

# Course Syllabus

**Section:** ENGL 3140-019

**Credit Hours:** 3.0

**Course Title:** Technical Writing

**Class Location/Meeting Times:**  
314 Daniel Hall/T/Th 11-12:15 p.m.

**E-mail address:** snalley@clemson.edu

**Instructor:** Kathleen Nalley

**Office Location:** 511 Strode

**Office Hours:** T/Th 8-9:25 a.m. and  
by appointment

**Office Phone Number:** n/a; please  
email me if you need assistance or to  
schedule a meeting

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 comm 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 Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* as the conceptual framework of our tech comm 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 students will be able to take advantage of in-class workshops and peer reviews to get feedback on their projects. Students will spend considerable time presenting their 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 (one of our genre projects) of your progress in critical thinking at the end of the semester.

## **Learning Outcomes (inclusive with Critical Thinking Skills):**

1. **Explore complex challenges and analyze multi-dimensional problems:** Students will explore, 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. **Extrapolate from one conceptual context to others:** Students will explore and use appropriate technologies to facilitate communication goals. Students will be using themes and issues explored in *The Hunger Games* as a conceptual framework for tech comm projects.
3. **Synthesize alternative solutions to multidimensional challenges:** Students 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. **Communicate complex ideas effectively:** Students will present and defend their approaches to subject matter in regards to audience, purpose, context, and constraints.

Students will effectively communicate complex ideas in various technical communications genres.

Discussions, peer reviews, genre projects, presentations, and reflections are used as the measure of mastery of these learning objectives.

### **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:**

January	6, W	Classes begin
	12, T	Last day to register or add a class
	18, M	Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
	20, W	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the University without a W grade
February	26, F	Last day for instructors to issue midterm evaluations
March	11, F	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the University without final grades
	14-18, M-F	Spring break
April	21, Th	Last day of class

### **COURSE CONTENT:**

**NOTE:** 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](http://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:** Our semester will be contextually based upon **Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games***, a novel. You need to purchase this novel as soon as possible. You must read and be prepared to discuss the novel by Tuesday, January 26. **Note: Failure to do so will result in being counted absent for that day.** In addition to this novel, there may be additional online readings that relate thematically to the novel.
2. **In-class Work Labs/Genre Projects:** You will participate in weekly in-class work labs, wherein you will work within groups to brainstorm, research, write, design, review, edit, and present genre projects. A good bit of your work, therefore, will be completed in class.

Because of this, your active and engaged participation during class time is vital to not only your success in this class, but to your classmates' as well. (But, work outside of class is also expected!)

3. **Presentations:** You will be required to give several in-class presentations of your work. These will be largely group presentations; however, 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.**
4. **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.
5. **Clemson Thinks<sup>2</sup> (CT2):** This course is part of Clemson University's CT2 seminar series, the university's Quality Enhancement Plan, which seeks to enhance the critical thinking skills of Clemson students through transformative learning experiences. It is designed to actively engage you in thinking critically about the issues discussed in class. To assess your growth in critical thinking skills, you will take the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTS) at the beginning and end of the semester. For completing this assessment you will receive a 100 no matter the score you earn. The goal of this course is to improve your ability to think constructively and creatively and therefore your score on these tests should increase from the beginning to the end of the semester. Your final project will be used as a CT2 artifact to demonstrate your critical thinking skills. More information can be found at <http://www.clemson.edu/assessment/thinks2> (Links to an external site.).
6. **Final Project (CT2 Artifact):** The only project that will be completed individually in this course will be your final project. You will complete a feasibility report that requires you to analyze a current political figure. The analysis will require you to think critically about political agendas, research former platforms, and predict potential outcomes. This project will measure your skills as a critical thinker, your knowledge as a writer, and your creativity. You will have the opportunity to present your ideas to the class, get suggestions for revision, and conference with me regarding specific final objectives, before turning in your final project.

## CLASS POLICIES

**Absences:** Your job is to be a student. I expect you to treat it as a job; one you treat with all seriousness, both in performance and in attendance. In short, you are expected to be here. 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 and largely completed in class. Three, missing class sessions is likely to put you very far behind, not only in your comprehension of the lessons, but in your work, and 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 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 and assignments cannot be made up, so be mindful of attendance.** Furthermore, if you are tardy by 5 minutes or more, you may be counted absent. Be respectful to your classmates and me, and come to class on time and be ready to roll.

**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 some of your readings and assignments will be online. **NOTE: you must have your laptop to participate in work labs. Failure to bring your laptop to class on these days will result in being counted absent!** 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 social media during class, you may be asked to leave and be counted absent for the day.

**Collaborative Work:** Collaborative work is a required and vital component of this course. Students are expected to work collaboratively, and you are expected to talk a lot in this class. Failure to do so will be reflected in your class participation grade. Furthermore, almost all of our genre projects are team-oriented. You will learn to work in groups, manage time wisely, and problem-solve within these teams.

**Late Work:** Assignments must be ready, proofed, 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 exercises 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.
- Handwritten assignments WILL NOT be accepted unless indicated.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** *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:** *Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should make an appointment with Dr. Margaret Camp (656-6848), Director of Disability Services, to discuss specific needs within the first month of classes. Students should present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disability Services when they meet with instructors. Accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester.*

**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).*

**To view a list of all University student policies, please see** <http://www.clemson.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-handbook/universitypolicies/index.html>. (Links to an external site.)

### **Receiving Grades and Feedback:**

Grades and feedback are provided generally one week after the assignment is turned in. Unless otherwise stated, grades and feedback will be available on Canvas. If ever you need to discuss your grade with me, send me an email to set up a time to talk or come see me during office hours.

### **GRADING POLICY:**

Final semester grades will be determined based upon the following:

<b>Genre Projects:</b>	<b>= 60%</b>
Mutt Proposal (20%)	
Hunger Games Design (20%)	
Survival/Instructional Guide (20%)	
<b>Critical Thinking Assessment #1</b>	<b>= 2.5%</b>
<b>Critical Thinking Assessment #2</b>	<b>= 2.5%</b>
<b>Class Participation:</b>	<b>= 10%</b>
<b>Final Project</b>	<b>= 25%</b>
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>= 100%</b>

**\*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.**

**SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1 (1/7): Welcome to Technical Communications**

- Th: Syllabus/Class Overview/Introductions

**Week 2 (1/12-1/14): Intro to Tech Comm**

- Tu: Intro to Tech Comm/Activity
- Th: Analyzing Audience

**Week 3 (1/19-1/21): Critical Thinking Week**

- Tu: Critical Thinking Intro
- Th: **CT2 Skills Test #1 (meet in the library!)**

**Week 4 (1/26-1/28): The Hunger Games (be sure to have read the book by Tuesday!)**

- Tu: Dystopias and Book Discussion
- Th: Discussion

**Week 5 (2/2-2/4): Proposal Writing**

- Tu: Proposal Writing Lesson and Assignment
- Th: Work Lab

**Week 6 (2/9-2/11): Proposal Writing Cont.**

- Tu: Work Lab
- Th: Work Lab

**Week 7 (2/16-2/18): Report Writing**

- Tu: Work Lab
- Th: **Proposals Due! Presentations Today!**

**Week 8 (2/23-2/25): Report Writing**

- Tu: Cover Letter, Report Writing Lesson and Assignment
- Th: Work Lab

**Week 9 (3/1-3/3): Report Writing Cont.**

- Tu: Work Lab
- Th: Work Lab

**Week 10 (3/8-3/10): Report Writing Cont.**

- Tu: Work Lab
- Th: Presentations/Reflections

**Week 11 (3/15-3/17): SPRING BREAK!**

**Week 12 (3/22-3/24): Instructional Writing**

- Tu: Instructional Writing Lesson and Assignment
- Th: Work Lab

**Week 13 (3/29-3/31): Instructional Writing Cont.**

- Tu: Work Lab
- Th: Work Lab

**Week 14 (4/5-4/7):**

- Tu: Work Lab and Final Project Assignment
- Th: Work Lab (Survival Guide Due by 11:59 p.m.)

**Week 15 (4/12-4/14): Final Project Work Week**

- Tu: Work Lab
- Th: **CT2 Skills Test #2**

## **Week 16 (4/19-4/21): Presentations**

- Tu: Presentations
- Th: Presentations/**Final projects due on Canvas by Wednesday, April 27, at 5:30 p.m.**

**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.