ST 530 Course Syllabus 1

ST 530 DE Technical Communication for Teachers

Fall 2013 Online

Please print a copy of this syllabus for your reference throughout the course!

REQUIRED TEXTS


INSTRUCTOR’S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Julie Ford  
**NMT Email:** jford@nmt.edu

**Bio:** I am Professor of Technical Communication and my home department is Mechanical Engineering. Prior to coming to New Mexico Tech in 2003, I taught graduate-level communication courses at the University of Dubuque, in Dubuque, Iowa. I have also worked for the College of Engineering at New Mexico State University and as an industry consultant for McCulley/Cuppan LLC, Salt Lake City, planning professional communication research studies and educating clients within the pharmaceutical industry of current trends in technical communication. I have a Ph.D. in Technical Communication from New Mexico State University, an M.A. in English with an emphasis in Technical Writing from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and a B.A. in English from Elon University. My research interests include knowledge transfer, technical communication pedagogy, writing within engineering, and organizational communication. When I'm not in the classroom or in front of the computer, I enjoy long distance running and golfing.

COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES

ST 530, Technical Communication for Teachers, is designed to help you learn the skills you will need to develop, research, write and present professional documents in multiple contexts. All technical and professional documents are action-oriented, and we will consider the ways that content, style, organization, format, visuals, and medium help readers to take efficient and effective action. Through the instruction and assignments in this course, you will learn to improve your communication skills and improve the communication skills of your students.

Course Portal

All course materials can be found online at the Course Portal, New Mexico Tech Distance Education’s gateway to online courses. The http address for the portal is: http://distance.nmt.edu/portal/ For initial login information, use the help links or contact the Distance Education staff.

Since this course revolves around writing assignments, the bulk of the work includes 6 different document assignments, peer review of your classmates’ drafts, and contribution to a discussion forum.
**Document assignments**

Document assignments are explained in detail (and available as MS Word files for downloading) in each of the 5 assignment modules located in the Course Files section of the Course Portal. Be sure to read these assignments carefully, and remember to read any additional resources or files included in each module. Due dates for both drafts and final versions of document assignments are listed on the Calendar that appears on the Course Portal. (Doubleclick on a highlighted date on the calendar to see what is due). You will exchange drafts with your classmates by uploading MS Word documents to the Forums (see Peer review below). To submit final versions of assignments you will upload your MS Word document to your student folder on the homepage of the Course Portal.

**Peer review of your classmates’ drafts**

Guidelines for conducting constructive peer reviews of your classmates’ drafts are included in the folder titled Intro and Supplemental Materials within the Course Files section. Also included in this folder are instructions for using the Insert Comment and Track Changes functions within MS Word. Note that peer review is an important (and graded) part of this course. You will use the Forum feature (you’ll see a link to it within the Announcements section of the Course Portal) to post messages (with attachments) to your classmates asking for their review of your drafts.

**Discussion forum**

Another important (and graded) part of this class is your contribution to weekly discussions. Since the Course Portal doesn’t have a separate discussion board feature, we will be using free software called Forum for these discussions. (Look for the link within the Announcements section of the Course Portal.) Almost every week I will post a discussion question to the forum. I expect that each of you will carefully consider my question and respond thoughtfully, citing examples and providing sufficient detail. You are also encouraged to read each others’ responses and continue the discussion by responding to them. You will also use Forum to post your drafts for peer review. **IMPORTANT NOTE: To reduce the amount of traffic on the Forum please refrain from beginning new threads unless it is necessary (unless you are the first to post your draft for an assignment or are beginning a new discussion.)** Most of the time you should just select the Reply tab at the bottom of the initial discussion message; doing so will ensure that you aren’t beginning a new thread.

**Technology Issues**

To participate in this class you MUST have access to Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. I will NOT accept other file formats.

**Confidentiality**

One of the cornerstones of New Mexico Tech’s online classroom is the practical application of theoretical concepts. Therefore, you are encouraged to share your personal and professional experiences as a means to integrate the knowledge through reflecting on its application. However, it is important to note that we are all bound by confidentiality in this class. In order to assure that we can have a free and open discussion in which you may elect to discuss your company and its policies and procedures as they apply to the course material, I expect each person to respect the confidentiality of what your classmates are willing to share with us while at the same time I ask that each of you exercise good judgment in what you choose to share, avoiding non-public or competitively sensitive information.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The administration, faculty, and your fellow students at New Mexico Tech expect you to act ethically. This includes not cheating, falsifying information, or plagiarizing, actions which may cause your instructor or department to reduce your course grade or to issue you a failing grade for the class, or to send you before the Disciplinary Board for more severe
Grading Policies

I evaluate your assignments on *demonstration* of understanding of the concept(s) at hand. This will include depth of discussion, utilization of critical thinking, information reported, and clarity and correctness of presentation.

**Assignment Point Values**

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<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Interview and Memo Report</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Memo and Letter</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Formal Research Report</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Proposal</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. PowerPoint Presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Peer Review/ Participation in Forum Discussions</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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