

COURSE SYLLABUS
ECS 3390: Professional and Technical Communications
Section 005 MW 11:30 – 12:45
Section 007 TR 1:00 – 2:15
Section 009 TR 2:30 - 3:45
Section 011 TR 4:00 – 5:15
FALL 2013

Professor: Melissa Hernandez-Katz

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Office Hours: T 10:00 – 11:30

W 9:00 – 10:30

Or by appointment

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Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restriction

ECS 3390 requires you to have credit for Rhet 1302 and have a junior standing. As an upper-level class students should have at least college-level writing skills and both written and oral proficiency in English. Sufficient technical knowledge is also needed to contribute to project design and to write and speak knowingly about technical content. This course emphasizes developing a sense of professionalism and responsibility to produce high-quality assignments both individually and in teams.

Course Description

Technical and professional communication skills are critical tools for success in the “real world” of engineering and computer science professions. Therefore ECS 3390 will help you develop skills and competency in both oral and written communication as they occur in engineering and technology work environments. You will have opportunities to determine audiences’ information needs, assess what information is correct, be reliable and responsive to those needs, and present that information in a form that helps the audience process and use it. You will work with industry-specific projects, determine technical communication needs, develop professional quality documents, and make formal presentations on technical topics to technical and non-technical audiences.

Engineering and programming are collaborative activities; therefore, this course uses a collaborative learning environment where you will work in teams to practice the fundamentals of collaborative decision making and communication in professional contexts. Course activities also raise related professional issues, such as meeting deadlines, carrying out instructions as specified, organizing your time so that you can work productively on more than one activity at a time, and developing an increased commitment to doing accurate work.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students in this class will be expected to achieve the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) Assessment Objectives and Learning Outcomes listed below.

SACS Assessment Objectives

- Students will be able to write effectively using appropriate organization, mechanics, and style.
- Students will be able to construct effective written arguments.
- Students will be able to gather, incorporate, and interpret source material in their writing.
- Students will be able to write in different ways for different ways for different audiences.

ABET Assessment Objectives

Students will demonstrate:

- An ability to function on multidisciplinary teams
- An understanding of professional and ethical responsibility
- An ability to communicate effectively
- A knowledge of contemporary issues

Learning Outcome

Students who successfully master these objectives will develop the ability to:

- Enhance credibility through communication that adheres to professional and ethical norms
- Adapt to different purposes, constraints, and audiences
- Develop arguments with frontloaded claims and appropriate evidence
- Use visual rhetoric to enhance message effectiveness
- Collaborate in a team to research, plan, and present information
- Research, draft, and edit documents that adhere to technical and professional standards
- Prepare organized speeches and present them with appropriate verbal and nonverbal delivery

Required Textbook & Materials

This course requires one textbook which can be purchased in the campus bookstore:

M. Schlobohm & C. Ryan – Business and Technical Communication – A Guide to Writing Professionally
Kendall Hunt Publishing; ISBN 978-1-4652-1329-7

Course & Instructor Policies

Deliverables

All assignments and presentations are due on the assigned date by the beginning of class. If the date for your assignment or presentation is a problem, please notify me as soon as possible so that the situation can be addressed and we can consider any alternatives. Waiting until the day of your presentation to request a new date and time for your presentation is not acceptable and you will receive a zero for your grade if you are not able to present.

Grading Policy

Assignment and Grade Values

Grading is based on the UTD Undergraduate Catalog and a 1000-point cumulative scale for points earned from assignments. Grades are awarded as follows:

Grade	Cumulative Credit Points
A	930 - 1000
A-	900 - 929
B+	879 - 899
B	830 – 869
B-	800 – 829
C+	770 – 799
C	730 – 769
C-	700 – 729
D+	670 – 699
D	630 – 669
D-	600 – 629
F	0 – 599

Credit points are awarded based upon the following maximum values per assignment or competency:

Resume	100
Cover Letter	100

Elevator Speech	50
Cultural Assignment	50
Informative Speech	50
Team Report	125
Team Presentation	125
Low Impact Assignments	125
Proposal Presentation	100
Proposal Report	100
Class Participation, Professionalism	75

Late Work

Late, incomplete, or improperly submitted work in the “real world” can cause consequences, such as;

- product releases can be delayed,
- coworkers and customers can be inconvenienced,
- expenses can skyrocket,
- contracts can be broken,
- clients could refuse payment.

Technological problems are not valid excuses for late work, so plan accordingly.

For these reasons you may not submit late or incomplete work or make up work unless you are hospitalized & provide a valid physician excuse or if there is a family emergency. Missed work results in a zero on the assignment.

Students are advised to turn in their assignments early if they know they will miss a due date by being absent from when the assignment is due.

Class Attendance

ABSENCES: You must attend class regularly. You are responsible for signing in at the beginning of each class. A student may miss a maximum of 3 classes throughout the semester before your grade will be affected. Once a student has 3 absences there will be a 100 point deduction for each subsequent absence after the 3rd. This means upon the 4th absence, the student’s grade will receive an automatic deduction of 100 points from their final point total. There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences.

TARDINESS: Arriving at a scheduled class time after roll has been taken constitutes a tardy. Being late 10 or more minutes constitutes an absence although the student may attend the class. You must sign in at the beginning of class. Three tardy arrivals equal 1 absence. Out of respect for your fellow class members and your instructor, be on time to class. If you arrive late it is your responsibility to sign in at the end of class.

Classroom Citizenship

Students are expected to use this course to practice communicating in a civil and professional manner. Examples would include:

- Respect for each other when speaking
- No side conversations when a fellow classmate or instructor is talking
- Cell phones should be off or set to vibrate
- Do not check email, text messages, or work on other class work.

Technology Requirements

EMAIL: Check your email prior to each class for assignments and announcements. Use only your UTD email account. You can redirect your UTD to a preferred email account. Contact the UTD Help Desk if you have any problems or questions regarding your UTD email account. Failure to check UTD email, errors in forwarding email, and over-quota mailboxes are not acceptable excuses for missing course or project related email.

Laptops: Not required for class, however if you bring one to class they should only be used for assignments if not using one of the computers in class. Laptops should not be opened/used at any other time during class.

Classroom and Equipment Use Policies

- Tampering with or destroying any of the computers, printers, white boards, networks or wiring in the classroom is strictly prohibited. Violations will result in disciplinary referral to the Dean of Student's office.
- The room may be used only for ECS 3390 related activities. You may not work on other class projects, check your email, print, or install software. Violations will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Student's office.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because of the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details).

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials, including music and software. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted works may infringe the copyright owner's rights, and such infringement is subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as criminal penalties provided by federal law. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow the institution's copyright policy (Policy Memorandum 84-1.3-46). For more information about the fair use exemption, see <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U. T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's academic calendar. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

A student having a grievance regarding academic concerns may have the issue considered. Procedures for appeals of academic decisions can be found at www.utdallas.edu/student/catalog/undergrad11/app1.html.

Incomplete Grade Policy As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within 8 weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 3.200 in the Student Services building.

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please visit with the Office of Disability Services. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professor of the need for accommodations. Letters are provided to students to present to faculty to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Please contact me after class or during office hours if you need special accommodations.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence (for the purpose of observing a religious holy day) or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.