

Course: DMED 540 Technical Writing (Fundamentals) 2

Term: Spring 2024

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Course Description

This course is designed for students who intend to apply their writing know-how to professional technical fields. It is a foundational course, so that the content will approach each stage through the lens of an ESL/ESP student learning the fundamentals of specialized writing. The main strategy focuses on applicability and practicality, so the workshop/collaborative model is intended to offer in-class exercises and lab assignments, which will gradually build from the existing knowledge of the English language toward a clear, cohesive and succinct writing style suitable for technical environments.

The spring course builds on the DMED Technical Writing (Fundamentals) 1 in the fall semester, followed by more difficult written assignments and addressing more advanced needs in the professional fields related to Digital Media. The course will focus on writing effective portfolio descriptions, concise writing and describing processes, short project briefs, problem statements, and others, all helpful in the future MDM program and career launch. You will evaluate and model examples of portfolios, user-centric writing samples, and documentation related to app and game design among others.

Course Objectives

Throughout the course, you will:

- Improve accuracy, clarity, cohesion and pace through technical writing exercises;
- Learn how to write concisely for easy skimming - a skillset needed in portfolio, resume and cover letter writing;
- Get a better understanding of your abilities to instruct particular users, get feedback and improve according to the feedback, revise your writing using various strategies and peer-edit;

- Correctly use new lexical items related to contemporary and agile digital media environments by applying the language in writing assignments specially devised to improve clarity and cohesion;
- Practise succinct writing of instructional and expository texts individually, in pairs and in groups,
- Effectively plan and design a portfolio comprising your exemplary work, accompanied by the necessary written documents.

Students' goals:

Note: This part will be completed in class during our first week. You will discuss your personal goals and needs related to this course in groups and articulate up to five additional goals you would like to achieve throughout the semester.

Course Format

The course will run for 13 weeks with 3.15-hour weekly classes. This is not a lecture-based course; it is a functional language one. Therefore the materials and activities planned for the class are communicative and involve active learning. The system doesn't intend to teach hard (technical) skills or digital media concepts; the focus is on the operating language in the authentic materials. **All activities assessments and materials are subject to change, according to the current group's linguistic needs.**

Course pre-requisites

A minimum of upper-intermediate English proficiency is required to take this course. (i.e. IELTS Academic overall - 6). You should also have an upper-intermediate ability to operate with Digital Media terms.

Tips for successful completion of the course

- The motivation, participation and attendance grade (MPA - 20%) should be taken seriously throughout the semester.
- Writing can be daunting if not handled and scheduled/appropriately structured, so a good outline for every task should help you immensely with an overview of the content you wish to present.
- Try to use all the digital tools recommended throughout the course, even if you have a preferred one. Testing a wide array of applications and writing tools will contribute to your development in the field.
- Collaboration is essential and learning to ask the right questions and peer-edit will guarantee success in the course.
- As far as assignments are concerned, they must be handed in due time. You will have the possibility to extend **one** assignment **per semester**. **Extensions** will only be granted for medical and emergency reasons.

Reading materials

Throughout the course, you will be assigned technical grammar and style chapters or a technical writing samples. These texts will sometimes be accompanied by writing exercises to be complete in or out of class.

Schedule

Week	Stage	Focus	Tasks and assignments
1	<i>Fundamentals of portfolio writing</i>	The language of my portfolio. Showcasing your best work (example selection) Structure and format.	N/A
2		The language of my portfolio. Using persuasive language, explaining clearly.	In-class writing sessions
3		Describing case studies and writing for easy skimming.	In-class writing sessions
4		The grammar of modern portfolios.	In-class writing sessions
5	<i>Job searching and technical writing - best practices</i>	Writing the story of your product. Creating a conversation with your readers.	In-class writing sessions
6		Writing your personal story. Resumes and cover letters in current digital media fields. (part 1)	In-class writing sessions Personal resume writing.
7		Reading week - classes cancelled	
8		Writing your personal story. Resumes and cover letters in current digital media fields. (part 2)	In-class writing sessions
9	<i>Concise writing for users</i>	User-centricity and feedback collection.	In-class writing sessions
10		Writing for your users' evolving needs. Explaining features in user-centric writing.	In-class writing sessions
11		Writing user research insights - brief writing prompts and examples.	In-class writing sessions
12		Bringing it all together. Reviewing for the final exam.	In-class writing prompts.
13	<i>Wrap up</i>	Final written exam (1 h)	In-class written exam

Evaluation

You will be evaluated according to your research abilities, collaborative work and final written exam. Writing clearly and accurately and using proper style vocabulary for a specialized industry is paramount for your professional life and future MDM program. The following methods will offer you a balanced assessment at the end of the term:

Motivation, participation and attendance 20%

Throughout the semester, you will be graded according to your willingness to participate in discussions, peer reviews, self-correction and attitude toward your instructor and peers. You should limit your device time to in-class activity requirements and always be present and active.

Final written exam 80%

Final assignments will be graded according to task achievement, effective command of the language, fluency, accuracy, coherence, cohesion, and critical thinking. **You will receive a detailed rubric three weeks prior to your written exam. Rubrics are only given for graded assignments, in this case the final written exam. The rest of the assignments are formative, and they will not receive a grade per se. They will, however, be accounted for on the base of completion.**

Total 100%

Grading System

A+	95-100	Very Good, Excellent, or Outstanding Performance
A	90-94	
A-	85-89	
B+	80-84	Good Performance
B	75-79	Satisfactory Performance
B-	70-74	Marginally Unsatisfactory Performance
C+	65-69	Unsatisfactory Performance
C	60-64	
F	0 – 59	Unsatisfactory Performance (students must retake the course)

Policies (Simon Fraser University)

Accommodations

The university accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably the first week of class, if you will require any accommodations on these grounds.

The Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) will make every effort to assist students with disabilities in achieving their educational goals.

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/accessible-learning/establishing-accommodations/accommodation.html>

Academic Integrity: Your Work, Your Success

SFU's Academic Integrity website <http://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity.html> is filled with information on what academic dishonesty means, where you can find resources to help with your studies and the consequences of cheating.

Each student is responsible for their conduct as it affects the university community. Academic dishonesty, in any form, destroys the university's values. Furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to most students who pursue their studies honestly. Scholarly integrity is required of all members of the university. <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student/s10-01.html>

Inappropriate use of technology in coursework

If you are using generative AI to produce content that will be part of your graded work in the course, you must be transparent about your tools. Undeclared use of the tool/technology will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. Be aware that any tool used will require you to evaluate the output for accuracy and be responsible for making the appropriate corrections.

Graduate Studies Notes

Important dates and deadlines for graduate students are found here: http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current/important_dates/guidelines.html.

