



VE300 Technical Communication

Spring 2020

Thursdays 8:00–9:40am

Online

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Office hour time: TBA

Course Description

This course provides a practical introduction to

- Technical documents and reporting
- Professional correspondence and presentations
- Career-related documents such as resumes and personal statements

The course is intended to directly support the JI students in their research and academic work. Its content will be rooted as much as possible in their particular projects and writing assignments. Key areas of focus will include:

- Defining a technical problem through benchmarking and needs analysis
- Reporting technical data through a variety of reports, charts, and graphs

Students will learn to

- Organize a technical report, with strong logical coherence and lexical cohesion
- Write in a variety of tones, styles, and registers appropriate for different audiences
- Strengthen claims and evidence leading to a clear conclusion, without gaps or errors in logic

Course Structure and Format

The course will be taught in a workshop style, where students will have frequent writing opportunities with immediate feedback and the chance to implement that feedback. In class, roughly one-third of the time will be spent presenting new material, one-third of the time in small-group writing exercises, and one-third of the time on feedback and application. The course will use a flipped classroom format, where much of the lecture material is read or watched outside class, while most assignments and activities are performed in class. The course will also be based heavily on the principle of peer review, namely that students reviewing their classmates' work is an effective way to improve their own.

Course Text

- Johnson-Sheehan, R. (2015). *Technical communication strategies for today*. Pearson.



Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance: Students will be expected to attend every class meeting online. Attendance will be recorded. Of course, serious illnesses and family emergencies can occur. If the reason is serious and you give me enough advance notice with the appropriate documentation, I am willing to work with you on how to best make up the assignments.

Participation: Students will be expected to participate actively in class. If a student is absent from a class without an excuse, then any in-class assignments that he/she submits for that day will not be counted. In-class assignments will be counted as part of the students' participation score.

Food: Because this semester's course will be online, I obviously cannot control your eating or drinking. However, please ensure that any eating or drinking does not distract other students (i.e. they hear it through your microphone) and does not distract you from being able to focus on the class activities.

Assignments: Assignments will normally be due on Canvas by the start of the next class period, unless I say otherwise. Grading criteria will be clearly specified for each assignment. Assignments submitted late without a valid excuse will have points deducted at my discretion; or if submitted more than a week late, will receive a zero. Do not come to me at the end of the semester asking for the chance to make up work because you need to pass this course in order to graduate...I know you need to pass this course in order to graduate. The time to do the work is during the semester, not at the end of it. If you let me know of problems in advance, I am always willing to work with you.

Electronic devices: This semester's online format makes technology essential for class. Laptops, tablets, and smartphones are expected to be used only for note-taking, in-class activities, and class-related internet research. Technology should contribute to the learning process, not detract from it.

Security: To prevent unwanted people from attending live lectures, please do not share the meeting ID or password with anyone who is not in the class. During lectures, please use your real name (both English and Chinese) in your Zoom window. In addition, please do not give any class materials to unauthorized students.

Honor code: Please refer to the [2018 JI Undergraduate Student Handbook](#) for information about acceptable academic conduct. Section 6 covers the Honor Code. Violations will be reported.

- "It is dishonorable for students to receive credit for work that is not the result of their own efforts" (p. 38).
- "It is a violation of the Honor Code for students to submit, as their own, work that is not the result of their own labor and thoughts. This applies, in particular, to ideas, expressions or work obtained from other students as well as from books, the internet, and other sources. The failure to properly credit ideas, expressions or work from others is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously at JI. A student is required to follow the rules of citation and attribution as set down by the instructor" (p. 39).
- "Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously at JI. A student is required to follow the rules of citation and attribution as set down by the instructor. The following list includes some specific examples of plagiarism:



- Use of any passage of three words or longer from another source without proper attribution.
- Use of any phrase of three words or more “must be enclosed in quotation marks” (as seen in this example).
- Use of material from an uncredited source, making very minor changes (like word order or verb tense) to avoid the three-word rule.
- Inclusion of facts, data, ideas or theories originally thought of by someone else, without giving that person (organization, etc.) credit.
- Paraphrasing of ideas or theories without crediting the original thinker.” (p. 39)

Course Grading and Assessment

This class will have no exams (they don’t work for a writing class). You will be graded by portfolio assessment, meaning that your grade will be based largely on the various writing projects that you complete throughout the semester. Grading criteria will be clearly specified for each project. Generally, grades will be determined as follows:

<u>Grade Distribution</u>		<u>Grading Scale</u>			
Technical Project Design	15%	100 – 98	A+	72 – 70	C-
Paraphrasing/Direct Quotation	10%	97 – 93	A	69 – 67	D+
Chart/Diagram	10%	92 – 90	A-	66 – 63	D
Resume/CV	15%	89 – 87	B+		
Cover Letter/SOP	15%	86 – 83	B		
Professional Correspondence	10%	82 – 80	B-		
Individual Presentation	15%	79 – 77	C+		
Attendance and Participation	10%	76 – 73	C		

Week	Date	Topic
1	3/5	Technical Project Design and Problem-Need-Solution Analysis
2	3/12	Paraphrasing, Direct Quotation, and Plagiarism Avoidance
3	3/19	Creating Technical Charts and Visuals
4	3/26	Reporting Technical and Graphical Data
5	4/2	Resumes and CVs
6	4/9	Cover Letters and Statements of Purpose
7	4/16	Professional Correspondence
8	4/23	Individual Presentations: Structure, Intonation, Body language

The above information is subject to change as needed. You will be notified of the changes in advance, and the most recent syllabus will be posted on Canvas.