

Course Syllabus and Information
English 381 (WID), Sec. I01: Technical Communication
Spring 2017
Professor Bill Knox

Course and Conference Information

Class meets: 17 January – 12 May 2017

Faculty Contact: Simpkins 013, 298-2505 (office), 298.2974 (FAX), wl-knox@wiu.edu

Office and Contact: Simpkins 013, 298-2505 (office), 298.2974 (FAX), wl-knox@wiu.edu

Office hours: T Th 8:30-9:30 a.m. + 11:00 a.m.-noon, and W 2:00-3:00 p.m., and by appointment.

(To arrange a phone call or office visit, email in advance.)

Prerequisites

ENG 180 and 280, and/or permission of Director of Writing Programs

Text and Materials

Markel, Mike. *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016. Print. (PS)

Initial Comments

Actions and attitudes central to your success in this course include

- ***recalling and applying past relevant learning from ENG 180 and ENG 280***
- ***visiting our course syllabus and WesternOnline course site daily***
- ***printing class information sent to you electronically***
- ***reading assignments thoroughly***
- ***studying assigned material in Markel before beginning assignments***
- ***reading report assignments thoroughly before beginning them***
- ***asking me questions if the reading or assignments are unclear, and***
- ***completing assignments when due—only assignments submitted on time are accepted***

This syllabus outlines our work this semester; however, some details may change. Assignments and other communication (including changes) will be given in class and via Western Online. ***Class information sent to you electronically should be printed as backup.*** Discussions about the development of your assignments (as well as any other class matter) are encouraged with me by email (wl-knox@wiu.edu--not the WesternOnline email address), via telephone, during my office hours, and by appointment. If you live in the Macomb area, I encourage you to visit.

Although I am available via email outside of class and will usually respond within a day, I prefer you to phone or visit during the office hours for class business. As a rule, use email for routine questions. ***Please read all course material carefully because some questions may be already answered in the textbooks, assignments, and online material.***

Course Content

The 2016-2017 *Undergraduate Catalog* describes ENG 381 as “Developing informative, reader-centered technical communication. Writing, testing, and revising common genres and styles. Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID) course. BGS online writing course.” Further, “This course has been designated to meet the Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID) graduation requirement. WID courses provide instruction in the processes and formats for the writing content and style needed to be an effective professional in a student’s chosen field.” This course will introduce you to technical communication by means of individual yet related course projects. Study and practice, peer editing, and student-instructor conferences will help you to write clear, concise technical prose while improving skills, sharpening critical ability, creating awareness of writing habits, and fostering your writing confidence.

Your writing, the principal text in this class, should accomplish four goals:

- meet assignment requirements,
- convey significant content,
- interest the reader, and
- define you as a technical writer.
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Course Calendar

Assigned reading should be done before the week indicated. **Writing assignments will be due and the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the “Due” column.**

Class Weeks	Unit Topic(s)	Reading	Due to Dropbox
1 17-20 January	Introduction and Summaries Intro Letter-Resume	Western Online Course Intro Ch. 1, “Introduction”; Ch. 2, “Ethical”; Ch. 3, “Collaboratively” + Ch. 6, “Writing”	How-to 1-4 (19 January)
2 23-27 January		Ch. 9 “Correspondence” + Ch. 10 “Job Application” <i>Letter-Resume Partner Review</i>	How-to 5-8 (26 January)
3 30 Jan.-3 Feb.	Instructions	CH. 4 “Audience and Purpose” + Ch. 14, “Instructions” Appendix Part B “Editing”	1-Intro Letter + Resume Writer’s Log (WL) 1 (30 January)
4 6-10 February		Ch. 5, “Researching” Instructions Partner Review	How-to 9-12—email (9 February)
5 14-17 February	Proposal-Feasibility	Ch. 11, “Proposals” + Review Ch. 6, pp. 111-115	2-Instructions WL 2 (14 February)
6 20-24 February		Ch. 7, “Designing” + Ch. 8, “Graphics”	How-to 13-16 (23 February)
7 27 Feb.-3 Mar.		Ch. 12, “Informational” Appendix Part A, “Documenting” + Part B, “Editing and Proofreading” Proposal Partner Review	
8 6-10 March		Telephone Conferences	How-to 17-20 (Due before Conference)
13-17 March	Spring Break	No Classes	
9 20-24 March	Progress	Preview Ch. 13, “Recommendation Reports”	3-Proposal Rpt WL 3 (20 March)
10 27-31 March			How-to 21-24 (30 March)
11 3-7 April		Review Ch. 6, “Writing” <i>Progress Partner Review</i>	How-to 25-28 (6 April)
12 10-14 April	Research-Recommendation	Ch. 13, “Recommendation Reports” Review Appendix Pt. A + Pt. B	4-Progress Rpt WL 4 (10 April)
13 17-21 April	Public Presentation	Ch. 15, “Oral Presentations” Review Ch. 8	How-to 29-32 (20 April)
14 24-28 April		Telephone Conferences	How-to 33-36 (Due before Conference)
15 1-5 May			How-to 37-40 Recommendation Rpt WL 5 (1 May) PowerPoint (3 May)
8-12 May	Finals Week		ENG 381 Learning Report + Online Learning Report (10 May)

“Virtual” Class Activities

Class materials will structure assignments, invite responses, and guide evaluation of your original practical use reports in progress. Much of your “virtual” class time at home or in other settings will be yours to write and to ask questions, discuss, and work with your classmates and me online.

Our course is divided into units, requiring reading, reports, partner reviews, a set of PowerPoint slides, a portfolio, and a final project (built from the proposal-feasibility, and progress reports) demonstrating growing writing skill. In some How-to exercises, we will reference Appendix B of Markel’s text to gain sentence-level competence and confidence.

Since we do not meet in class: Maintain daily writing and online habits. Keep up with the reading, participate in Partner Review, and write several drafts for each assignment.

Attendance, Due Date, Return and Revision Policy

>>>According to the *WIU Undergraduate Catalog*, “[s]tudents are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled.” Please see the following link for attendance policy:

(http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/student_development_office/current/absencepolicy.php).

In our online class, this means to perform some course activity every day: signing on to our course on WesternOnline for updates, reading Markel, notetaking, drafting, and revising prior to submission. Contact me via email with questions about assignments. All reports are due according to the course calendar. Assignments will be marked as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

In this course, as in all others, “it is the student’s responsibility to be informed and to abide by all University regulations and policies on Academic Integrity.” Please study the following link:

>>>(<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>). Take responsibility for work on activities and reports and, as necessary, give credit where it is due to outside sources of information—whether a friend in person or an expert in print or online. Undocumented reports will not be accepted.

Use of Learning Technologies, Web Note, and Writing Assistance

Use WesternOnline to receive assignments and submit certain reports. Use w1-knox@wiu.edu to contact me—again, not the WesternOnline email system.

The **University Writing Center** (Malpass Library 3rd Floor) and the **Riverfront Writing Center** (QC 2219) is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-to-one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and finding help with writing correctness. See www.wiu.edu/uwc. Call ahead for an appointment (Macomb-298-2815 and QC-309-762-9481) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment. If you are writing elsewhere, you will also find online writing help at OWL, the Online Writing Lab--<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>--24/7.

Assignments and Assessment (1000 Points)

Assignment	Points
1-Reports and Letters on suggested topics—4 (100 pts. each)	400
2- Final Project	200
3-ENG 381 Learning Report	100
4-Online Learning Report	100
5-PowerPoint Slides	50
6-Writer’s Logs (WL)-5 (10 pts. each)	50
7-Partner Review—1 as writer + 4 as reviewer (10 pts. each)	50
8-How-to (H-t) Exercises based on the textbook--10 (5 pts. each)	50

Percentage Grading Scale

A=1000-930; A-=929-900; B+=899-870; B=869-830; B-=829-800; C+=799-770; C=769-730; C-=729-700; D+=699-670; D=669-630; D-=629-600; F=<600

(I reserve the right to add assignments and points for effort and improvement.)

Standards for Assignment Assessment

The table below provides a performance guide but the ultimate measure is how the document would be perceived by the professional audience, including a “robo-reader.” Therefore, bring the greatest care to your work.

Area	Standard
Content	Precisely worded details and examples address a targeted, educated audience.
Structure	Order of document sections and transitions between them exhibit logic.
Correctness	Sentence structure, writing mechanics, and citations are copy ready.
Creativity	Meaningful thinking reflects imagination, not just conventional ideas.
Critical Thinking	Serious reflection values key information and rejection of easy answers.
Format + Layout	Text and visual standards are met with no distracting elements.

Summary of Dates for Your Attention

January 23: Open registration ends (technically at 11:59 PM, but if students need permission to enroll or drop, they should seek permission before 4:30 that day)

January 30: Last day of restricted schedule changes/last day to drop without a W (technically at 11:59 PM, but students need permission to enroll [and sometimes to drop], so they should seek permission before 4:30 that day)

April 2: Last day to drop a course (students needing permission to drop should seek permission prior to March 30 at 4:30) AND last day for a total university withdrawal

Disability Services

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Sex Discrimination

Title IX: University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at:

http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Comment

Scheduling changes may occur, but I will usually announce these in advance. You are welcome to visit my office in Simpkins 013. At any time, feel free to tell me how the class can serve you better.

WID Course

This course has been designated to meet the Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID) graduation requirement. WID courses provide instruction in the processes and formats for the writing content and style needed to be an effective professional in a student’s chosen field.

Letter of Introduction and Resume Assignment (See WO Assignment Folder for due date and time.)
ENG 381: Technical Communications
Fall 2016
Prof. Bill Knox

Important: Starting with this assignment, all assignment should be done in technical style: single-spaced and in block paragraphs, separated by a double space—see examples in Practical Strategies. The double-spaced, indented paragraph style in MLA and APA formats studied in ENG 180 and 280 should not be followed.

Letter of Introduction and Resume Assignment—Even if you are not graduating at the end of this semester, this assignment should help organize your career application. Study Markel Chapters 9 and 10. Consider the purpose of each document—putting you and your qualifications in the best possible light. As you begin your series of ENG 381 reports for the semester, this letter will help you to think of yourself as an expert, putting your experience and study to work on paper. This two-part assignment asks you to compose a professional presentation of yourself.

Letter of Introduction—50 points

For this assignment, the letter of introduction presents the highlights of your qualifications to a potential employer or partner by the time you graduate, whether next semester or later. The letter requests a professional position, admission to graduate school, or action on an idea. Whether you are known or unknown to your audience, the letter should create a favorable impression about your professional ability: Your letter should make you seem like the candidate, not just another candidate.

Guided by the examples in Markel and on the WIU Career Services website, write a letter introducing yourself as one who can work with authority in your chosen field by providing accurate and attractive information about yourself.

For this assignment, invent a professional audience--a potential supervisor, business partner, administrator, admissions committee, etc.—who you would like to interest in your ability.

1. For examples and advice from the WIU Career Services, give attention to http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/career_development_center/resume/cover.php,
2. To complete this one-page letter in full block format (see *PS* p. 287):
 - ___ Generally, observe content, order, and format elements of correspondence writing
 - ___ Write an appropriate salutation and close
 - ___ Para 1: show position you seek, reason for your interest, and the way you learned of it
 - ___ Para 2: outline your education and experience
 - ___ Para 3: explain any special achievements and how you can contribute to the organization
 - ___ Para 4: indicate your enthusiasm and how you can be reached

Resume—50 points

Presented together with the letter of introduction is the resume, a focused, nearly comprehensive list of professional qualifications, experience, and service. Usually information about one's objective, education, experience, special skills, achievements, and references is printed on a single sheet but yours may be longer if needed. Using the examples on pp. 284-285 in Chapter 10 as guides, write a resume summarizing your education, work history, and service as you anticipate having by the time you graduate.

1. Before drafting your resume, please study various examples in Markel to acquaint yourself with the chronological and skills models to determine which best fits your needs.
2. To complete this assignment:
 - ___ Apply content, structure, and layout conventions of resume writing
 - ___ Complete appropriate categories of information
 - ___ Provide sufficient information in an easy-to-read form

Instructions Assignment—(See WO Assignment Folder for due date and time.)
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Fall 2016
Prof. Bill Knox

Important: Beginning with this report and all future ones in this class, apply report (pp. 587-591 and elsewhere in PS) format. Include important identifying information, as in this example below, centered, at the top of the first page—no title page required until the Final Report:

Organizing an Apartment Kitchen

Lakisha Pena
ENG 381 001
Professor Knox
Fall 2016
September 19, 2016

Study Chapter 14, especially pp. 402-423, “Writing Instructions,” the brief *PS* examples, and the one on WesternOnline. The sections “Writing Definitions” and “Writing Descriptions” should be studied in detail to help with this assignment and those that follow.

This document exercise asks that you write a set of instructions from your academic major or from a compelling and individual interest for an audience of peers. (see examples below). Do not choose, however, a ready-made set of instructions from online, a product manual, or do-it-yourself magazine. Whatever reasonably sophisticated topic you choose, make your commitment obvious to readers—and show your concern for their need to understand how to perform the instructions to complete the procedure. *Note: This assignment can help you to plan for the significant proposal-feasibility, progress, and final reports ahead.*

Use the information and examples from the text Chapter 14, “Instructions” as guides to writing your assignment.

To complete the assignment, use:

- ___ clear, numbered steps in a series or several series, showing how the reader logically moves through a procedure without missing critical detail
- ___ definitions of unfamiliar terms
- ___ imperative mood with the pronoun *you* and precise action verbs
- ___ notes, cautions, warnings, and dangers as necessary
- ___ a pointed title, introduction, and conclusion
- ___ a succinct but comprehensive body of text and necessary visuals of at least three (3) pages
- ___ appropriate spacing, labels, and headings

Some topics for this report may be as various as but not limited to:

- how to study for an important test
- how to do a major research, laboratory, or survey project
- how to organize a group project
- how to earn and save money for an important, long-term purchase
- how to plan, plant, and harvest a vegetable garden
- how to prepare a dish or meal for guests
- how to create an effective exercise or diet program
- how to prepare a car, motorcycle, or truck, to sell for the best price
- how to prepare and pack for a vacation by plane, train, car, or canoe
- how to break up with somebody
- how to approach a personnel issue at work

Proposal-Feasibility Assignment--(See WO Assignment Folder for due date and time.)
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Fall 2016
Prof. Bill Knox

Study Ch. 11, especially p. 302, "Introducing a Proposal," Ch. 13 pp. 341-342 regarding feasibility, and the example on WesternOnline to guide your planning.

For this assignment, write a proposal for your final project.

Important: This Proposal-Feasibility Report, followed by the Progress Report, Final Recommendation Report, and PowerPoint, address a single topic in its progressive stages. Once you make this proposal, all reports follow the development of the same project. Note as well that all reports beginning with this one require research and documentation in IEEE format.

Convince your audience that you can do it! The reader should know what the project is, why it needs to be done, and how it solves the problem you identify. The topic, moreover, should be original in some way--if not the problem, then the approach to the solution. Although the example beginning on p. 435 is more elaborate than the requirements for the report you are being asked to write, it can be useful in showing the organization and level of specificity required.

The project may be already in-progress (so immediacy should be clear), or may take place in the future (so use projective thinking); nevertheless, the final report should enable the reader to see the intended purpose, process, and outcome of the project.

To complete the assignment, use:

- ___ clear, organized sections, showing the reader the key features of the project—problem, solution, the way to get there—and at least two alternative approaches that would not work.
- ___ use of three kinds of IEEE documented-style outside sources (reference list and in-text citations)
- ___ definitions of unfamiliar terms
- ___ use of first person pronouns—I, me, my, mine
- ___ pointed title, introduction, and conclusion
- ___ a succinct but comprehensive body of three to four pages of text and visuals
- ___ appropriate spacing, labels, and headings

Suggested areas include better use of money, time, and resources; planning for the future; and improving the quality of your life. Some examples may include but are not limited to

- raising your GPA before graduation
- completing a professional portfolio to use for a job interview
- planning your graduate school curriculum
- outlining a five-year plan of education, work, and service for yourself
- making your life more "green"
- improving your long-term health by means of diet, exercise, or therapy
- planning your wedding
- providing a plan for a comprehensive do-it-yourself (DIY) project—for example, landscaping, rebuilding a vehicle, beginning a drone aircraft business
- conducting a community service or other volunteer project
- introducing a new product or process at your place of work

Note the larger scale of topic required compared to the instructions report.

This proposal-feasibility report will determine the direction of your work for the rest of the semester, so choose well.

Good luck!

Progress Report Assignment—(See WO Assignment Folder for due date and time.)

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Progress Report Background

Study Chapter 12, especially pp. 324-334, “Writing Progress and Status Reports” and “Sample Progress Report.”

Important: The example report provides a nine-page model, but this assignment asks you to write a three- to five-page report.

Using the information and examples from Ch. 12, “Informational Reports” as a guide, write a progress report, the second in your project series, showing the developments in your final project so far and the progress you intend to make before the final report due date. Your audience should be able to see clearly the work accomplished and the work ahead.

In Chapter 12, your study of the report sample and miscellaneous guides in particular will be helpful. From the Time and Task Patterns at the bottom of p. 325, decide which to use in this report. Often students apply the time pattern because of the neat, commonsense division between what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. Apply your learning from the earlier ENG 381 reports to make the decisions that will help your audience to see and appreciate your progress thus far and that to be made.

Progress Report Checklist for an Acceptable Report:

To complete the assignment, use:

- clear, organized, and developed sections, showing the key features of past and projected progress.
- three kinds of IEEE documented-style outside sources-- print, online, and interview
- an IEEE reference list and in-text citations according pp. 467ff.
- definitions of unfamiliar terms
- first person pronouns—I, me, my, mine
- a succinct but comprehensive body of three to five pages of text **plus visuals**

Essentials to include:

- technical memo format as the sample beginning on p. 327—addressed to me
- a pattern of organization reflecting either time or task
- steps clearly identified as those accomplished and those yet to do
- a clear sense of audience

Specifics to follow:

- Submit no fewer than four (4) pages of text and no more than five (5), including visuals
- Create a neat layout design--appropriate fonts, labels, headings, margins, and spacing
- Label and credit embedded visuals: diagrams, photos, flow charts, graphs, tables, etc.

This is an important report because it bridges your proposal with the final report by providing opportunity to correct issues in past planning and writing and prepare your audience for the project outcome.

Final Recommendation Assignment—(See WO Assignment Folder for due date and time.)
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Final Project Assignment

Study Chapter 13, especially “Using a Problem-Solving Model for Preparing Recommendation Reports” and review Appendixes A and B.

The final report is the summation of your term topic/project, beginning with the proposal-feasibility and continued with the progress report; therefore, it should present your best technical writing skills

This term you have written several assignments that have provided content and practice in the various kinds of writing also required for the final report. You will find yourself using elements of past assignments that have built toward this one. You will also find that the final project is a skillful blend of knowledge, structure, and visuals to create an informative and convincing document.

Using the information and examples from Markel in Chs. 12 and 13 as well as all the knowledge you have gained from writing technical reports this term, write the final recommendation report for your semester project. Your audience should be able to understand (1) the problem (or issue) you will address with this project and (2) an appropriate solution (or answer). As stated in the proposal assignment, this may be a project already largely completed, one at some stage of completion, or one yet to begin. Please review Ch. 11.

For this final report:

___ Please include

___ a title page

___ a table of contents

___ a list of visuals

___ a 100 word abstract or executive summary of no more than a half page

___ the text of the report (including visuals)

___ one appendix (or more), if appropriate, of supplemental information

___ in-text citations and reference page in IEEE format of sources

___ Complete a main report of at least seven (7) single spaced pages of text.

___ Integrate appropriately numbered, labeled, and cited visuals and tables in the report.

___ To complete this report, you should:

___ use semi-technical language

___ provide complete details of the problem and solution, including context

___ answer all relevant wh-questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how)

___ indicate alternative solutions and why they were rejected

___ title all the report sections

___ present a clean final copy

This report carries the most weight of the semester, so give close attention to all areas.
Good luck!