WTS 115.06: Technical Writing

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Instructor: Betsy Holmquist
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:30 - 3 or by appointment

Required Materials:

Professional and Technical Writing Strategies
by Judith VanAlstyne, Sixth Edition

Little, Brown Compact Handbook
by Jane E. Aaron, Sixth Edition

Course Objectives:
1. Constructed text that accurately communicates technical information using appropriate technical writing constructs, document design, and graphic placement within technical formats.
2. An understanding of technical writing situation and appropriate formats.
3. Demonstrated mastery of a writing process that includes revising and editing.
4. Demonstrated working knowledge of *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook* for use as a tool in other writing classes.

Workload and Expectations:
This course focuses on the kind of writing that fills manuals—description, instruction, and analysis. We will read, write and discuss technical documents as well as materials about technical writing. There is a special focus on audience.

The writing, reading and discussing in this course fall into several areas: technical papers with revision days, business reports/letters, in class group work, student designed documents, sentence level assignments and quizzes, and ends with a comprehensive final paper evaluating all work done during the semester.

All writing classes address writing conventions at some point. Punctuation problems are addressed through clauses and basic sentence structure, leading to a working knowledge of *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*.

The technical papers are the core of this course and include a mandatory revision day. We work the writing process as we write these papers to better understand how we compose. There is nothing neat and tidy about writing and revising. In technical writing with the audience so important, we have to get feedback and adjust continually.

The in-class projects are designed to help build a writing community. We never write alone and technical writing especially needs input from others. We group up and help each other often. We think through writing problems and get ideas from each other. It is helpful to be in a group and analyze together. Groups can be good learning experiences.

Grading Scale:
94-100 A
92-90 A-
87-89 B+
86-83 B
82-80 B-
77-79 C+
76-73 C
72-70 C-
Course Policies

There will be no “make-up” tests, quizzes or in-class assignments that are not turned-in during the designated class period. This make-up policy is applied at the discretion of the Instructor.

Attendance is an expectation. Students who do not attend class do not perform as well as students who do attend class.

Format of all works produced will depend upon the specific assignment. All final drafts must be word processed. Save everything to disc for your own protection.

Plagiarism of any sort will result in a course grade of F. The UM Student Conduct Code defines plagiarism as “representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own."

Students may be asked for their research or sources at any time.

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