

## GENG 573: Professional Writing and Diverse Publics

Summer 2017  
MR 6:00-9:00 pm  
JRC 481

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JRC 346

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Office Hours: Mo and Th 5-5:30 pm; and by appointment

Professional writing is tied inherently to individuals and communities. This course examines professional writers' evolving roles as their public audiences become more heterogeneous. It also emphasizes the responsibility that all writers have for making their texts and documents inclusive. More specifically, we will consider accessibility issues for individuals with disabilities, feminist approaches to critiquing language and knowledge, and power differences in representations of ethnic and cultural minority groups in public documentation. We will cover...

- What professional writing looks like and who "counts" as a professional writer
- How attention to race, gender, disability, and culture impacts professional writing work
- How communities, cultures, and stakeholders come together to form publics and counter publics
- The importance of bridging communication practices in organizations with those in publics

### Expectations

By the end of this course I expect everyone to be able to

- Define professional writing based on their reading of the scholarship
- Articulate the responsibilities that professional and technical writers have to publics
- Apply the concepts that we have discussed in a professional setting outside this class
- Understand how academic scholarship texts circulate within a field

### Texts:

*Language, Gender & Professional Writing* by Francine W. Frank and Paula A. Treichler.

*Public and Professional Writing: Ethics, Imagination, and Rhetoric* by Anne Surma

*Central Works in Technical Communication* by Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart A. Selber

*Rhetorical Accessibility* by Lisa Melancon (online access through St. Thomas)

Various PDFs on Canvas

## Assignments:

2 Synthesis Papers (2 @ 10% each; 20% total)

7-8 Discussion Forum posts (5% of total grade)

Daily Participation (5%)

1 Workshop (10%)

1 major project (33%)

1 Min Exam (7%)

1 Prospectus (7.5%)

1 Conference Proposal (7.5%)

1 Incomplete Draft (5%)

## Description of Work

**[note: Canvas will only accept .doc ; .docx ; or .pdf file extensions]**

### **Synthesis Papers**

Twice this semester, you will write a paper that asks you to find the connections and the tensions between our readings while exploring a topic you find particularly noteworthy. You will be asked to read these papers in class, so pay close attention to grammatical concerns. See instructions on Canvas for more information.

### **Discussion Forum Posts**

Each week of class requires substantial reading. Prepare 500-750 word responses to the assigned reading. I have created a few forums in Canvas under Discussion for folks to post. Be sure to follow the instructions on each post and to post by the deadline.

### **Workshop**

You are responsible for leading discussion on one article one time this semester via a workshop. Workshops should include

- a brief summary of the most important points,
- an application of these points via a case study (or a case study that helps us see how we might move forward with what the article proposes)—this can be taken from a news article
- an activity that helps us understand the points that you are making or that the writer is making through the text you are presenting on
- discussion questions (can be combined with activity)
- other elements that help us to gain a rich understanding of the material.

Your workshop should focus on the readings for the day but should also be supplemented with material covered in previous class sessions. Post supplementary materials that you will use in the Discussion section of Canvas under Workshop Materials (handouts, short news articles to read in class, powerpoint, prezi presentations, etc). Consider the workshops as your opportunity to focus on an idea that you think is important for class members to consider and pose questions and focus our attention on an important issue or development in the field.

Look through the readings and email me as soon as you know which article you would like to workshop; because it's first come, first served, have a backup just in case. For those who forget to email me, I will have a sign up sheet on Monday, July 17 so come ready with your choice.

### **Seminar Paper**

Write a 15 page paper (not including references) that explores and develops an idea, issue or theory raised in readings and class discussion. This can take on several forms. You can:

- extend the theoretical knowledge that circulates regarding PW/Tech Comm and diverse publics
- interpret a recent event as a case study in PW/Tech Comm (digital communication, policy issues, etc) and diverse publics.
- put forth a proposal for improving or researching a diversity issue in a professional context based on the readings of the semester

Other possibilities can be considered with enough time. This paper should be written in APA style and with the intention of being revised for submission to a professional writing or technical communication journal such as *JBTC*, *TCQ*, *JTWC* or *Programmatic Perspectives*. Please review the submission guidelines and requirements for whichever journal you choose to submit to.

### **Prospectus**

Before you write your seminar paper, you will be asked to submit a prospectus in which you document what you hope to produce for the Final Project. We will go over the requirements for this prospectus in class, but you will need to be precise in what you hope to accomplish and how you will go about accomplishing it. Note that although we will look at some examples, that you will turn in something much shorter.

### **Conference Proposal**

Based on your seminar paper, you will respond to a fictitious conference Call for Proposals (CFP). Your goal here will be to tailor your project to meet the requirements of this CFP in a way that engages reviewers and discusses a wide-range of potential and interest at the conference. We will discuss conferences and CFPs in class.

### **Incomplete Draft of Major Project**

You will submit an incomplete draft of your major project (4-5 pages). This will be graded based on your mastery of the subject matter and your proposed trajectory. Note that although I will not grade specifically on grammatical or stylistic considerations, that if left unchecked, they can impact how you communicate mastery of the subject matter and your proposed trajectory.

### Mini Exam

You will take an exam in which you answer a few questions on our readings and discussions.

### Participation

The class is molded by your engagement with the subject matter. I will bring in a few activities or artifacts that might help guide our discussion of the readings, but you will need to sustain the conversation and even get the ball rolling. As this is a graduate course, I expect everyone to be engaged and invested in the ideas, questions, and implications of the topics at hand. I have purposely slimmed down the readings to allow folks enough time to read through them in depth and come to class prepared to have discussions. If it seems like we are running out of steam too early in our class periods, I will add more readings to the calendar.

[Note: please check the calendar and Canvas for Rubrics and due dates].

### Scores and Grades

Every assignment has its own rubric on Canvas. That said, in general, you can assume that the following descriptions relate to a particular score range that you receive.

**A+ (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76) C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (Below 60)**

**70 to 79 (C- to C+)**—You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style, verbal and visual, is straightforward but unremarkable.

**80 to 89 (B- to B+)**—You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows attention to style and visual design.

**90-100 (A- to A)**—You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, *and your work shows originality and creativity*. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed above for a B; but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a verbal or visual style.

Try to avoid the following score ranges. See me if you have any questions.

**60-69 (D to D+)**—You did what the assignment asked for at a low quality level. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Verbal and visual style is often non-existent or chaotic.

**Below 60 (F)**—The work does not meet the requirements or is not submitted completely or with care.

If you are a person who wants or *needs* a particular grade in this course, start working toward that grade right now. Don't wait until the end (or even the middle) of the semester to decide that you need a B or an A.

If you think I have misjudged or misinterpreted your work, come to my office and talk to me about it. I will not discuss grades in the classroom, but I don't mind if you come to my office and talk to me about your paper.

## Attendance and Lateness

You should attend class every day. That said, I understand that life happens. Therefore, you are allowed to miss one day due to other outside obligations that arise without any penalty. Afterwards, your score will be reduced by one letter grade for every absence.

## Email and Emergencies

I will respond to emails within 24 (excluding weekends). As this is a condensed course, I ask that you check your email daily and respond—if needed—with the same diligence as best as possible.

Note about Canvas: Admittedly, this is my first time using Canvas, so I take responsibility if sometimes things that are supposed to be there are not, or if dates are slightly off. Please notify me when you see one of these errors and I will correct it immediately.

If the campus needs to close due to an emergency, these policies may be changed. You will be notified via e-mail by me if class is cancelled

## Late Work

My general policy is that I do not accept work. Moreover, due to the compacted schedule for summer session, it is impossible to provide students with any major extensions on work. If you foresee an issue with a due date, plan ahead and let me know so that we can plan with enough time. That is all I ask.

## Academic Integrity

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism or some other form of dishonest conduct related to academic coursework and listed in the Student Policy Book under "Discipline: Rules of Conduct" will

automatically result in failure for the work involved. But academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the university. Here are the common ways to violate the academic integrity code:

### ***Cheating***

Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit

### ***Fabrication***

Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

### ***Facilitating Academic Dishonesty***

Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

### ***Plagiarism***

The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment. You commit plagiarism whenever you use a source in any way without indicating that you have used it. If you quote anything at all, even a phrase, you must put quotation marks around it, or set it off from your text; if you summarize or paraphrase an author's words, you must clearly indicate where the summary or paraphrase begins and ends; if you use an author's idea, you must say that you are doing so. In every instance, you also must formally acknowledge the written source from which you took the material. (This includes material taken from the World Wide Web and other Internet sources.)

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Students are encouraged to report incidents of academic dishonesty to course instructors. When academic dishonesty occurs, the following procedures will be followed:]

### ***Consequences***

#### *a) Sanctions*

The instructor will impose a minimum sanction of failure for the work involved. The instructor also will notify the student and the appropriate academic dean in writing of the nature of the offense and that the minimum sanction has been imposed. The instructor may recommend to the dean that further penalties be should imposed.

If further penalties are imposed, the dean will notify the student immediately and the student will have five working days to respond to the intention to impose additional penalties. The student has the right to respond to the charge of academic dishonesty and may request in writing that the dean review the charge of academic dishonesty as fully as possible.

If the dean determines that no further sanctions will be applied, the instructor's sanction

will stand and the instructor's letter to the dean and student will be placed in the student's file. If no further charges of academic dishonesty involving the student occur during the student's tenure at St. Thomas, the materials will be removed from the file upon graduation.

b) Previous Incident

If the student has been involved in a previous incident of academic dishonesty, the dean will convene a hearing, following guidelines listed under "Hearings and Procedures" in the Student Policy Book. During the hearing, all violations of academic integrity will be reviewed. The student and the faculty member charging the most recent incident will be present at the hearing.

*IN EITHER SITUATION, A OR B*

If the dean determines that further sanctions are warranted, the student will be informed in writing. Among the sanctions considered by the dean will be the following: failure for the course in which the incident occurred; suspension from the university for the following semester; expulsion from the university; community service; a written assignment in which the student explores the principles of honesty and trust; other appropriate action or sanctions listed under "Sanctions" in the Student Policy Book. The materials relating to the incident, including the instructor's original letter to the student and dean and the dean's decision following the hearing, will become part of the student's file.

*COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE*

The Committee on Discipline shall have the authority to investigate the facts of the particular case that has been appealed and the committee may:

Affirm the original decision and sanction.

Affirm the original decision and reduce or increase the original sanction.

Reverse the original decision.

Disallow the original decision and order a new hearing by the dean (or designee).

## Disability Statement

Classroom accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. Students are invited to contact the Disability Resources office about accommodations early in the semester. Telephone appointments are available to students as needed. Appointments can be made by calling 651-962-6315 or 800-328-6819, extension 6315. You may also make an appointment in person in Murray Herrick, room 110. For further information, you can locate the Disability Resources office on the web at <http://www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog/>.

## First Half of Calendar

See Canvas for Full calendar

### Week One

#### Homework Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> Day.

##### **Read:**

<p><u>Books</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 1 in <i>Central Works</i> (CW): Robert J Connors, “The Rise of Technical Writing in America” (16 pp)</li> <li>Chapter 4 in CW: Carolyn Miller, “A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Communication” (6 pp)</li> <li>Frank and Treichler, Introduction (32 pp)</li> </ol>
<p><u>PDFs</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lauer and Brumberger, “The Evolution of Technical Communication: An Analysis of Industry Job Postings” (20 pp)</li> <li>Tebeaux, “Response: Let’s Not Ruin Technical Writing Too” (4 pp)</li> </ol>

#### Monday 7/10:

##### **In Class:**

Introductions, Syllabus, What is PW? What are Publics?

##### **After Class:**

<p><u>PDFs</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carolyn Miller, “What’s Practical about Technical Writing?” (6 pp)</li> <li>Jo Allen, “The Case against Defining Technical Communication” (10 pp)</li> </ol>
<p><u>Books</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frank and Treichler: Sally McConnel-Ginet, “The Sexual (Re)Production of Meaning: A Discourse-Based Theory” (15 pp)</li> </ol>



4. Frank and Treichler: H. Lee Gershuny, "English Handbooks 1979-1985" (10 pp)

5. Chapter 3 in *CW*: Katherine T. Durack, "Gender, Technology, and the History of Technical Communication." (19 pp)

Discussion Forum Post on Canvas

**Thursday 7/13:**

**In Class:**

*Distance meeting via Skype or Facebook; still meet in JRC*

**After Class:**

Books

Chapter 10 in *CW*: Mary M. Lay, "Feminist Theory and the Redefinition of Technical Communication (13 pp)

Frank and Teichler: Break up Part Two of Frank and Treichler and present to the class informally on Monday (10-15 minutes); Have a Handout. (pp will vary)

PDFs

Elizabeth Tebeaux, "Technical Writing for Women of the English Renaissance" (36 pp)

Marie Moeller and Erin Frost, "Food Fights: Cookbook Rhetorics, Monolithic Constructions of Womanhood, and Field Narratives in Technical Communication" (12 pp)

Synthesis Paper 1 (due on Canvas Assignments and as hard copy in class on Monday)

Week TwoMonday 7/17In Class:

Present on Frank and Treichler, Part 2  
Paper Day!

**After Class:**Books

Anne Surma, *Professional and Public Writing* Chapters 1-3, pp 1-74 (74 pp);

Chapter 13 in *CW*: Steven B. Katz, "The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology and the Holocaust" (15 pp)

Chapter 7 in *CW*: Robert R. Johnson, "Audience involved: Toward a Participatory Model of Writing" (15 pp)

Discussion Forum Post on Canvas

Thursday 7/20In Class:**After Class:**Books

Chapters of Lisa Meloncon's *Rhetorical Accessibility*, PDF copies in folder

PDFs

From *Rhetorical Accessibility*, Ch. 2: Jarrett, Redish, Summers, "Designing for People who Do Not Read Easily" (<26 pp)

From *Rhetorical Accessibility*, Ch. 3: Lisa Meloncon, "Toward a Theory of Technological Embodiment" (16 pp)

From *Rhetorical Accessibility*, Ch. 4: Margaret Gutsell and Kathleen Hulgin, "Supercrrips Don't Fly" (12 pp)

Michael Salvo, "Rhetoric as Productive Technology" (22 pp)

Fernando Sánchez, "Enabling Geographies: Mapping Campus Spaces through Disability and Access" (<34 pp)

Discussion Forum Post on Canvas

### Week Three

#### Monday 7/24

##### **In Class:**

Discuss Disability and Tech Comm/PW

##### **After Class:**

##### PDFs

Miriam Williams and Octavio Pimentel, "Introduction." (6 pp)

Jennifer Ramirez Johnson, Octavio Pimentel and Charise Pimentel, "Writing New Mexico White :A Critical Analysis of Early Representations of New Mexico in Technical Writing" (27 pp)

Natasha Jones, "The Importance of Ethnographic Research in Activist Networks" (15 pp)

Angela M. Haas, "Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: A Case Study of Decolonial Technical Communication Theory, Methodology, and Pedagogy" (35 pp)

Miriam Williams "A Survey of Emerging Research: Debunking the Fallacy of Colorblind Technical Communication" (8 pp)

##### *Skim:*

Charise Pimentel and Deborah Balzhiser, "The Double Occupancy of Hispanics: Counting Race and Ethnicity in the U.S. Census" (30 pp)

Discussion Forum Post on Canvas

#### Thursday 7/27

##### **In Class:**

Discuss Race and Ethnicity in Tech Comm/PW

##### **Assignments:**

##### PDFs

Sample Prospectus

Mini discussion post

Synthesis Paper 2 due on Canvas Assignments and 11 hard copies are due in class on Monday 7/31