MSE 6754 | Engineering Communication | Sample Syllabus |
Amanda C. Gable, Ph.D.

Course Description

This course focuses on advanced skills in writing and editing; designing visuals; and creating and delivering presentations. Students will learn the fundamentals of writing clear and concise engineering prose and will produce professional documents based on their current research. Applying principles of effective editing, students will analyze documents and edit them for clarity and coherence. Another element of the course will be designing effective visuals to use in documents and electronic presentations. Finally, students will gain experience creating and delivering several presentations, both in electronic media and other forms, and will evaluate the presentations of others. Each presentation will have a specific purpose defined and the presentations will be recorded so that students can evaluate their own presentations and assess their progress.

Course Requirements

Overall, students will need to be active participants in the classroom: in-class discussion, editing, writing, peer reviewing, workshops, and presenting will be required. There will be quizzes; in-class writing and editing exercises, in-class peer review of writing, editing, and presentations; homework in the form of reading and short editing assignments; tests, a rough draft and final draft of a 15 page paper (a portion of a Ph.D. proposal or other approved topic); two formal presentations with slides—one focused for a non-technical audience (3 min. + Q & A) and another focused for on a conference audience (10 min. + 5 min. Q & A); other shorter presentations; a critique of a seminar talk; and written self-evaluations of oral presentations.

Each presentation will be recorded so that students can critique their own performance for their self-evaluation write-up. Students will be required to buy an SD HC I card (of at least 4 GB and **rated class 10**) to record their presentations. I use a SanDisk, SD HC I (10)— the camera name and model is Canon HD, VIXIA HF E 500.

Students will be required to keep before and after versions of their presentations and send them to me when they submit their self-evaluation.

Reading assignments will be from the required textbook: Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace. 11th edition. Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup. (available on Amazon and elsewhere)

Grading

Though peer evaluations will be done on many assignments, the peer review score will not be considered when assigning the grade. I will be the final determiner of the grades for any in-class work, quizzes, tests, presentations, and papers. Active participation is part of your grade, which includes all in-class activities or out of class assignments, including peer reviews, self-evaluations, and all formal assignments.

There will be no final.

50% of your grade will come from writing and editing assignments: of this 50%, 10% will come from quizzes, assignments, and in-class work and participation, including peer reviews; 10% from tests; 15% from the draft of your paper and 15% from the final version of your paper.

50% of your grade will come from oral presentation assignments, including visuals and slide design assessment: 10% will come from completing peer reviews, active Q & A, and participation (including any short talks); 10% from your written self-evaluations; 15% from your informative talk and 15% from your non-technical talk.

You may talk to me at any time during the semester about your current grade or any concerns you might have about your grade.

Electronic Devices in Class

This is a small interactive class during which you will be expected to be fully engaged in discussion. Only use your devices to take notes (and this will rarely be necessary), to take pictures of the white board, or to do some other class activity that is requested. Please do not email, text, or otherwise do non-class activity on your devices. I expect that the majority of the time your devices will be stowed during class.

Attendance

Attendance is required for all classes. Missing class means you miss assignments that may or may not be able to be made-up. Students who know that they will miss a class to attend a conference or out of town professional interview must inform me well before the date. *Each unexcused absence will lower a student's final grade by ½ a letter grade.* Excused absences require documentation and a student may only have 2 excused absences during a semester.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs. If needed, I will make classroom accommodations for students with documented disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the Office of Disability Services (http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu).

Acknowledgement: The original course was developed by Dr. Lisa Rosenstein; the course has changed, but all remaining materials and ideas are used with permission.

MSE 6754: Seminar on Engineering Communication | Example Schedule
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Class Schedule (schedule and some assignments may be modified during the semester)

Date	Topic	Assignment (for next class period, unless indicated)
Section 1: Writing and Editing Skills		
Week 1 Mon.	Introduction to the course: writing, editing, designing visuals, and oral presentations assignments	Reading in Style: Read *Science of Scientific Writing*—Gopen & Swan
Wed.	Principles to guide writing and editing: Sentence Level Clarity: Actions	Revise sentences
Fri.	Sentence Level Clarity: Agents	Reading in Style
Week 2 Mon.	Quiz #1 (sentence revisions); Peer Review	Editing Assignment
Wed.	Discuss Quiz #1 and nominalizations	
Fri.	Discuss Writing Assignment: version of a Ph.D. Proposal (or lit review or article or another agreed-upon written assignment)	Receive Test #1 (take-home) Edit for Clarity
Week 3 Mon.	NO CLASS/Labor Day holiday	
Wed.	Test #1 due; Peer review; Discussion. Consequences of Nominalizations: Ethics; Who's Responsible; Examples	Revision assignment
Fri.	Discuss edited document; brief intro to Cohesion at Paragraph level.	Reading in Style
Week 4 Mon.	NO CLASS: Individual conferences (during class and also at other times)	
Wed.	Cohesion & Coherence: In-class exercise	Reading in Style; Read article: map cohesion; **Article samples due**
Fri.	Cohesion & Coherence: article analysis	
Week 5 Mon.	Point of View; Quiz #2—paragraph re-writes.	
Wed.	Peer Review Quiz; Paragraph clarity	Reading in Style
Fri.	Test #2: Paragraph revisions for cohesion and coherence	
Week 6 Mon.	Document organization: Issues, Points, Discussion (and motivation). Writing Introductions	Introduction for proposal (or article or lit review or other agreed-upon doc) DUE
Wed.	Analyzing document organization: In-class workshop	

Fri.	Test #3: analyzing document structure and organization	
Week 7 Mon.	Peer review of annotated document; Discussion of structure	
Wed.	Analyzing documents: proposals	
Fri.	Discussion of Concision; In-class exercises	
Week 8 Mon.	Grammar and Punctuation Review	
Wed.	Quiz #3 on punctuation: peer review and discussion.	**Proposal draft due. (Hard-copy & on Canvas)**
Section 2: Visual Design Skills		
Fri.	Transition: Oral Presentation assignments; Visual design in documents, slides, & posters.	View Ignoble Prize 24/7s—see links on Canvas; Write your own 24/7 to present
Week 9 Mon.	Designing Slides: sentence title-figure (visual) evidence.; principles of organizing info on slides.	Watch & analyze specified TED talks
Section 3: Oral presentation Skills		
Wed.	Lecture: Non-technical presentations; 3-Minute Thesis Talk; All present 24/7s (from notes)	
Fri.	Discuss TED talks: Delivery Issues, Audience.	
Week 10 Mon.	Workshop for 3-min. Thesis Talk	
Wed.	Workshop for 3-min. Thesis Talk	
Fri.	3 Minute Diss Talks (non-technical)	Submit self-Evaluation and ppt
Week 11 Mon.	3 Minute Diss Talks (non-technical)	Submit self-Evaluation and ppt
Wed.	Lecture/Discussion: Informative presentation; introduction to explaining graphics.	Prepare 1 slide with a graph to present.
Fri.	Short presentations with 1 slide that includes a graph or schematic (12)	Bring complete draft of informative talk on laptop.
Week 12 Mon.	Informative presentation workshop	Bring complete draft of informative talk on laptop.
Wed.	Informative presentation workshop	<u>Looking ahead:</u> Create a 2-page resume and bring a hardcopy to class; Review samples on Canvas for design ideas.
Fri.	Informative Talks; Peer Review	Submit self-Evaluation and ppt

Week 13 Mon.	Informative Talks; Peer Review	Submit self-Evaluation and ppt
Wed.	Informative Talks; Peer Review	Submit self-Evaluation and ppt Looking ahead: **Optional--**Submit Poster pdf to be used in the critique/analysis session—I will get it printed.
Fri.	Informative Talks; Peer Review	Submit self-Evaluation and ppt
Week 14 Mon.	Informative Talks; Peer Review	Submit self-Evaluation and ppt
Wed.	Thanksgiving Break	
Fri.	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 15 Mon.	Free form speaking day: 15 sec. intros of research; interview questions; and other impromptu speaking	Create a 2-page resume **Final Proposal Due (Hard-copy + draft with comments & Final electronic version on CANVAS)**
Wed.	Workshop 2-page resumes	
Fri.	Lecture: scientific poster design—then analyze posters and discuss	
Week 16 Mon.	Last Class--Summary	**No Final**