Group Breakout/Infographic Assignment Due!
- Th: Proposal Writing/Chpt. 11 textbook

Week 8 (10/4-10/6):
- T: Group Work Lab
- Th: Group Pitches Due and Discussion #4 Due!

Week 9 (10/11-10/13): MODULE 5: Instructions
- T: Instructional Writing/Chpt. 14 textbook
- Th: Instructional Writing Work Lab

Week 10 (10/18-10/20):
- T: Instructions Due for Peer Review
- Th: Reflection and CT Activity/Revision Due!
Week 10 (10/25-10/27): MODULE 6: Reports
- T: Report Writing/Chpt. 12-13 textbook
- Th: Work Lab

Week 11 (11/1-11/3):
- T: Report Due for Peer Review!
- Th: Reflection and CT Activity/Revision Due!

Week 12 (11/8-11/10):
- T: FALL BREAK
- Th: Work Lab

Week 13 (11/15-11/17): Presentations
- T: Work Lab/CT2 Test #2 Due!
- Th: Presentations/Group Projects Due Day of Presentation!

Week 14 (11/22-11/24): THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
- T: Presentations
- Th: TURKEY WEEK!

Week 16 (11/29-12/1): Wrap Up
- T: Presentations/Student Evals
- Th: Presentations/Student Evals

There is no final exam for this class.

* The instructor maintains the right to change policies, readings, assignments, and schedules as deemed necessary.

Agreement: If you disagree with any of the policies or procedures spelled out above or cannot accept the demands of the course (i.e., the amount of time and work required), you need to drop the course as soon as possible. By staying in the course, you agree to comply with all the policies and procedures described in this syllabus.

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