

Course Outline

1. COURSE INFORMATION

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| Session Offered | Fall 2017 | |
| Course Name | Technical Communications | |
| Course Code | GENTECH 3TC3 | |
| Date(s) and Time(s) of lectures | Tuesday Evening - 6:30 – 9:30 PM | |
| Program Name | Civil Engineering Infrastructure Technology, Manufacturing Engineering Technology, Power and Energy Engineering Technology or Software Engineering Technology | |
| Calendar Description | This course introduces students to the best practices for essential written, spoken, and graphic communications used in technology workplaces. Emphasis is placed on how to conduct research, analyze information, and design communication materials that are succinct and customized to the readers' needs. | |
| Instructor(s) | Jennifer Long | E-Mail: longjen@mcmaster.ca Office Hours & Location: Tues. 5:30 – 6:30 PM; ETB 204 |

2. COURSE SPECIFICS

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| Course Description | | | |
| Instruction Type | Code | Type | Hours per term |
| | C | Classroom instruction | 26 |
| | L | Laboratory, workshop or fieldwork | 13 |
| | T | Tutorial | |
| | DE | Distance education | |
| | Total Hours | | 39 |
| Resources | ISBN | Textbook Title & Edition | Author & Publisher |
| | ISBN: 978-0-19-902149-9 | Writing in the Technical Fields: A Practical Guide | Thorsten Ewald, Oxford |
| | Other Supplies | | Source |
| | PowerPoint slides and supporting material | | All material will be provided via electronic files on the course A2L site |
| Prerequisite(s) | Registration in one of Civil Engineering Infrastructure Technology, Manufacturing Engineering Technology, Power and Energy Engineering Technology or Software Engineering Technology | | |
| Corequisite(s) | None | | |
| Antirequisite(s) | None | | |

Course Specific Policies

1. Weekly Readings:

Students are expected to complete assigned textbook readings before class. Students are responsible for all assigned textbook readings, regardless of depth of coverage offered in class.

2. Avenue to Learn:

Instructors will post on Avenue to Learn, insofar as feasible, lecture notes and classroom materials; however, some materials presented in the classroom cannot be made available electronically for your "home use."

This course will be using a range of software. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor. Instructors will also use other software: McMaster e-mail and Avenue to Learn

3. Final Exam

Students must take the final exam to pass the course. The final exam consists of two sections: 1) Multiple choice questions of cumulative course content; and 2) Written responses to long answer questions based on lecture content and readings. No aids are allowed.

4. Participation Mark

Participation is not merely attendance; participation involves the quantity and quality of your contributions in class and your engagement during in-class activities and assignments. Come to class prepared to discuss the material, contribute ideas and examples and participate in individual and group activities.

5. Submitting work from other courses

All assignments submitted for grading must be new work. Assignments containing work completed in other courses (previous or concurrent) will not be accepted.

6. Turnitin

This course will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Please see Turnitin Policy under Section 6: Policies. If a student wishes to opt out of Turnitin, then he/she must notify the instructor by the third week of classes, so that alternate arrangements may be made.

Corrupt Files: Any files uploaded to Turnitin or Avenue that the instructor cannot open will be treated as late, regardless of when the instructor attempts to open the file. Make sure your files are not corrupt and are in a file format approved by the instructor. Note, if you are submitting from an Apple computer, you must submit your work as a pdf file.

7. Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the date scheduled,

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| | <p>unless they are scheduled as in-class assignments. Late assignments will receive a penalty of 5% for each day that the assignment is late, up to a maximum of 25%. Assignments that are more than 5 days late will not be accepted.</p> <p>8. Extra Credit Extra credit assignments are NOT offered in this course. No exceptions made. If there is an extra credit assignment opportunity, it will be the instructor’s initiative and it will be given to ALL students in the class.</p> <p>9. Communicating with your instructor Please feel free to contact your instructor with questions and/or issues. You may talk to your professor in person during her/his office hours, or arrange an appointment by email. You may also address issues through email. Please use your Avenue email and/or identify your section when sending email inquiries. The instructors will make every effort to respond to email inquiries within 48 hours. Email inquiries sent through your personal email will not be accepted.</p> | |
| Departmental Policies | <p>Students must maintain a GPA of 3.5/12 to continue in the program.</p> <p>In order to achieve the required learning objectives, on average, B.Tech. students can expect to do at least 3 hours of “out-of-class” work for every scheduled hour in class. “Out-of-class” work includes reading, research, assignments and preparation for tests and examinations.</p> <p>Where group work is indicated in the course outline, such collaborative work is mandatory.</p> <p>The use of cell phones, iPods, laptops and other personal electronic devices are prohibited from the classroom during the class time, unless the instructor makes an explicit exception. <i>Do not record (audio or visual) content in the courses at any time without the explicit consent of your instructor.</i></p> <p>Announcements made in class or placed on Avenue are considered to have been communicated to all students including those individuals that are not in class.</p> | |
| 3. SUB TOPIC(S) | | |
| Week 1 | <p>Introduction to Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation | <p>Buy Textbook @ Bookstore</p> <p>READING: Syllabus & Chapter 1</p> |
| Week 2 | <p>Introduction to Technical Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices of written communication <p><i>*Bring a work-related writing sample to class</i></p> | <p>READING: Chapters 2 & 3</p> |
| Week 3 | <p>Everyday Workplace Correspondence</p> <p>The professional action structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Letter | <p>READING: Chapter 5</p> <p>In lab Quiz # 1 (1, 2, & 3)</p> |

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| Week 4 | Technical Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical writing with a purpose • Report styles | READING: Chapter 6 |
| Week 5 | Formal Workplace Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Reports • Organizing information | READING: Chapter 4 & 7 Assignment 1: Standard Operating Procedure due on October 8th, 2017 |
| Fall Reading Week: Monday, October 9 to Sunday, October 15, 2017 | | |
| Week 6 | Oral Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices of oral communication Sign up for individual presentations | READING: Chapter 14 In lab Quiz # 2 (4, 5, 6, & 7) |
| Week 7 | Intercultural Communication & Indirect Writing Styles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffer statements & indirect writing • Writing and speaking to a global world <i>*Bring a copy of a work email (or a draft of Assignment 3) to class</i> Assignment 2: Individual Presentations (select participants) | READING: Chapter 8 Recommended Reading: A2L Assignment 3: EWC Email due on October 29th, 2017 |
| Week 8 | Descriptive Writing: Definitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is descriptive writing? • Elements and types of definitions • Expansion methods Assignment 2: Individual Presentations (select participants) | READING: Chapter 12 |
| Week 9 | Instructions, Procedures, & Manuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions of instructions vs. procedures • Manuals Assignment 2: Individual Presentations (select participants) | READING: Chapter 13 Assignment 4: EWC Memo or Letter due November 12th, 2017 |
| Week 10 | Visualizing Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions and types of graphics Graphics in reports Select Group Members for Group Work (Weeks 11 – 13) | READING: Chapter 10 |
| Week 11 | Choose your own communication topic: Top Tech Topics in Communication (Group work) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance required – in-class groupwork If possible, bring personal computer for group work (Weeks 11 – 13) | READING: As assigned by group In lab Quiz # 3 (8, 10, 12 & 13) |

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| Week 12 | Choose your own communication topic: Top Tech Topics in Communication (Group work) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance required – in-class groupwork If possible, bring personal computer for group work (Weeks 11 – 13) | READING: As assigned by group |
| Week 13 | Group Presentations Assignment 5: Top Tech Groupwork & Presentation Due December 5th, 2017 | |

Classes end: Wednesday, December 6, 2017
Final examination period: Friday, December 8 to Thursday, December 21, 2017
All examinations MUST be written during the scheduled examination period.

List of Communication Lab Topics

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| Lab 1 | Introduction to Technical Communication |
| Lab 2 | Technical Sentences & Paragraphs |
| Lab 3 | Quiz # 1 |
| Lab 4 | Standard Operating Procedure |
| Lab 5 | Editing and Revising Formal Documents |
| <i>Mid-term Recess: Monday, October 9 to Sunday, October 15, 2017</i> | |
| Lab 6 | Quiz #2 |
| Lab 7 | EWC Email |
| Lab 8 | Definitions |
| Lab 9 | EWC Letter |
| Lab 10 | Background Research |
| Lab 11 | Quiz # 3 |
| Lab 12 | Presentation Preparation |

Note that this structure represents a plan and is subject to adjustment term by term. The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The University may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes.

| 4. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING *including dates* | Weight | Date |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| Active Learning Activities & Lab Work | 10% | Throughout Term |
| Assignment 1: Standard Operating Procedure | 10% | Week 5 |
| Assignment 2: Individual Presentations | 5% | Week 7 - 10 |
| Assignment 3: EWC Email | 10% | Week 7 |
| Assignment 4: EWC Memo or Letter | 10% | Week 10 |
| Quizzes (5% for each quiz) | 15% | Weeks 3, 6, & 11 |
| Assignment 5: Top Tech Group Work (Weeks 11 & 12) & Presentation (Week 13) | 10% | Weeks 11-13 |
| Final examination (tests cumulative knowledge) | 30% | TBD |
| TOTAL | 100% | |
| Percentage grades will be converted to letter grades and grade points per the University calendar. | | |

5. LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Recognize, understand, and recall fundamental technical communication principles and techniques
2. Produce everyday workplace written communications that follow current professional practices
3. Comprehend and apply oral presentation principals and techniques
4. Demonstrate indirect form of writing to deliver unfavourable news in the workplace
5. Recognize and recall essential document design principals and techniques
6. Assess one's own knowledge, competence, and limits as a team member
7. Understand the attributes of effective team organization

6. POLICIES

Anti-Discrimination

The Faculty of Engineering is concerned with ensuring an environment that is free of all discrimination. If there is a problem, individuals are reminded that they should contact the Department Chair, the Sexual Harassment Officer or the Human Rights Consultant, as soon as possible.

http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/General/HR/Discrimination_Harassment_Sexual_Harassment-Prevention&Response.pdf

Academic Integrity

You are required to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism. E.g. the submission of work that is not own or for which other credit has been obtained
2. Improper collaboration in group work
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work (Assignments, Mid-Terms, etc.)

The McMaster Student Absence Form is an on-line self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences for:

- 1) Relief for missed academic work worth less than 25% of the final grade resulting from medical or personal situations lasting up to three calendar days:
 - Students may submit a maximum of one academic work missed request per term. It is the responsibility of the student to follow up with instructors immediately (within the 3 day period that is specified in the MSAF) regarding the nature of the accommodation. All work due in that time period however can be covered by one MSAF.
 - MSAF cannot be used to meet religious obligation or celebration of an important religious holiday, for that has already been completed or attempted or to apply for relief for any final examination or its equivalent.
- 2) For medical or personal situations lasting more than three calendar days, and/or for missed academic work worth 25% or more of the final grade, and/or for any request for relief in a term where the MSAF has not been used previously in that term:
 - Students must visit their Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office) and provide supporting documentation.

E-Learning Policy

Consistent with the Bachelor of Technology's policy to utilize e-learning as a complement to traditional classroom instruction, students are expected to obtain appropriate passwords and accounts to access Avenue To Learn for this course. Materials will be posted by class for student download. It is expected that students will avail themselves of these materials prior to class. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail account, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about this disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor. Avenue can be accessed via <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>.

Communications

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Maintain current contact information with the University, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contact information.
- Use the University provided e-mail address or maintain a valid forwarding e-mail address.
- Regularly check the official University communications channels. Official University communications are considered received if sent by postal mail, by fax, or by e-mail to the student's designated primary e-mail account via their @mcmaster.ca alias.
- Accept that forwarded e-mails may be lost and that e-mail is considered received if sent via the student's @mcmaster.ca alias.
- Check the McMaster/Avenue email and course websites on a regular basis during the term.

Turnitin (Optional)

This course will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students submit their assignment/work electronically to Turnitin.com where it is checked against the internet, published works and Turnitin's database for similar or identical work. If Turnitin finds similar or identical work that has not been properly cited, a report is sent to the instructor showing the student's work and the original source. The instructor reviews what Turnitin has found and then determines if he/she thinks there is a problem with the work. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/turnitin/students/>

Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) applies to universities. Instructors should take care to protect student names, student numbers, grades and all other personal information at all times. For example, the submission and return of assignments and posting of grades must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality.

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/fippa/fippa.cfm>

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities Policy

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information consult McMaster's policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

Students must forward a copy of the SAS accommodation to the instructor of each course and to the Program Administrator of the B.Tech. Program immediately upon receipt. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of a SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. <http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct (SCC) exists to promote the safety and security of all the students in the McMaster community and to encourage respect for others, their property and the laws of the land. McMaster University is a community which values mutual respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others. The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct is to outline accepted standards of behavior that are harmonious with the goals and the well-being of the University community, and to define the procedures to be followed when students fail to meet the accepted standards of behavior. All students have the responsibility to familiarize themselves with the University regulations and the conduct expected of them while studying at McMaster University.

<http://judicialaffairs.mcmaster.ca/pdf/SCC.pdf> and <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/StudentCode.pdf>