



**Course Title:** Professional & Technical Communication  
**Sections:** ENGL 320 – 004 | ENGL 320 – 007  
**Location:** Online Delivery via Canvas  
**Instructor:** Daniel Ruefman, Ph.D.  
**Office:** Harvey Hall – 373P  
**Office Hours:** M/W/F 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM (or by appointment)  
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## WORDS OF WISDOM

“The two words *information* and *communication* are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out. Communication is getting through.”

– Sydney J. Harris

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 320: Technical and Professional Communication, is an interdisciplinary professional writing course designed to introduce students to workplace communication skills and strategies for both print and digital contexts. Throughout this term, students will orient themselves with key professional and technical writing genres that are adaptable to a variety of academic and vocational disciplines.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

During this course, students will learn to:

1. Employ rhetorical awareness (purpose, audience, context, and genre) to complete outcomes 2 – 5 in a variety of communication situations, whether in-person or online;
2. Research and evaluate information from a professional, academic, and government sources that are appropriate for workplace genres and rhetorical situations (including awareness and avoidance of plagiarism);
3. Analyze and evaluate information for quality and validity that effectively responds to the purpose, audience, context, and genre;
4. Develop rhetorical strategies for generating content and organizing it into a logical structure that is appropriate for workplace communication situations;
5. Use a variety of communication methods, from written to oral, to ethically and responsibly develop documents and presentations that exhibit an overall design that enhances readability and illustrates professionalism that consider intercultural factors when appropriate.

## REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

This course has one required text, though supplemental materials will be available via Canvas. To succeed this term, you will require the following:

1. *Technical Communication*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. – by Mike Markel (E-Text via Canvas)
2. Regular / reliable internet access capable of streaming video lectures online
3. Method to back up coursework (e.g. USB flash drive, Stout OneDrive, etc.)

## COURSE POLICIES

**COVID-19 Policies:** Due to the ongoing pandemic, it is the responsibility of all UW-Stout community members to ensure the safety and security of everyone across campus. For these reasons, all campus visitors, students, faculty, and staff will be required to wear masks while on campus in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Although this course is online, students may need still visit campus throughout the term or require an in-person meeting with their instructors. For these reasons, everyone should remain up-to date with all campus policies regarding [COVID news and mitigation efforts](#) at UW-Stout.

**Academic Misconduct:** Students engaging in academic dishonesty, in any form, will be subject to disciplinary action, as outlined in [the UW-Stout's academic dishonesty policies](#). All members of this class should familiarize themselves with these policies to avoid the following penalties:

- First instance of intentional plagiarism or other forms of cheating will result in automatic failure of the assignment in question.
- A second instance of plagiarism or cheating during the term will result in the automatic failure of the student for the semester and a referral to the Dean of Students for possible disciplinary action.

**Disability Accommodations:** An inclusive classroom, whether online or in-person, is vital to the learning process of the entire community. For that reason, UW-Stout strives to ensure that students have full access to their course materials. However, there are times when students may require additional accommodation to empower them to realize their full potential. In those cases, students should contact disability services to ensure that instructors have the appropriate documentation, that guarantee students receive all the accommodations to which they are entitled. [Disability Services](#) is located in the Robert S. Swanson Library & Learning Center (Room 120), and may be contacted by email at [disabilityservices@uwstout.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@uwstout.edu), or by phone at 715-232-2995.

**Counseling Center:** In these very uncertain times, many students experience a range of issues which may make inhibit learning in some way. These issues might include any number of things, including strained relationships, anxiety, stress, substance abuse, depression, loss of motivation, grief, etc. The Counseling Center on campus is available to all students who may be experiencing personal challenges. It is free and confidential. [The Counseling Center](#) is located in Bowman Hall, Room 410. For questions or to schedule an appointment, please call 715-232-2468.

**Writing Center:** Students of all skill levels are encouraged to visit the Writing Center to discuss writing projects at any stage of development (including writing-intensive projects for classes other than those designated as “English”). Its primary location is in Harvey Hall, Room 174, though the center does offer tutoring services in the library and dormitories periodically throughout the term. **To schedule an appointment, or to learn more about the services offered, please call (715) 232-5284 or visit their [website](#) on the Stout Cloud Gateway.**

**Email Policy:** Though I would prefer to have general questions presented in the “General Inquiry” forum on Canvas, specific questions related to your personal work may be emailed to me at [ruefmand@uwstout.edu](mailto:ruefmand@uwstout.edu). Given the nature of this course, I expect all emails to be written in a professional manner. Your email should:

- Address me by name (“Professor Ruefman” or “Dr. Ruefman”);
- Include an appropriate subject line;
- Provide a concise, formal message, free of grammatical or spelling errors;
- Close with your name, course, and section number [Jamie Smith (ENGL320-001)].

**Late Assignment Policy:** Deadlines are a part of the professional world and this is a reality that every student must come to terms with. For that reason, **late assignments will not be accepted.** Often you may have an opportunity to work ahead, and students are encouraged to do so if they anticipate personal conflicts with any of the due dates.

**General Inquiry Discussion Forum:** To more efficiently to student questions this term, a “General Inquiry” forum can be found in the Discussion Section of Canvas. If students have a general question about a project or content covered in the class, please present that question through this forum. I will respond to these inquiries during regular office hours.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Job Application Packet (20 points):** Draft, revise and edit a cover letter and resume that are tailored for an actual job opening in their field (entry-level or internship preferably). During this process, students will also be asked to discuss interview and job fair strategies.

**Infographic Project (20 points):** Representing data in an accessible and ethical way for a general audience is essential to professionals in virtually every field. For this project, students will conduct research into a topic related to their professional goals. Students will then develop an infographic that will serve as a public service announcement, informing the general population of an important issue and persuading them to take some action.

**Bid Proposal / Business Plan (50 points):** Proposals come in many forms. Construction companies write bid proposals to compete for government contracts, small business owners must create a detailed business plan to secure funding from investors, and the clinical researchers at 3M must write research proposals before testing their products.

**Manual / Handbook Project (50 points):** Providing clear, actionable instructions is a universal skill. Whether it is a walkthrough of a new computer program, assembly instructions for a new product, or preventative maintenance manual for a piece of machinery, it is vital to provide an audience with directions that they can follow. Select a topic of personal or professional importance and write the manual or handbook that will allow an audience to achieve a specific objective.

**Online Activities (60 points):** During the term, this class will involve a series of synchronous and asynchronous activities designed to engage students with course content. Online discussions, workshops, viewing of lectures, and individual video conferences with the professor will be included in this category.

## GRADING

Final grades this term will be awarded according to the following scale:

A = 93-100%	B+ = 87 – 89%	C+ = 77 – 79%	D = 60-69%
A- = 90 – 92%	B = 83-86%	C = 73 – 76%	F = <59%
	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70 – 72%	