

English 2116-014

Introduction to Technical Communication

Spring 2023

Dr. Aaron A. Toscano (atoscano)

Office: Fretwell 255F

<https://pages.charlotte.edu/aaron-toscano/>

Classroom: NONE Internet (100% online)*

Office hours: Virtual options available via Zoom

*Online course delivered through a combination of [class website](#) and Canvas. Learn to use Canvas at <http://canvas.charlotte.edu/>.

English 2116 is designed for advanced-writing students in engineering, natural sciences, computer sciences, business, communications, and English studies. We will concentrate on writing in a variety of technical forms of discourse and engage critical thinking and writing by developing our writing processes and producing finished prose—both technical and expository. We will also emphasize discovering our writing processes, secondary research, and problem-solving; recognizing the rhetorical character of technical and professional discourse with its multiple purposes and audiences; evaluating and integrating a variety of written, visual, and oral elements of design; and developing field-specific vocabularies for talking about this discourse.

This course is 100% online and asynchronous. Students will need to have access to [Canvas](#) to complete assignments for this class. Because we're not in a face-to-face environment, you'll need to read very carefully, and the exercises will reinforce the reading. Online environments are not ideal for learning because of the many distractions available to us. Do your best to work in a distraction-free environment. I strongly recommend you access the materials and do your work from a laptop or desktop and not a tablet or phone.

Textbooks

Required	Tebeaux, Elizabeth & Dragga, Sam. <i>The Essentials of Technical Communication</i> . 5 th edition {9780197539200} Asimov, Isaac. <i>I, Robot</i> . {Any Edition—Will Smith doesn't have to be on the cover} Willingness To Learn
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Work Requirements

Students in this course are expected to be able to complete unified, coherent documents nearly free of mechanical, logical, or structural errors. Additionally, students must strive to write using inclusive language including, but not limited to, gender neutral/inclusive language, nontechnical language (where appropriate), and interculturally aware language. The ability to read college-level texts critically is also a requirement. The table below has a list of required assignments to complete individually. Also, students will have the opportunity to collaborate or work individually on a final presentation and annotated bibliography that addresses an issue or issues in technical communication. The final exam will be **Wednesday, May 11, 2023 on Canvas**. All of these assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course. Just because the assignments have point values associated with them does not mean you will pass the course if your missing assignments do not drop you below 60%. Your final grade is out of 1,000 total points.

It might seem odd for an online, asynchronous class to have dates on the calendar portion of this syllabus and the class webpage (<https://pages.charlotte.edu/aaron-toscano/engl2116-014spring2023/>), but I've organized the class this way to help keep you on top of what you need to do. You may be able to devote your entire Monday to all the week's material, and that's fine. I have the course separated into days so that it's easier to manage than if I just lumped everything together. Please go to both Canvas and the course webpage—yes, they are two separate entities—for important class assignments and activities.

Assignments/Grade Distribution

Portfolio Assignments (300 points) —Grade comes at end of term			
Cover Letter			
Resume			
Set of Instructions			
Portfolio Reflection			
Other Assignments (600 points)		Project (300 points)	
Prose Revisions	100	Proposal	100
<i>I, Robot</i> Essay	100	Annotated Bibliography	100
Weekly Discussion Posts	300	Visual(s)	50
Ethical Dilemmas	100	Presentation	50
Total	600	Total	300
Exams/Quizzes (200 points)			
Midterm	100	Grand Total of 1400 points	
Final	100		
Total	200		

All of the above must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course.

Portfolios, Journals, and Exams

Students must revise the three portfolio assignments (Cover Letter, Resume, and Set of Instructions), which are not graded until the end of the semester, to go into their final portfolios. These portfolio documents will go through the entire writing process (prewriting, drafting, re-visioning, and editing). I will make comments on drafts in Canvas, and those comments should guide your revision. Unlike in a face-to-face class, you will not have a physical portfolio to turn in. Although the first two assignments are short (1-2 pages), please note that you will have a final reflection that will give context to the decisions you made in your writing process. Every week students should write a 250-word response to the Weekly Discussion Prompts. These prompts will be located on [Canvas](#). They are due by **Thursday at 11:00 pm*** of the week they're assigned. We will refer to the topics throughout the semester. The Midterm and Final Exams will cover all course readings and prose revision lessons. The Final Exam will be *slightly* cumulative, and both exams will be on [Canvas](#).

***Set a weekly reminder now, so you don't forget these prompts—I will not accept late posts.**

Grading Policy

Your final grade is supposed to reflect your entire work for the semester and will be based on the percentages below:

Grading Scale for Graded Assignments and Final Grade:				
A= 90 - 100	B= 80 - 89	C= 70 - 79	D= 60 - 69	F=Below 60

Definition of A, B, C, D, and F Grades

Remember, your final grade is a combination of the five areas above in the assignment percentage table. An 'A' means your work was excellent—not mediocre, average, or just good. A 'B' means your work was good—not quite excellent but definitely above average and thoughtful. A 'C' means your work was barely adequate enough to satisfy the assignment—showing a lack of effort or thought for the assignment guidelines. A 'D' or 'F' usually means assignments were late, missing, or incomplete—often this work does not demonstrate appropriate college-level work for a 2000-level course.

Late Work

An assignment is due at the beginning of the class for which it was assigned. All late work will reduce the assignment by 10% for each class meeting it is late. Therefore, an assignment worth 100 points that is one class meeting late will not be able to have a grade higher than 90. If a portfolio assignment is late, your overall grade will be 3% less. Therefore, if you turn in a portfolio assignment draft a day late, your final grade begins at 97%. You are responsible for making up all work missed. Something I have learned from past semesters is that if you do not turn things in on time early in the semester, you end up not turning other things in on time (or at all). Do your best to get all your work in to me on time.

Important Dates and Administrative Information

The syllabus schedule on the last two pages has important dates for readings and assignments. Students are responsible for not only knowing course deadlines but also knowing UNC Charlotte deadlines (drop/add, billing, vacation, etc.). Please visit the following link for the registrar's calendar: <https://registrar.charlotte.edu/printable-calendar>.

Academic Integrity

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is an academic community dedicated to teaching, scholarship, service, inclusion, and the holistic development of Students. Academic integrity is a cornerstone value of the University's intellectual community. It is important to nurture an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, trust, respect, and mutual responsibility. **Integrity is essential because it ensures that Students fairly benefit from their educational experience and pursuits of knowledge.** Violating the principles of academic integrity damages the reputation of the University and undermines its educational mission and goals.

The University recognizes that Academic Misconduct detracts from the value of a UNC Charlotte degree and has influence beyond the University community, including relationships with employers, other educational institutions, the business community, the UNC system, and the community at large.

The purpose of the Code is to:

1. support and promote an ethical learning environment;
2. create consistent standards for all members of the academic community;
3. **assist Students in learning responsibility for one's own academic work;**
4. protect the academic environment of the University community; and
5. **clarify Student values and how they relate to the behavior in question.**

Definitions of Academic Dishonesty (From University Policy: 407, Ch. 6—<https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-407#c6>)

- A. **Cheating** means using or attempting to use materials, or giving assistance or materials without Authorization to another in any academic exercise that could result in gaining or helping another to gain academic advantage.
- B. **Fabrication** means providing fabricated information, including inventing or counterfeiting information, in any form in an academic exercise.
- C. **Falsification** means altering without Authorization any data or information, regardless of communication method (e.g., e-mail or other electronic communication), in an academic exercise.
- D. **Misuse of Academic Materials** means sharing, distributing, altering, acquiring, damaging, or making inaccessible academic materials without Authorization, that could result in gaining or helping another to gain an academic advantage.
- E. **Multiple Submission** means submitting academic work or substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) in more than one academic exercise without Authorization.
- F. **Plagiarism** means presenting the words or ideas of another as one's own words or ideas, including failing to properly acknowledge a source, unless the ideas or information are common knowledge. Plagiarism includes self-plagiarism, which is the use of one's own previous work in another context without indicating that it was used previously.

- G. **Unauthorized Collaboration** means sharing the work or effort in an academic exercise with another Student or Students without Authorization.
- H. **Research Misconduct** means a determination that Research Misconduct has occurred under [University Policy 309, Responding to Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Scholarship](#) and its [Supplemental Procedures](#). (See Chapter 3, Section III of the Code.)

If you try to pass off any work in full or part as your own without proper credit being given to the original source—you will receive an ‘F’ in this course. If you use non-sanctioned resources (e.g., other classmates) to complete tests and exams, you will receive an ‘F’ in this course.

You will also receive an ‘F’ in the course for other academic integrity violations. Do not expect another warning—this is it. Please see me if you need further clarification regarding cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submission of academic work, plagiarism, or complicity in academic dishonesty. Again, so there’s no confusion, you will most likely fail the course if you violate any part of the academic integrity code.

Title IX Mandated Reporting

{This section is often subject to change based on federal changes that could happen during the semester. We will abide by any new regulations.}

UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that many UNC Charlotte employees, including all faculty members, are considered [Responsible Employees](#) who are required to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must [report the information to the Title IX Coordinator](#). Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, please contact any of the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) University Counseling Center (caps.charlotte.edu, 7-0311); (2) Student Health Center (studenthealth.charlotte.edu, 7-7400); or (3) Center for Wellness Promotion (wellness.charlotte.edu, 7-7407). Additional information about your options is also available at the [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX](#) under the “Students” tab.

Safety and Security Information

UNC Charlotte’s Department of Safety and Security offers the following safety tips:

- Ensure your cell phone number is in the Banner Self-Serve system (Emergency Text Phone Number box) to receive text message NinerAlerts. NinerAlerts are sent via a variety of methods when there is a threat to campus safety or a change in operating condition.
- For every NinerAlert that is issued, an action directive is also included in the body of the message. Action Directives can include run, hide, fight; seek shelter; or evacuate. Visit emergency.charlotte.edu for more information on what each directive means.
- Download the [Livesafe app](#). This connects you to campus police via phone or text 24/7.
 - 911 dialed from a mobile phone connects to CMPD and can slow down response.
 - Alternatively, you can put the UNC Charlotte Police emergency number in your phone: 704-687-2200.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and know the quickest escape routes: exit doors, windows, etc.
- Safety and Security offers a variety of trainings to students. For more information, visit: <https://police.charlotte.edu/safety>

- Remember: Personal pepper spray is allowed on campus. However, guns and knives are not.

Action Directives included in NinerAlerts:

Run-Hide-Fight is the individual's Action Directive for an active assailant.

- **RUN:** If outside or in a building and it is safe to flee, run and leave the campus if possible.
- **HIDE:** If you are in a building and unsure of where the threat is, find the closest room in which to hide. Close, lock and/or barricade doors if they do not lock. Do not huddle in one location. Remain quiet.
- **FIGHT:** This is a last-resort option. Do not seek the assailant. If you come into direct contact with the individual, use any means necessary to defend yourself.

A **Seek Shelter** directive is normally issued during severe weather or hazardous material releases.

If a Seek Shelter is ordered:

- Stay inside if you are indoors.
- If outside, quickly go to the nearest building.
- Once indoors, find a fitting room or space in the building to shelter. Stay away from windows.

An **Evacuation** can be for either a single building, area, or the entire campus. Further information and direction will be included in the NinerAlert.

Statement of Academic Freedom

I strongly encourage students to use class as a place for free inquiry and intellectual growth. Although we as a class will not always agree or be comfortable with the views of others, every student has the right to his or her own tastes and convictions. I promise to be fair and always support your right to look at the world from your own position, but I encourage all students to branch out and consider multiple perspectives. **I will not tolerate any harassment or abuse (emotional or physical) or any instance where others adversely affect students' learning. Remember, harassment isn't just verbal—making harassing or abusive posts won't be tolerated.**

Instructional Modifications

Students who have a condition that may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria are encouraged to meet with the Disabilities Resource Center (ds.charlotte.edu/) to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modifications or accommodations. I don't need specifics about a condition, but I will need to know what specific accommodations you will need.

Inclement Weather/Building Issues/Apocalypse

Some buildings can have HVAC problems. Occasionally, the powers that be close buildings and classes are canceled because it is too brutally hot to remain inside. If a building related "issue" cancels class, continue to keep up with the class webpage, readings, and [Canvas](#) posts. The library has lots of space and many computers. We'll pick up where we left off on the syllabus when we return to class. This also goes for inclement weather and other situations that cancel class.

Right to Make Changes

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives, to compensate for missed classes, or to make our lives easier.

Schedule for Readings and Assignments

(have readings and assignments done before class)

January 9	Introduction to the Course: Read the syllabus. Get on Canvas and check out our Class website: https://pages.charlotte.edu/aaron-toscano/engl2116-014spring2023/
January 11	Asimov, Isaac. "Cult of Ignorance." <i>Newsweek</i> , 21 Jan 1980, p. 19. (on Canvas) Remember: Your Weekly Discussion Posts will be due every week on Thursdays at 11:00 pm

January 16*	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—No assignments or reading
January 18	Ch. 1 and 2 in Tebeaux and Dragga

*January 17th—Big day for the semester:

- Last day to add, drop with no grade 11:59 PM
- If you're not registered, you will not be allowed to continue in the course

January 23	Ch. 12 in Tebeaux and Dragga Résumé reading on Canvas
January 25	More Résumé and Cover Letter discussion

January 30	Ch. 4 in Tebeaux and Dragga
February 1 **DUE**	Résumés and Cover Letters DUE on Canvas Ch. 7 in Tebeaux and Dragga

February 6	Lessons on Plain Language
February 8*	More Lessons on Plain Language

*February 10th— Deadline for ALL students to apply for May 2023 graduation

February 13	Ch. 5 in Tebeaux and Dragga
February 15 **DUE**	Ch. 10 in Tebeaux and Dragga Prose Revisions Due

February 20	The Rhetoric of Technology
February 22 **DUE**	Technology in a social context discussion (reading online) Set of Instructions Due

Feb 27th —March 5th: Spring Break

March 6 Midterm	Midterm Exam on Canvas Midterm Exam is on Canvas, and you take it wherever you have internet access before March 8 th at 11:00pm
March 8	Midterm Exam on Canvas

March 13	Ch. 6 in Tebeaux and Dragga
March 15	More on Information Design

March 20*	Ch. 9 in Tebeaux and Dragga
March 22	Continue reading <i>I, Robot</i> , and look ahead to the Proposal, Visual, and Annotated Bibliography

*March 18th: Last day to withdraw from courses with a "W" grade

Please review the [Withdrawal Policy](#) before considering withdrawing from any course.

March 27	<i>I, Robot</i> discussion—have the novel finished by now
March 29 **DUE**	<i>I, Robot</i> essay DUE

April 3	Research Discussion Ch. 8 in Tebeaux and Dragga
April 5	Research Discussion (continued)
April 10	Ethics and Perspectives discussion
April 12	Ch. 3 in Tebeaux and Dragga
April 17	Huff, Darrel. "How to Lie with Statistics" on Canvas
April 19 **DUE**	More on ethics in writing and professional contexts Ethical Dilemmas DUE
April 24	Ch. 11 in Tebeaux and Dragga
April 26 **DUE**	Proposal, Visual, and Annotated Bibliography DUE
May 1 **DUE**	Final Portfolios DUE on Canvas
May 3 **DUE**	Final Presentations Due on Canvas
May 11	Final Exam on Canvas

Commencement May 12th & 13th