

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
ME 333T Engineering Communication
Fall 2015 COURSE DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. John Cline
<mailto:johncline81@gmail.com>

Lectures:
MW 10-11, CPE 2.218
MW 12-1, ETC 2.136
MW 2-3, CPE 2.218

Office: ETC 5.140
Hours: MW 11-12, 1-2

Teaching Assistants

Workshops: ETC 3.112
Offices: ETC 4.114

Kristin Smart
mailto:kristin_smart@utexas.edu
Office Hours: M 4:30-5:30, Th 8-9

Joshua Orme
<mailto:joshua.orme@gmail.com>
Office Hours: W 3:30-5:30

Maureen Anways
<mailto:maureen.anways@utexas.edu>
Office Hours: M 11-1

Caroline O'Meara
<mailto:caroline.omeara@utexas.edu>
Office Hours: T 2-4

Sean Killen
<mailto:spkillen@gmail.com>
Office Hours: M 11-1

OBJECTIVES

Professional engineers are often surprised to discover how important writing, reading, and making oral presentations can be to their success. Mechanical Engineering 333T is an upper division communications course that focuses on helping engineering students develop effective written and oral communication skills vital to their future careers with a focus on the following areas:

- gathering, organizing, and evaluating data;
- drafting, composing, and revising written documents;
- making effective oral presentations;
- understanding, analyzing, and composing effective arguments;
- developing critical thinking skills; and
- understanding the social and global impact of engineering communication, research, and practice.

In addition to being a writing flag course, ME 333T is also carries an ethics flag—so we will be thinking about and discussing engineering ethics and ways that engineers can impact public policy through effective communication.

TEXT REQUIRED

- There is no required text for this class, but required readings will be posted online or handed out in class

RECOMMENDED

- Alley, Michael. (1996) *The Craft of Scientific Writing* (3rd ed). Springer-Verlag, 1996.
- Strunk, W., Jr. (1999). *The Elements of Style*. (Original work published 1918) Retrieved from <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

PREREQUISITES

Rhetoric 306 is a prerequisite for this course. Students entering this course should have a basic understanding of English grammar and composition. ME 333T is a prerequisite for ME 366J.

CLASS FORMAT

Both the content in this course and the learning process are probably a little different from many of your other courses. We will engage in class discussion, exercises involving small groups, and both formal and informal oral presentations. We encourage your respectful contribution to class discussion in both the lecture section and the workshop.

ASSIGNMENTS

Formal Writing Assignments

There are four formal writing assignments for this course, which collectively make up 55% of your grade. These include a Business Packet that consists of a cover letter and resume, a formal Memo that serves as a proposal for your White Paper topic, and two iterations of the White Paper that involve a 1st Iteration and a Revised one. Your Business Packets will be completed individually. However, given the size of this course (3 lectures sections + 10 workshop sections) later assignments will be done with a partner or in groups of three. I strongly encourage you to begin thinking about who you might partner after we have done the “Brainstorming” workshop and before the due date of the Memo. Memos can be written collaboratively or individually; after your submission of the Memo if you do not have a partner we will do our best to partner

you with another student whose proposed White Paper topic is the same or similar to your own.

Short Assignments, Quizzes, and Drafts/Peer Critiques

Short Assignments will include homework assignments, responses to the readings, brief in-class presentations (such as the mock interview), and other exercises. I will also be giving periodic quizzes on the assigned readings. During the latter half of the semester, you will write drafts and submit those drafts to other students in the class for evaluation. These peer critiques are an essential part of this class. I expect you to take your responsibility to the other students in the class seriously; if you do not bring a draft to workshop on the days we are doing peer critiques, you will not be allowed to write a peer critique and will not receive credit for the assignment. Because the peer critiques are a resource for the student you critique to use in revising their papers, you cannot arrange to make up a peer critique by doing it later. The Short Assignments, Quizzes, and Drafts/Peer Critiques comprise 20% of your final grade.

Presentations

Near the end of the semester, you and your partner(s) are required to present an approximately 15-20 minute version of your White Paper using either PowerPoint or Prezi. This presentation is worth 20% of your final grade. You will receive feedback from your classmates on your presentation skills as well as graded evaluations collated from two graders in attendance (either myself and a TA or two TAs). You are required to attend the same lectures and workshops you would on a normal week during this part of the semester in addition to your scheduled presentation time.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required in both lecture and workshop. I pass around an attendance sheet during lectures, and your TA will use your in-class assignments as evidence of your attendance of workshops. Although Attendance and Participation forms only 5% of your total grade, every unexcused absence will result in a loss of .5% of your Attendance and Participation grade. This can make the difference between one letter grade and another when the final tally is made. I also do not tolerate tardiness in either lectures or workshops. The first time you come into the room late, you will be given a warning. The second time will be counted as an unexcused absence, and you will lose the same percentage points as if you had not come at all. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late, you will be asked to leave and will be counted as absent. Exiting the classroom before you are dismissed will also be considered a unexcused absence and, again, will cause you to lose .5% of your attendance grade. I am conscientious about letting you out at ten till the hour, so please offer me the same kind of courtesy in return.

If you are absent from class for unexcused reasons, you are responsible for contacting a classmate to get the material covered that day. However, I will happily assist any student who is absent for an approved reason with making up what was missed. Also: **If you are enrolled in the MW lecture from 12-1 in ETC 2.136, you are not allowed to sit in the back five rows.** Unlike CPE 2.218, the lecture room in ETC is too long and rises too gradually to justify a group of 60 students sitting so far from the podium. I ask you to honor this request because your participation during lectures is as important as it is in your workshops. In order for this class to be successful and your take-away to be of the most use in the future, your respectful contribution to discussion is highly valued; it will also be a factor when considering your Attendance and Participation grade.

GRADING

Your course grade will be based your scores on written assignments, oral presentations, and participation. To pass the course, you must submit all major assignments before semester's end. We will not give any incompletes. Final course grades will be weighted as follows:

Business Packet	10%
Memo	10%
White Paper, 1 st Iteration	15%
White Paper, Revised	20%
Short Assignments, Quizzes, and Drafts/Peer Critiques	20%
Presentation of White Paper	20%
Attendance and Participation	5%

Your final grade for the semester will be calculated on a plus/ minus basis using the following scale:

A = 94-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F= 0-60
A- = 90-93	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66	
	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63	

You can find more about the University's plus/minus policy at <http://www.utexas.edu/provost/planning/plus-minus/>. When an assignment is returned, please read our comments carefully. If you have questions about those comments, please see your TA first. With final grades, my policy is to round at the .5% mark. For example, an 89.5% will be considered an A-. While I will oblige all requests to reconsider an assignment score or your final grade made before I am required to submit the latter to the university, I reserve the right to potentially lower as well as raise the number/letter in question.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

If you are unable to meet a particular due date on an assignment, you may request a two-day extension. This concession **does not** apply to oral presentations or to drafts. You may not make this request more than once during the semester, so use it judiciously. To request an extension on one of the major assignments, you must write an email stating the reason you are requesting an extension. You must send the email to your TA and me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. Unless you have already used your extension, your request will be approved. Then, you **must** honor the amended due date and turn the assignment in 48 hours after the original due date; if you do not, your grade on that assignment will be lowered by 20 points, or 10 points per day late. The same 10 point/day penalty will apply if you fail to turn in your assignment on the due date without requesting an extension.

PLAGIARISM

You must acknowledge any source you quote, paraphrase, or summarize, and any work you do on an assignment must be your own or your team's. Plagiarism can result in a failing grade for the course and notice to the dean. We will discuss plagiarism in more detail later in the semester. For more on UT's policy on scholastic dishonesty, please see: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis.php>

SPECIAL NOTES:

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TDD or the College of Engineering Director of Students with Disabilities at 471-4321.

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER (UWC)

The UWC is an excellent resource for students who want to improve their writing. Students can bring their assignments to the center, with or without an appointment, and work with a consultant on any aspect of their writing, from brainstorming to developing and organizing an argument, to learning conventions of usage and punctuation. The services are free. The UWC is located in Flawn Academic Center (FAC 211). Phone: 471-6222 / Email: <mailto:writing@uts.cc.utexas.edu> / Web: <http://www.uwc.fac.utexas.edu>

UT Learning Center

The center helps with language development and writing and study skills. It is located in Jester Center (A332).

Phone: 471-3614.

CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS

Please don't use your phone during class. If you have to leave your phone on because you have kids or are expecting an emergency, set it on vibrate, and leave the room if you need to take a call or respond to a text message; you can explain the emergency later.

Otherwise, if I see you with your phone out during class, I will ask you to leave the classroom and you will be counted absent. Please use laptops during lecture only for taking notes or looking up information relevant to the topic at hand. **You are required to bring a laptop to every workshop.** However, when your TA is talking to the class as a whole or other students are giving presentations you should put your computer away.

CONFERENCES

Your TAs and I hold office hours weekly, according to the schedule on the first page of this syllabus. We encourage you to come to us with questions and concerns about the class. If the scheduled times are inconvenient, we are available by appointment.