**ENGLISH 4367**

Spring 2004  
TR 9:30-10:50  
357 English Bldg

**PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION**

Instructor: Dr. Sean Zdenek  
Office: 472 English Bldg  
Office Hours: TR 1-3 p.m. (and by appt)  
Phone: 742-2500, ext. 284  
Email: sean.zdenek@ttu.edu  
Info: [http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/zdenek/](http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/zdenek/)

---

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This semester, we’re trying something new. We’re using both sections of ENGL 4367 to pilot a new course. This new course is going to be the new capstone course to the Tech Comm major, and it is designed to provide you with an opportunity to step back and reflect on what you’ve learned as well as prepare you for an ethically responsible, civic-minded professional life.

This course asks you to think seriously about how to present yourself professionally. One of the major assignments in the course is a web portfolio that you will design and execute to showcase your best work. How do you want to represent yourself to a prospective employer? How might you gather together samples of your work and present them effectively? How might you build your *ethos* on the web? As a portfolio designer, what is the best way to make use of the web?

The course also asks you to reflect on what you’ve learned as a tech comm. major. Another major assignment in the course is a report on trends in the field of technical communication. We will read a number of research articles on a range of current topics as well as articles from professionals who are working as technical communicators.

Finally, the course aims to promote civic-minded and ethically responsible action. The third major assignment in the course, an assignment that you will work on all semester, asks you to address a need in the community, a need that requires your special skills as a technical/professional writer.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Purchase the books from the campus bookstore. If they are not yet available at the bookstore and are not due to be delivered to the bookstore by the end of the second week of classes, then you should purchase them from barnesandnoble.com immediately. (Avoid amazon.com because of a delay in delivering these particular texts.)


*The official title of ENGL 4367 is “Developing Instructional Materials,” but we are using this course this semester to pilot a new capstone course to the Tech Comm major (ENGL 4380).*

In addition to the required books, there are a number of required supplemental readings that will be available on e-reserve (see link below). Print out these supplemental readings, read them carefully, and bring them to class on the days assigned.

**COURSE MATERIALS ONLINE**

Course materials: [http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/zdenek/courses/4367](http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/zdenek/courses/4367). Required supplemental readings are on e-reserve: go to [http://library.ttu.edu/ul/](http://library.ttu.edu/ul/), click “Course/E-Reserve,” and search by instructor.

**GRADING**

Your final course grade will be determined according to the table below, using the standard curve of 90-100% = A; 80-89.9% = B; 70-79.9% = C; 60-69.9% = D; 0-59.9% = F. Under no circumstances will grades be rounded up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web Portfolio</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report: Trends in the Field</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning Project</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Service-learning project**

Address a need in the community by offering your skills as a technical/professional writer to an organization (nonprofit, local business, or campus org). Your service-learning project should involve a significant amount of writing and reflection, and it should aim to be ethical and beneficial to the community.

**Report: Trends in the field**

Write a report on trends in the field of technical communication that analyzes and synthesizes both research articles and articles from professionals working in the field.

**Web portfolio**

Design and execute a web portfolio that showcases your writing and other professional accomplishments for an audience of prospective employers. Your web portfolio will be assessed according to how well it meets the guidelines specified in class and in our textbook on creating an electronic portfolio.
Reading quizzes
On days that reading assignments are due, we’ll begin the class with a short reading quiz to gauge your reading comprehension. These quizzes are intended, for the most part, to encourage you to keep up with the reading. They will not require you to analyze or interpret the readings (unlike the Trends Report you will write).

COURSE POLICIES

- Be prepared for class by doing the assigned reading and writing in advance
- Be on time for class
- Expect to attend every class meeting. The success of the course depends upon your regular attendance. If you are absent more than three (3) times, your final course grade will be reduced 3% for each absence after three. Six or more absences will warrant a failing grade in the course. You are marked absent if you are not here when I take roll. In general, I do not excuse absences.
- See me during the first two weeks of class to discuss your special needs or ADA accommodations, if any
- Expect to participate actively in class discussions
- Respect the views of others
- Don’t hesitate to contact me privately if you are having difficulties working in groups
- Conduct yourself professionally at all times
- Always cite your sources in your writing – i.e. do not plagiarize. See me immediately if you have questions about the university’s policy on plagiarism. The Texas Tech University Catalog (p. 49) defines plagiarism as: “Offering the work of another as one’s own, without proper acknowledgment . . . therefore any student who fails to give credit for quotations or an essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, and other reference works, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.” The university and the instructor take plagiarism very seriously.
- Submit your work on time. Late work is penalized 10% per day. Assignments more than five days late will not be accepted.
- Feel free to discuss course questions and concerns with me during office hours, by appointment, or via email. I will do my best to respond to your email queries within 24 hours, except during weekends and holidays.