

TO: Dr. Katie Cruger
FR: Heather Pidcock-Reed
RE: Course Design Packet
DA: December 5, 2015

Dear Dr. Cruger

Attached is the assigned Course Design Packet for PWR 617: Teaching Technical Writing.

I made revisions to the course syllabus to make it more detailed and to fine-tune some issues that were present in the first draft. For instance, I eliminated my initial participation “scores” and decided to base participation grades for the class on attendance and participation in the final group project. This seemed much less subjective and also takes into account more quiet students who may not speak up in class as often.

I also chose to make changes to the weighting of the various course components by reducing the percentage points for participation and adding in a section for the completion of in-class exercises.

The rest of the changes fleshed out some of my other course policies. I added examples of how much reading is to be expected by students each week and specified what I expected from journal entries. I believe that these changes make things clearer for students and spell out up-front what will be expected of them in the course.

I made only a couple of small revisions to the Week 4 Assignment. They included breaking down my examples into tasks and processes/ideas. I also made a clarification on the reflection portion of the assignment so that students knew they only had a to choose one or two of the examples to reflect upon. I tweaked the grading requirements to explain further what I meant for each category the assignment would be graded on as well. These changes clarify the assignment and grading expectations and hopefully make the choice of topics a little less overwhelming for students.

I chose to revise Sierra’s blogging assignment by turning it into a brainstorming assignment for just a single blog post topic. This gives students an opportunity to go through the brainstorming process in class and then reflect on it outside of the class. I felt that this would help students in creating a topic for their blog post assignments.

Sincerely,

Heather Pidcock-Reed

Course Syllabus

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Title:

Technical Writing in the Digital Age

Course Number:

ENG 401

Semester/Year:

Winter 2016

Classroom:

Room 202 + Moodle

Instructor:

Heather Pidcock-Reed

Contact Information:

H.PidcockReed@chatham.edu

(937) 789-1096 (email is the best way to contact me)

Office Hours:

MWF 10AM-12PM

T, TH 2 PM-4PM

If any of these times don't work for you, please contact me so we can set up an appointment at another time.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description:

This course explores digital methods of delivering technical content to readers. As technology has evolved, technical writers are frequently expected to keep up with the latest trends in order to deliver their material. We will explore the creation and writing of online help guides, technical blogging, as well as the creation of multimedia elements such as podcasts, screencasts, and videos that technical writers may be expected to create in the professional world.

Prerequisites:

ENG202 – Technical Communications (or equivalent).

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of the course, the students will be able to:

- Identify the similarities and differences between traditional technical writing and technical writing meant to be consumed digitally.
- Write for a variety of digital and multimedia mediums including: blogging, online help guides, screencasts, podcasts, and video.
- Evaluate writing projects according to industry and audience needs.
- Design and execute a digital technical writing package within a team while incorporating a variety of digital and multimedia components.

- Review and constructively criticize fellow students' work. Through critiquing the work of others, students will gain insight into their own work and how to improve upon it.
- Recognize the changing nature of the technical writing profession and the expectations placed upon technical writers in the workplace.

Required Texts and Materials:

Readings and additional materials will be provided in class and on Moodle. Each week you will be responsible for reading, listening, or watching an assortment of blog entries, short articles, short videos, or podcasts. There will be between 2-4 of these per week. You should review these materials before class.

The components required for the multimedia portions of your final project are available in the media lab. Your group is responsible for reserving them. If group members have their own equipment and software for use, you are free to use those. I will provide a list of the equipment needed by the second week of class.

Course Requirements: (tests, assignments, etc.)

Detailed rubrics for each component will be handed out in class, as well as posted on Moodle.

Participation	10%
Class Exercises	10%
Journal Entries	10%
Assignments	30%
Peer Critiques	15%
Final Project	25%

Your participation grade is based on your attendance and being an active member of your group in the final project. At the end of the final project, each member of your group will give me an evaluation of each member's participation.

Each week, you will be given a small exercise/assignment to complete during class. This will usually happen towards the end of class. Each exercise will be worth between 10-20 points. Occasionally, the assignment might give you a small task to complete outside of class. While these assignments may seem small, they are important. They will assist you in developing ideas for your writing projects. Completing these smaller exercises will also make your larger assignments easier to complete.

Journal entries are to be based on the assigned readings, videos, and podcasts. You will turn in your journal entries via Moodle the day of class, before the class meets. Writing prompts and questions will be posted on Moodle to help you determine what to write about.

I expect your journal entries to provide a thoughtful reflection on the readings you were assigned. Your entry should show me that you've completed the assigned materials and have begun to think about how they relate to our class. There aren't any "right" or "wrong" answers to your journal prompts and questions. They are intended to get you thinking about the readings so that you can better participate in class discussions. I will provide a few examples of what a thoughtful journal entry looks like in class.

There are six assignments you will complete over the semester. They are:

Task Breakdown	50 pts
Technical Manual	100 pts
Blog Entry	50 pts
Online Help Guide	100 pts
Podcast or Screencast Script	100 pts
Video Script	100 pts

More information on these assignments will be provided in class and on Moodle.

You are expected to participate in peer critiques of your classmates' work. You are required to post the first draft of your assignments to Moodle by 11:59 P.M. on Tuesdays. You will be assigned a group to work within and will post your critiques on Moodle by 11:59 P.M. on Fridays. After receiving your critique, you are to apply the feedback from your peers and revise your draft. Final drafts are due on the specified Friday by 11:59 P.M. on Moodle. This generally works out to be the week after peer reviews are due, which gives you a week to work on revisions.

Your final project is a group project. Each team will be responsible for producing a short technical document with digital/multimedia components to go along with it. More details will be provided later in the course.

Course Policies:

Attendance and/or participation

It's expected that students will attend all class meetings and be actively engaged in the coursework. This includes participating in class discussions and activities, turning in assignments on time, and making up work missed due to absences. Due to the project-based nature of this course, I require a Doctor's note for medical based absences. If you will be missing class for religious reasons, athletic, family emergencies, or other, it is your responsibility to let me know so we can discuss how you can make up work. Unexcused absences will result in a "0" for your participation grade on the day you missed.

Grading

Your grade is evaluated on organization of thought, originality, and clarity of presentation. Additional guidelines will be provided to you in class for each assignment. I grade based on the following scale:

Grade	%
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
C	74-77
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

Missed Exams/Assignments

Meeting deadlines on time is an important aspect of being a professional writer. Therefore, assignments are to be turned in on the day that they are due. If you submit assignments late, I will deduct 10% per 24-hour period (i.e. if you turn in your assignment two days after the deadline, I will deduct 20% from the overall grade of the assignment).

Many of the writing projects in this class are cumulative (based on your previous work). Your peer review groups also rely on you to turn your work in on time. Keeping on top of your deadlines and submitting your assignments on time are imperative to your success in this course.

Behavior

All students are expected to be respectful of one another and display a professional attitude. This includes showing up to class and participating in class discussions and group work in a thoughtful manner. Peer critiques are to be conducted respectfully and constructively.

Course Communication & Feedback

I check email frequently throughout the week. If you send an email during the work week, I will respond to it within 24 hours. If you send an email over the weekend, I will respond to it on Monday. You can expect your assignments to be graded within a week of submission. If you have any questions or concerns about the coursework and your assignments, contact me.

Course Calendar/Schedule:

<i>Week</i>	<i>Weekly Focus & Assignments</i>
Week 1	Introduction to the course. Overview of technical writing.
Week 2	Technical Writing in the Digital Age Task Breakdown (Tuesday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 3	Technical Writing in the Digital Age + Critiquing Your Peers Technical Manual 1 st Draft (Tuesday) Technical Manual Critiques (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 4	Blogging Technical Manual Final Draft (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 5	Blogging Blog Entry 1 st Draft (Tuesday) Blog Entry Critiques (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 6	Online Help Guides Blog Entry Final Draft (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 7	Online Help Guides Online Help Guide 1 st Draft (Tuesday) Online Help Guide Critiques (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 8	Multimedia: Podcasts & Screencasts Online Help Guide Final Draft (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 9	Multimedia: Podcasts & Screencasts Podcast/Screencast Script 1 st Draft (Tuesday) Podcast/Screencast Script Critiques (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 10	Multimedia: Video Podcasts/Screencast Script Final Draft (Friday) Journal Entries – due before class session
Week 11	Multimedia: Video Video Script 1 st Draft (Tuesday)

Video Script Critiques (Friday)
Journal Entries – due before class session

Week 12 Working as a Team
Video Script Final Draft (Friday)
Journal Entries – due before class session

Week 13 Working as a Team
Journal Entries – due before class session

Week 14 Final Project Presentations

CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

All courses, including those offered fully online, in a blended format, and in a seven-week session, must meet for a minimum of 14 hours per credit, **plus** the final examination period. If your class is not scheduled to physically meet for the appropriate number of hours, you must include a set of *Equivalent Instructional Activities* (EIAs) on the syllabus showing how the contact hours will be met.

Equivalent Instructional Activities (EIAs):

POLICY STATEMENTS

Chatham University Honor Code:

Chatham University students pledge to maintain the Honor Code, which states in part: “Honor is that principle by which we at Chatham form our code of living, working, and studying together. The standards of honor at Chatham require that all students act with intellectual independence, personal integrity, honesty in all relationships, and consideration for the rights and well being of others.”

Information about the Honor Code is available in the [Student Handbook](#).

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Cheating is defined as the attempt, successful or not, to give or obtain aid and/or information by illicit means in meeting any academic requirements, including examinations. Plagiarism is defined as the use, without proper acknowledgement, of the ideas, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse from another writer or speaker.

Turnitin.com and FERPA

In all classes, faculty must notify students if the Turnitin service may be used. Student papers are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as they are educational records that contain personally identifiable information. If faculty submits a paper or an excerpt from a paper on behalf of a student for evaluation by Turnitin, an alias must be used instead of the student's name and faculty will ensure that any identifiable personal information is removed before submission.

Disability Statement:

Chatham University is committed to providing an environment that ensures that no individual is discriminated against on the basis of her/his disability. Students with disabilities, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and who need special academic accommodations, should notify the assistant dean of the PACE Center as soon as possible. The PACE Center will work with students and the course instructor to coordinate and monitor the provision of reasonable academic accommodations.

Non-Registered Students Policy:

In accordance with University policy, only officially registered students may attend this class and all other classes offered at the University after the drop/add period. Please confer with your academic advisor if you need assistance with the registration process or you need additional information.

Minimum Grade Requirements:

Graduate students must earn a grade of B- or above in all courses. Undergraduates must earn a grade of C- or above in all courses completed after spring 2011 used to fulfill major or minor requirements. Please refer to the University catalog or individual program manuals for additional information.

MINIMUM TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

Internet Access	Broadband cable or DSL with a minimum connection speed of 768kbit is recommended; slower connections may not provide optimal course experience and performance
Operating System	Microsoft Windows 7 or higher (PC) Mac OS X 10.6 or higher (MAC) Current students may purchase Operating System upgrades from the Chatham Helpdesk
Processor Type	2.0 GHz or higher
System Memory	4GB RAM or higher
Monitor	1024x768 or higher screen resolution
Software	Microsoft Office 2013 or higher (PC) Microsoft Office 2011 or higher (MAC) All students will be provided with Microsoft Office 365 Current students may purchase Microsoft Office from the Chatham Helpdesk
Web Browser	Mozilla Firefox (Recommended for Moodle), or Google Chrome Incognito (Recommended for myPortal); other browsers such as Internet Explorer, Opera and Apple Safari are not recommended
Storage	500GB of hard drive or greater
Audio	Computer speakers and headphones
Visual	Web Camera
E-mail	Chatham University e-mail account (Microsoft Office 365)
Web Conferencing	Courses using web conferencing for online meetings require the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For audio: headphones and microphone • For video: web camera
Plug-ins	Course content may include file types that require special plug-in software, which are typically available as free downloads (ex: Real Player, Java, QuickTime, Silverlight, Adobe Reader and Adobe Flash)
Mobile Devices	Some resources are available via smartphones and tablets. Please note: Mobile devices will not be able to complete all course requirements. Students will still need regular access to a computer.
On Campus Resources	Current students have access to the following resources: 24 Hour Computer Lab – JKM Library 106 Computer Lab – JKM Library 101 Computer Lab – Buhl 236 (no printer) Computer Lab – Coolidge 42 Computer/CAD Lab – Eastside 209 Chatham IT Helpdesk – Woodland 100, Eastside 219, Eden Hall Lodge Library
Off Campus Resources	Current students have access to the following resources: Atomic Learning (http://www.atomiclearning.com/) Chatham IT (http://www.chatham.edu/its) Chatham IT Helpdesk (http://services.chatham.edu)

Current Technologies	For the most up-to-date technology, please visit Chatham IT (http://www.chatham.edu/its)
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Task Breakdown Assignment

There are two parts to your assignment this week.

Part 1 (40 Points)

Take a task, process, or idea and explain it in as few words as possible for your reader. It should be no more than one-page. Think of this document as a short instruction manual or “cheat sheet” for your reader. Your topic should be something that isn’t common knowledge, but something that you know a lot about and understand.

Avoid using topics that are too simple or too complex. For instance, how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is too simple and how to write a computer program is too complex for one-page. However, you can take one part of a complex task and explain it.

Some examples of appropriate topics are:

Tasks:

- Taking a screenshot on your computer or mobile device.
- How to use a blender
- Achieving first position in ballet
- Saddling a horse
- How to do CPR
- Deleting your Internet history
- Prepping a microscope slide

Processes & Ideas:

- Plate tectonics
- Process of photosynthesis
- Natural selection

Part 2 (10 points)

Briefly reflect (1-2 paragraphs) on how you might adapt this piece for different digital sources. Choose 1-2 of the formats below that you believe are most suitable for your task or idea:

- A blog post
- A video script
- A multimedia presentation such as Powerpoint
- An online help guide, article, or online piece of web content

- A podcast or screencast

Don't worry about being "right" or "wrong." This part of the assignment will get you to think about the different ways you could write or present your information depending on audience and presentation.

Grading

This assignment will be graded based on the following components:

- Chose an appropriately complex task to explain.
- Adhered to proper grammar and style
- Explained the task clearly.
- Explanation was to the point, without excess words and information.
- Completed reflection portion as assigned.

Task Complexity	10
Editing/Style	10
Clarity	10
Conciseness	10
Reflection Portion	10

How to Create a Sheet of Labels using the Mail Merge feature in Microsoft Word

In office administration, one of the most poignant short cuts we can take is using the Mail Merge feature to complete mailings efficiently. I'm going to demonstrate how to complete a Mail Merge using Microsoft Word 2013.

- In the Word Document, click on the tab entitled *Mailings*. There, you will find a button that says *Start Mail Merge*. Next, click on the drop down where the final option will be *Step-by-Step Mail Merge Wizard*.
- Next, select the option of Labels on the right in the wizard. Then, you will have to designate the type of label you want to create. First, choose the Avery Brand for type of labels. Then below, Chose 5160, which is the standard label size for easy-peel mailing labels.
- Next, you will have to select your recipients. Most offices have an excel spreadsheet of contact information and you will have to associate your excel document as the place to pull the addresses from.
- Next, you will have to select the fields you want on each label. The standard is:
 - First Name/Last Name
 - Address
 - City, State, and Zip
 - An Attention line
- Finally, preview your document of labels. Now, you are ready to insert your Avery label sheet into your printer to print your final label.

Reflection:

Today, we live in a world that not only wants stuff done quickly, but we also want to do it using the quickest method possible. If I were to do this assignment while implementing digital tools, I would use screenshots from MS Word. The reason being, some learners are visual and the need to see a picture or diagram of the steps in order for it to make sense to them.

Additionally, this instructional would be made even simpler by doing it as a YouTube. Captions could be integrated using Windows Move Maker and could be an accompaniment to the person narrating the instructional. It would be a great idea to utilize a text script to narrate this video, in order to keep things concise and succinct. It would also be instrumental in preventing rambling and small talk. The bottom line is, the more types of media used, the better the author can do in utilizing tools to communicate a powerful, but concise instructional message.

Heather Pidcock-R..., 11/21/2015 2:43 PM

Comment [1]: Great use of bullet points for each step. It makes it easy for the reader to follow your directions step-by-step.

Heather Pidcock-R..., 11/21/2015 2:41 PM

Comment [2]: *choose

Heather Pidcock-R..., 11/21/2015 2:41 PM

Comment [3]: *choose

Heather Pidcock-R..., 11/21/2015 2:56 PM

Comment [4]: This looks a little repetitive. Are there other words you can use in this line (and the one above it) or do you think you could cut those words entirely?

Heather Pidcock-R..., 11/21/2015 2:45 PM

Comment [5]: I agree. Screenshots would give your reader something to reference.

Heather Pidcock-R..., 11/21/2015 2:46 PM

Comment [6]: Again, great idea. These types of tasks are suited well for quick how-to videos.

Jason,

You did a great job presenting clear and concise directions for creating labels using Mail Merge. The bullet points made it easy to follow your directions. Your reflection on how to “digitize” this piece was insightful and shows that you understand different ways of presenting the material. I have just a couple of suggestions: keep an eye out on spelling/grammar/typos. I’ve highlighted the areas of concern in the paper. Also, be careful of being too repetitive. Overall, you’ve done a fantastic job. I look forward to reading more of your work.

Heather

Task Complexity	10/10
Editing/Style	8/10
Clarity	10/10
Conciseness	10/10
Reflection	10/10
TOTAL	48/50 = A

Blog Brainstorming In-Class Exercise (20 Points)

This exercise will help you determine a topic for the blog post you will write next week. It will also help you to start thinking about how to adapt technical material for a digital audience.

- 1) Use the technical manual you wrote earlier in this course as a guide. This will be the “theme” of your blog. For instance, if you wrote your technical manual as a set of instructions for an app, your pretend blog will be dedicated to that app.
- 2) You will be given five minutes in class to brainstorm ideas for potential blog posts related to your theme. After the five minutes are up, narrow the list down to your top three topics.
- 3) Think about how you can make those ideas into specific blog posts relevant to your theme. Choose **one** of those ideas to be your blog post.
- 4) Now it’s time to think about your audience. Write a paragraph about your audience. Who is your audience for this post? What do they want to know about your topic? What can you teach them? How can you keep their attention?
- 5) This portion will be done outside of class. Go online and find two examples of blog posts related to your idea. For example, if your pretend blog is about a particular app, look at blog posts about other apps to see how the bloggers approached their topic.
- 6) Write 1-2 paragraphs explaining what you like and dislike about both blog posts you found. Include specific examples of similar ideas you would implement in your blog and things you would do differently.

This assignment will be counted towards your class participation grade. You will be graded based on the relevance of your blog post idea to your technical manual. Your audience analysis and blog comparisons will be graded on conciseness, clarity, and style (grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.).

Relevance	5 points
Blog Comparisons	10 points
Audience Analysis	5 points

Video Script Assignment (100 points)

For this assignment, you will write a short video script on a topic from the technical manual you completed earlier in the semester. Depending on the subject you chose to write about, this could be an informational video or a how-to video.

Your script should be geared towards an online audience. Keep your script between 2-5 pages to stay within the five-minute run time goal. Remember, online audiences want short videos.

Keep in mind our class discussion on what makes a great video script:

- Narration should be conversational in tone.
- Visuals are important! Think about how you can show your future viewer your topic. Describe your visuals within the script.
- Remember, one page of script = one minute of video time!

Video Script Peer Review Guidelines

Read the scripts that the members of your peer review group submitted. Submit your written critique of their work by the deadline (Friday 11:59 PM).

Answer the following questions about your classmates' work:

- Is the script formatted appropriately?
- Does the script immediately pull the reader in and make you want to read more?
- Is the dialogue conversational?
- Is the topic explained clearly and concisely?
- Has the writer stayed within the page limit?
- Is there anything that could be cut from the script?
- Does the writer need to add anything to the script?
- Has the writer included relevant description of visuals within the script?
- What is your favorite part of the script?
- What do you think could be improved in the script?
- Did you understand the writer's topic?

Video Script Rubric

Category	20	15	10	5	Subtotal
Content	Topic is thoroughly researched and developed while remaining concise and easy to understand. The script remains focused on the topic at all times.	Topic is thoroughly researched and developed, while remaining easy to understand. The script remains focused on the topic most of the time.	Topic is researched and developed, but could use some more work. The script loses focus in a few places, but the main point is still clear.	Topic is poorly researched, undeveloped, or unclear. The script is unfocused, making the topic unclear.	
Narration	The written narration is conversational, relevant, educational, and interesting for the reader/future viewer.	The written narration is slightly conversational, yet has areas where the narration is slightly too formal.	Tries to provide conversational narration, but is inconsistent throughout the script.	Little or no attempt to provide a conversational style for the written narration.	
Imagery	Images are included in the script, are relevant to the written narration, and enhance the script and the information within it.	Images are included in the script, but could more relevant to the written narration. Some of the images may not enhance the script and the information within it.	An attempt was made to provide visuals within the script, but the images weren't relevant or didn't back up the written narration.	No attempt to match images to the written content of the narration.	
Economy	Script is concise with exactly the right amount of information and detail included. It adheres to the page limit and is neither too short or too long.	Script is good, yet either drags a little or needs more detail in one or two parts.	Script needs more editing, doesn't adhere to the page limit. It feels too long or too short in more than one part.	Script needs extensive work. It doesn't adhere to the page limit and is too long/too short.	
Mechanics	Script formatting, grammar, punctuation, and terminology were used correctly within the script.	Script formatting, grammar, punctuation, and terminology were usually correct, with only a few errors that did not detract from the script.	Script formatting, grammar, punctuation, and terminology were usually correct but the errors detracted from the script itself.	Repeated errors in formatting, grammar, punctuation, and terminology.	
TOTAL					