



ENG 341 (01W): Professional Writing

COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2021

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Ashanka Kumari, Assistant Professor of English (she/her/hers)

Email: ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu

Office Location: Online for Spring 2021

Office Hours: Virtually 8-5 p.m. weekdays or by appointment via Calendly

Office Phone: 903-886-5260 (to Dept. of Literature & Languages)

Office Fax: 903-886-5980 (to Dept. of Literature & Languages)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to English 341: Professional Writing! In this class, you will engage a study of how to manage business communication effectively through developing and employing critical thinking skills focused on organizing information, drawing conclusions, and practicing formal writing skills that will enhance marketability and success in the professional workplace. You will learn how to analyze job listings, write resumes and cover letters, and research content relevant to your professional goals. Regardless of what route or discipline you choose, one thing is certain—you will be writing.

Prerequisites: ENG 1302.

Student Learning Outcomes

Through a mixture of reading, writing, and discussion throughout the semester, you will:

1. produce writing and use oral communication skills that demonstrate knowledge of audience, context, purpose relevant to the professional workplace;
2. incorporate accurate and relevant evidence that supports well-reasoned solutions to workplace problems with a depth and breath of significant, well-researched information;

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

3. engage in the writing process, which means working through various strategies for planning, researching, drafting, revising, and editing documents that respond effectively and ethically to professional writing situations and audiences; and,
4. design professional documents that demonstrate knowledge of document design principles, including the implementation of various principles of format, layout, and design that meet multiple needs and integrate a variety of written, visual, and oral elements of design.

Required Texts & Materials:

- Course readings available on D2L (no book purchase required)
- A valid, working email address that you check often (everyday)
- Regular internet access (additional readings and course materials available online via D2L)
- Access to a word processing program
- At least two storage methods such as a flash drive, cloud storage, folder, etc.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF REQUIRED WORK

As a student in this class, expect to write every day on an informal level, drafting short pieces that you might (or might not) share with your classmates and me, with the goal of moving from these frequent drafts to longer pieces of writing intended for several different kinds of audiences.

Both informal and formal writing assignments will be centered on learning about professional writing. You will engage multiple types of sources, genres, and modes, and projects will have multiple drafts to encourage the revision process. One ultimate and important goal of our class is to help you see your writing through the eyes of other people, to listen to what they have to say about your writing and ideas, and then make revisions that meet your readers' expectations in the next draft.

In brief, you will work through the following each week (details in the schedule):

- LECTURE & DISCUSS – Tuesdays & Thursdays from 11 a.m. – 12:15 pm CST (details to access lectures will be emailed ahead of our course start date). During this time, we will engage in discussions about the readings and relevant ideas surrounding nonfiction writing.
- READ & COMPOSE – Ongoing – you should read assigned course readings ahead of each class; after week 1, you will also be responsible for a series of shorter writing assignments

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GRADING

I thoroughly believe that grades are technologies of surveillance and control. I never found grades productive for learning, and I have always felt that they limit the learning process, create nasty habits designed to “get the A,” and cause more anxiety than they are worth. Much research suggests the limits of grades and the benefits of going “gradeless.” However, I also realize that grades are important data points for you – your scholarships, majors, future jobs, and ability to graduate are all tied up in the grades you earn. To balance my distrust of grades with the requirements of the university, we will work on a feedback and labor model, which will be codified in a grading agreement we negotiate at the beginning of the semester. This means you will receive (a lot of) feedback from me and your peers throughout the semester with the expectation that you use that feedback to continually revise, rethink, and remix your work. For the most part, the only “grade” you will receive during the semester will be:

- **full credit:** project was completed, turned in promptly. Strong effort.
- **half credit:** project wasn't complete and/or prompt but effort was evident.

- **no credit:** project wasn't complete and/or prompt.

- **excused:** incomplete project due to uncontrollable circumstances.

However, this course is *not* “gradeless” because I, begrudgingly, have to enter a final course grade at the end of the term. At the end of the semester, I will review your work, my various responses to your work throughout the semester, your attempts to compose something of quality, and your general fortitude and determine a final grade using our grading agreement and the standard TAMUC grading scale. You may always meet with me to discuss your progress in the course (though don't expect me to give you a “grade”).

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Assessments

See assignment sheets and D2L for specific information about assignments

- **Workplace Writing Portfolio** – detailed assignment sheet forthcoming
- **Analysis of Genres in the Field and Translation for Public Audiences** – detailed assignment sheet forthcoming
- **Course Reflection Project** — For the final project in English 341 (detailed assignment sheet forthcoming), students will develop a reflective project, in an approved format of their choosing, that thoughtfully explores their experience in the course.
- **Participation** — Look, we are in a pandemic. Life is chaos right now. On top of the typical challenges, I recognize many of you are dealing with funky broadband, uncertain childcare, a serious virus, classes in different formats, financial precarity—and so am I.

So this is what I promise to you: I will strive to make each class interactive and useful for you. I chose to do this class synchronously because the material is dense, and it's really helpful to go through it together. I expect students to come to class each week, and your participation will be self-assessed in reflection moments throughout the semester. I will take roll each class, so I know if someone is falling behind. But I do not plan on factoring attendance into your final grade as I recognize that these are unprecedented times that require flexibility.

I understand that participation and contribution can look and mean something different to each of us, but ultimately, to do well in this aspect of the course, you should contribute to class discussion, raising questions, responding to classmates, and sharing insights in ways that keep the conversation moving forward in meaningful, generative, and generous ways.

- **In-Class Writing & Group Work** — See General Overview of Required Work above.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

I recognize that our classroom is made up of a diverse array of learners and am happy to make any reasonable accommodations to make sure every student has an equal experience in my class. For example, you may prefer to process information by speaking and listening; or you might feel more capable of participating via individual assignments rather than discussion threads online.

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Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services including the Counseling Center are available to all students. I recognize that disabilities can be visible and invisible, and I am dedicated to ensuring that all students succeed in my course.

Please also see the **Course and University Resources/Procedures/Policies** section below and course webpage for additional support services.

Students with Disabilities – ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Accessing the Course Website

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. You should have *at least* two storage methods such as a flash drive, cloud storage, folder, etc. to back up all of your class materials.

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY RESOURCES/PROCEDURES/POLICIES

A Note on Learning (in Unprecedented Times)

The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. People from many parts of our city, state, country, and the world are still suffering from the public health crisis with minimal support and resources. We are fortunate to be able to meet as a class, albeit remotely, to resume learning during this unusual time. As we pursue learning together, I strive to keep the following guiding principles (inspired by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*):

- Put people first. As we learn human-centered design philosophies and methodologies in this course, I hope we practice empathy and be cognizant that our own reality (day-to-day life) can be imposed upon others whose lives may differ drastically from ours.
- Stay informed. We will keep ourselves educated about the development of the public health situation and make informed decisions about our personal, social, and professional lives.
- Communicate early and often. Even when we are physically and socially distancing to help stop the spread of virus, we can remain connected through various communication platforms. Always reach out if you need anything necessary to support your learning and own well-being.
- Celebrate accomplishments. Any achievements, major or minor, during this time is a testament to your dedication and perseverance. We will enable a culture of celebration in this class. So, feel free to share with me your successes (and failures when you attempt at something) and I will acknowledge them however you prefer.
- Take care of yourself. Get enough rest, food, exercise, and anything you need to keep you in a positive mood and good health. If you don't feel well, do not force yourself through the course work. Let me know so we can work out alternatives together.

Communication

Communication is a key part of success in this course. I am available via email (ashanka.kumari@tamuc.edu) from 8 am – 5 pm weekdays or by appointment to discuss assignments, questions, and/or issues. Please note that I may not respond to emails between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. See the Respect section for details on sending respectful emails.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

I often send clarifications about assignments via email, as well as notifications and any emergencies or changes to class content. All course content will be posted to our course D2L site which is available for your to access at any time.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Grievances

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Director of Writing, Dr. Jessica Pauszek, by emailing her (jessica.pauszek@tamuc.edu). Before an appointment is scheduled the student must provide clearly documented and explained issues as to why the meeting is being requested. The student must also state when they discussed the issue in person or via phone (not email!) with their instructor already. Where applicable, students should also consult University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 ("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation").

Respect & Student Conduct

Each class is made up of diverse individuals with a variety of backgrounds and beliefs, so we won't always agree with one another on every issue. You will probably feel uneasy, uncomfortable, or challenged at some point in this class. In fact, those moments can often lead to greater insight and understanding. However, rudeness and insults will not be tolerated. Our classroom should be a respectful space where we all feel comfortable and safe sharing our thoughts, and professionalism and boundaries are very important to me as a professor.

These respect guidelines also apply in feedback and email correspondences we will have with one another. Emails should include a proper opening and closing salutations and a clear message.

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

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Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

Inclusion Policy & Nondiscrimination Notice

Your value as a member of this course community and the university community at large is vital to me, regardless of social identity factors. While at times, the topic of class discussions, readings, and other activities may take you out of your comfort zone, or even go against your individual perception of the world, you are expected to keep an open mind and evaluate claims based on fact and knowledge, rather than preconceived notions alone. For questions, concerns, and problems related to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, nationality, gender identity, sexuality, religion, veteran status, or other social or personal identity factors, please come talk to me.

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Military and Student Veteran Accommodation

I recognize the complexities of being a military student or a student veteran. If you are a military student or student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursements, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with other university staff who are trained to assist you.

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the university's Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will collect some of the ungraded texts you produce. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program "promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation." This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

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Writing Center

The Writing Center (or the "Communication Skills Center") offers writers free, one-on-one assistance. We welcome all writers, majors, and disciplines—undergraduate and graduate students alike. In fact, we work from the premise that all writers, no matter their ability level, benefit from the feedback of knowledgeable readers. The Writing Center staff is trained to provide writers with just this service. In short, we are here to help you help yourself. In order to ensure the most effective session possible, we offer visitors the following suggestions: (1) Get started on your writing project early, and email the Writing Center (writing.tamuc@gmail.com) at least two days before your final draft is due. You will need time to work with the ideas and suggestions generated in your tutorial sessions. (2) Attach a copy of your assignment, any relevant readings, and one or two specific questions or concerns you would like to discuss with us. Writing Center consultants are available virtually via writing.tamuc@gmail.com.

Pandemic-Specific University Policies

A&M–Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support students getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

Please, click on the following link to access A&M-Commerce COVID-19 Information, <https://new.tamuc.edu/coronavirus/>

Academic Integrity & Honesty

Here is the official word on plagiarism and academic integrity from TAMUC: "Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

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<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Basically, plagiarism is any attempt to pass of someone else's words or ideas as your own, but also not giving credit where credit is due. As your instructor, I want to know YOUR thoughts, YOUR ideas, and what YOU have to say—and it doesn't have to be perfect the first time. If you are struggling with an assignment, please come talk to me, and I will help you in any way that I can. Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE OUTLINE / SCHEDULE

Specific details forthcoming

Week	Dates	Main Focus
1	1/12 + 1/14	Introduction to the course concepts
2	1/19 + 1/21	Introduction to Workplace Writing Genres, Emails 101
3	1/26 + 1/28	CVs, Resumes, and tailoring for applications
4	2/2 + 2/4	Personal Statements, Cover Letters, and tailoring
5	2/9+ 2/11	--Writing Workshops--
6	2/16 + 2/18	Mock Job Interview
7	2/23 + 2/25	Final Workplace Writing Portfolio Due

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8	3/2 + 3/4	Introduction to Genre & Translation Unit & Research Review
9	3/9 + 3/11	Rhetorical Analysis, IMRAD format, jargon
10	3/16 + 3/18	--Writing Workshops--
11	3/23 + 3/25	Translating for Public Audiences
12	3/30 + 4/1	TBD
13	4/6 + 4/8	TBD
14	4/13 + 4/15	TBD
15	4/20 + 4/22	Wrapping Up
16	4/29	Final Reflection Due

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