

## ENG 3771, Advanced Career Writing



ENG3771 | D582 | MW 1:00PM-2:15PM | Namm N-923

Professor: Dr. Jason W. Ellis | Office: Namm 520 | Office Hours: MW 10:30AM-11:45AM or by appointment | Contact: [jellis@citytech.cuny.edu](mailto:jellis@citytech.cuny.edu) | Twitter: [@dynamicsubspace](https://twitter.com/dynamicsubspace)

### **Class Description**

ENG 3771, Advanced Career Writing gives you opportunities to learn important technical communication skills, heuristics, and approaches that you will use in the workplace. Borrowing ideas from Donald A. Norman's *Living with Complexity* (2010), we can think of technical communication as a way of managing complexity. Using rhetoric, research, and process, we can make complex information, tasks, and technology far easier to understand, accomplish, and use. In order to accomplish these things, we need to focus our use of WOVEN (written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) modes of communication on the needs of our readers. However, we must base our strategies and approaches on clearly articulated goals and firmly established research; we must test our deliverables for usability; and we must revise our deliverables to meet our clients' requirements. Above all else, as technical communicators, we must follow professional and ethical codes of behavior. In this class, you will learn about these important aspects of technical communication through daily exercises, hands-on activities, and collaborative service-based projects.

### **Learning Objectives and Prerequisites (See Additional Handout)**

### **Required Texts**

Oliu, Walter E., Charles T. Brusaw, and Gerald J. Alred. *Writing That Works: Communicating Effectively on the Job*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2013. Print.

Other readings made available by email or on our OpenLab site.

## Required Resources

Access to your campus email account. Use it to create an account on [openlab.citytech.cuny.edu](http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu) during the first week. Join our class on OpenLab (I will show you where to find it during class).

Software: Office suite of applications capable of producing files in DOCX, PPTX, and PDF formats.

Create accounts (or use your existing accounts) for Google and LinkedIn.com.

Ability to create DOCX, PPTX, and PDF documents, and print color and b/w documents.

## Recommended Resources

Journals in the field available through the library: *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *Technical Communication*, and *Technical Communication Quarterly*.

*Usability.gov* is an important website from the Department of Health and Human Services that provides information and methodologies for improving user experiences (UX).

City Tech's Ursula C. Schwerin Library, Atrium 4<sup>th</sup> Floor: <http://library.citytech.cuny.edu>

City Tech Learning Center, Atrium G-18: <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/students/learningcenter/>

Purdue Online Writing Lab: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

## Grading Policy

Due dates are provided for assignments on the tentative schedule. Instructions for these assignments will be given to you with plenty of time to discuss them with me or your peers before they are due. Should you have any questions, concerns, or issues about an assignment, you **MUST** speak with me **BEFORE** an assignment is due, because **ALL GRADES FOR THIS COURSE ARE FINAL**. This means that I will not entertain student arguments for grade changes after an assignment is completed. Also, failure to complete any major assignment in the course may result in the failure of the course as a whole. Should you find yourself having trouble, you **MUST** speak with me **BEFORE** an assignment is due. I will not listen to any arguments after an assignment is completed. If assignments are submitted late, one letter grade will be deducted from the assignment's score for each day that the assignment is late.

## Attendance Policy

I make no distinction between excused and excused absences. Students are permitted to have three absences without penalty. However, absence does not give you an extension on assignment or presentation due dates. It is the responsibility of each student to make sure her or his work is turned in on time and presentations are made according to schedule. Presentations cannot be made up except in the most exceptional cases. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class for its duration. Each late arrival or early exit will equal half of an absence. Excessive absence can result in failure of the course or a final WU grade.

### Major Assignment Grade Distribution

<b>Project 1: Getting a Job and Communicating in the Workplace</b>	Deliverables: Job application portfolio, which includes job ad, company research report, two resumes, job application letter, and mock interview report.	<b>30%</b>
<b>Project 2: Service-Learning Research Project</b>	Deliverables: Each team researches a problem around the City Tech campus, creates a detailed proposal document, and a multimodal campaign supporting their proposal.	<b>30%</b>
<b>In-Class Writing</b>	Deliverables: Daily writing that demonstrates an understanding of business writing models and an ability to summarize complex information in a concise way. NB: Other milestone writing assignments are included in this part of your grade.	<b>30%</b>
<b>Reading Presentations</b>	Deliverables: Notes, PowerPoint, and in-class presentation on readings or videos.	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Teaching Philosophy and Standards for Professor Performance

I understand the value of a technical education and I know the challenge involved in achieving it. My experiences as a student at different kinds of institutions inform, in part, the way that I design and teach classes. This means that I choose intellectually interesting and exciting source material, I encourage students to engage and participate in discussion and in-class exercises, and I make myself available as a mentor to my students. I have a tremendous amount of hard-won knowledge that I enjoy giving to my students. You should also know that I extensively draw on my research interests in American literature, postcolonial literature, neuroscientific discourses, digital literacy, and computer history in the implementation of my courses.

You can expect me to:	You should not expect me to:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be professional inside and outside the classroom.</li> <li>• Treat you like an adult in a professional and respectful manner.</li> <li>• Be prepared for class.</li> <li>• Attend class regularly.</li> <li>• Respond promptly to email communication.</li> <li>• Adhere to my policies and standards.</li> <li>• Be available for student meetings with an appointment.</li> <li>• Maintain a positive attitude.</li> <li>• Be a problem solver.</li> <li>• Offer thoughtful, constructive criticism on your work.</li> <li>• Be a coach, instead of a “sage on the stage,” in the classroom.</li> <li>• Be a mentor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept notes or other documents from third parties excusing you from class or other activities.</li> <li>• Respond favorably to excuses of any kind.</li> <li>• Answer emails or phone calls from parents, guardians, or other third parties.</li> <li>• Be available outside my office hours without an appointment.</li> <li>• Respond favorably to any argument for missing my class or leaving my class early because of activities in another class.</li> <li>• Make exceptions to my policies and standards.</li> <li>• Grant make-ups.</li> <li>• Accept late work without a <i>pre-arranged</i> extension.</li> <li>• Answer emails on the weekends.</li> </ul>
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### Standards for Student Performance

Another important aspect of the Technical Communication class is developing your professionalism. Expect to be held to these professional standards in our class:

- **Respect deadlines.** In the workplace, you will be held to a high standard of making and meeting project deadlines. I do not accept late work unless the student speaks with me about arranging an extension. I do not guarantee extension, but I often grant them if there is a documented, compelling need that is identified before an assignment is due.
- **Do not expect make-ups.** In the workplace, there are consequences for poor performance or incomplete projects. Likewise in our class, you should not expect any make-up opportunities for late or incomplete work. Students who participate in school sanctioned absences (e.g., in-season athletics) are a possible exception, but it is the responsibility of those students to meet with me before assignments are due to discuss and establish a plan for the individual student.
- **Arrive on time for class and stay for the duration of class.** Being late or leaving early can be disruptive and are disrespectful in any situation, especially in the workplace. I assign partial absences to students who arrive late or leave early, because those students miss a portion of the class lecture, exercises, or team participation. Students who are perpetually late run the risk of receiving a failing grade in the class.
- **Respect others.** Following a workplace example, we will treat our class as meetings. This means that you should not disrupt class with texting, phone calls, or unnecessary computer sounds. Furthermore, you should respect the people who you work with in class

on daily assignments or major projects. Give one another your full attention, your attention to detail, and your vast wealth of expertise. In addition, be receptive to constructive criticism and provide it in full measure to your classroom colleagues.

- **Maintain a positive attitude.** Many of your projects will be collaborative. Having a negative attitude can influence your and your teammates' performance and success. Put your best foot forward regardless of any situation's challenges.
- **Be a problem solver.** This is the best strategy for maintaining a positive attitude. The workplace is replete with problems, miscommunications, and difficulties. In any job or situation, we should work toward solutions, compromises, and successful communication. This involves identifying where the problem lies, figuring out a solution, applying the solution, evaluating its success, and revising if possible until the problem is fully resolved (or as resolved as possible). This class gives you many opportunities to be a problem solver in preparation for the higher stakes of the workplace.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

This class does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, disability, or status as a veteran. Alternative viewpoints are welcome; however, statements that are deemed racist, sexist, homophobic, classist, or otherwise discriminatory toward others in the class or outside the class will not be tolerated.

### **Accommodations Policy**

Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the Student Support Services Program (SSSP). Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student's eligibility from SSSP, which is located in A-237. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the SSSP staff and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

### **Communication**

The best and most efficient way to contact me is by email. Please feel free to email me with your questions about the readings, assignments, or anything else pertaining to the class. While I am not an official advisor, I can offer first-hand advice and I can point students toward resources for student success. If I do not know the answer to a question, I will find out for you. I will not discuss grades by email, but I will be happy to discuss student grades in person during my office hours or by appointment. Please feel free to stop by during my office hours, but please send me an email beforehand so that I can prepare appropriately for what you would like to discuss. I will send official announcements to the class by email. Each student is expected to check her or his email before class.

## Office Hours

I encourage students to meet with me outside of class to discuss their work. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, you may setup an appointment to meet with me at another time. Students should send me an email at least 24 hours in advance requesting a meeting and including information about the student's available meeting times for the next few days.

## New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog ([http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/academics/catalog\\_listing.shtml](http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/academics/catalog_listing.shtml)).

While we will discuss academic integrity and plagiarism in class, please do not hesitate to seek my advice on this subject should you have any question at any time before an assignment is due. In our class, any writing or work by others that you incorporate into your writing and work should be properly attributed using MLA professional style. There is a section on MLA in Hacker and Sommer's *A Writer's Reference* and in the Purdue OWL website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>). City Tech provides a list of tips on avoiding plagiarism ([http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/students/academic\\_integrity/plagiarism\\_tips.pdf](http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/students/academic_integrity/plagiarism_tips.pdf)).

## Tentative Schedule

I believe that classes should be organic and adaptive for each group of students. Therefore, I reserve the right to alter the following tentative schedule depending on the needs of the class as a whole. However, major assignment due dates will remain unchanged. If you have suggestions for supplemental readings or viewings, please share them with me. If you have questions about the course content, please speak with me.

Week	Day	Date	Reading/Announcements	Work	Due
1	W	1/28	<b>FIRST DAY OF CLASS.</b>	Class introductions and discuss syllabus.  Discussion: What is career writing? What is technical communication? Career writing and technical communication are	<b>Print out and sign the syllabus policy and use forms on the last page of syllabus.</b>

				rhetorical, reader-centered, multimodal (WOVEN), dynamic, ethical, and solving problems.	<b>Signup for an account on <a href="http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu">openlab.citytech.cuny.edu</a> and join our class site.</b>
2	M	2/2	<p>“Communicating Effectively for Dummies,”  <a href="http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/communicating-effectively-for-dummies-cheat-sheet.html">http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/communicating-effectively-for-dummies-cheat-sheet.html</a></p> <p>Signup for reading presentations.</p>	<p>Discussion: What is complexity and (perceived) simplicity?</p> <p>Discussion: Why should we follow a user-centric/reader-centric focus?</p> <p>Introduce Unit 1 Project: Workplace Communication and Getting a Job</p>	<b>Beginning of class writing: write 125-250 word summary of today’s reading in a comment to today’s blog post. Discuss important points and what you found most interesting. Format each comment as a memo (see page 298 in <i>Writing That Works</i>).</b>
	W	2/4	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 14, “Giving Presentations and Conducting Meetings”	Discussion.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
3	M	2/9	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 1, “Assessing Audience, Purpose, and Medium: A Case Study.”	Discussion.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>  <b>Signup for LinkedIn account and add professor as a contact.</b>
	W	2/11	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 16, “Finding the Best Job for You,” Section: Determining the Best Job for You.	Discussion.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
4	M	2/16	No Class: Presidents’ Day		
	W	2/18	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 16, “Finding the Best Job for You,” Section: Preparing an Effective Resume, and Excerpt from Paul Anderson’s <i>Technical Communication</i> , Ch. 2 (Available on OpenLab).	Discussion.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
5	M	2/23	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 16, “Finding the Best Job for You,” Writing an Effective Letter of	Discuss job application portfolio and job advertisements.	<b>Submit Unit 1 Deliverables as a blog post on</b>

			Application and Completing a Job or an Internship Application, and Mashable.com, "Looking for a Job? Ditch the Resume Tips and Open a Marketing Book," <a href="http://mashable.com/2015/01/18/career-marketing-yourself/">http://mashable.com/2015/01/18/career-marketing-yourself/</a>		our OpenLab website.  Beginning of class writing.
	W	2/25	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 16, "Finding the Best Job for You," Doing Well in the Interview, Sending Follow-up Correspondence, and Sending a Resignation Letter or Memo; and Monster.com, "Interview Questions: 100 Potential Interview Questions," <a href="http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-questions/100-potential-interview-questions/article.aspx">http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-questions/100-potential-interview-questions/article.aspx</a>	Discussion.	Beginning of class writing.
6	M	3/2	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 2, "Organizing Your Information."	Discussion.	Beginning of class writing.
	W	3/4	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 3, "Writing the Draft."	Plan mock interviews.	Beginning of class writing.
7	M	3/9	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 4, "Revising the Draft."	Conduct mock interviews.	Project 1 Deliverables due as a Blog Post on our OpenLab site.
	W	3/11	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 5, "Collaborative Writing."	Introduce Unit 2 Service-Learning Research Project.	Beginning of class writing.
8	M	3/16	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 6, "Researching Your Subject."		Beginning of class writing.
	W	3/18	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 7, "Designing Effective Documents and Visuals."	NB: Midterm grades available.	Beginning of class writing.
9	M	3/23	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 8, "Understanding the Principles of Business Correspondence."		Beginning of class writing.
	W	3/25	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 9, "Writing Business Correspondence."		Beginning of class writing.
10	M	3/30	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 10,	Discussion.	Beginning of

			“Writing Informal Reports.”	Team studio time.	<b>class writing.</b>
	W	4/1	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 11, Writing Formal Reports.	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
11	M	4/6	<b>No Class: Spring Recess</b>		
	W	4/8	<b>No Class: Spring Recess</b>		
12	M	4/13	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 12, “Writing Instructions.”	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
	W	4/15	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 13, “Writing Proposals.”	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
13	M	4/20	<i>Writing That Works</i> , Ch 15, “Writing for the Web: Rhetorical Principles for a Diverse Medium.”	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
	W	4/22	Susan Colantuono, “The Career Advice You Probably Didn’t Get,” <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_colantuono_the_career_advice_you_probably_didn_t_get?language=en">http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_colantuono_the_career_advice_you_probably_didn_t_get?language=en</a>	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
14	M	4/27	Shawn Achor, “The Happy Secret to Better Work,” <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work?language=en">http://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work?language=en</a>	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
	W	4/29	Nigel Marsh, “How to Make Work-Life Balance Work,” <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/nigel_marsh_how_to_make_work_life_balance_work?language=en">http://www.ted.com/talks/nigel_marsh_how_to_make_work_life_balance_work?language=en</a>	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
15	M	5/4	Melody Hobson, “Color Blind or Color Brave?,” <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/melody_hobson_color_blind_or_color_brave?language=en">https://www.ted.com/talks/melody_hobson_color_blind_or_color_brave?language=en</a>	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
	W	5/6	Angel Lee Duckworth, “The Key to Success? Grit,” <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit?language=en">http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit?language=en</a>	Discussion. Team studio time.	<b>Beginning of class writing.</b>
16	M	5/11		Team studio time.	
	W	5/13		Team studio time.	
17	M	5/18		Team presentations.	<b>Submit Project 2 deliverables.</b>
	W	5/20		Team presentations.	

## Syllabus/Policy Acknowledgment and Permission Statement

**PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS BY OUR NEXT CLASS.**

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for \_\_\_\_\_ and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

\_\_\_\_\_

print name

\_\_\_\_\_

signature

\_\_\_\_\_

date

**DIRECTIONS:** Read carefully and check all that apply.

- I give my instructor, JASON W. ELLIS, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.
- I do NOT give my instructor, JASON W. ELLIS, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.

Please indicate whether you want to be acknowledged if your work is used:

- Please use my name in association with my work.
- Please use my work, but do NOT acknowledge me.

If your instructor decides to use your work, he//she may wish to contact you. Please provide your contact information below:

\_\_\_\_\_

print name

\_\_\_\_\_

signature

\_\_\_\_\_

email address

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phone number

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print address

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date