SOUTHERN
MAINE
COMMUNITY
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**South Portland, Maine 04106**

**Applied Technology Division**

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| Title: Technical Writing/Communication | Catalog Number: COMM 201 |
| Credit Hours: 3 | Total Contact Hours: 45 |
| Instructor: Peter K. Sampson | Contact Information: phone: 207-415-5365 |
| | e-mail: psampson@smccme.edu |

## Course Syllabus

### Course Description

This course presents a basic study of techniques used in technical fields to communicate in writing and through presentations. Study includes document purpose, situation analysis, style, format and production of reports, proposals, procedure sheets, technical descriptions, forms, letters, memos, and visual aids. Assignments will include reports, business letters, forms, memos, resumes, and proposals that require graphics and other supportive data. Prerequisite(s): ENGL-100 Corequisite(s): None

### Course Objectives

1. Learn the problem-solving approach to technical writing.
2. Write to express rather than to impress across all audience levels.
3. Use formatting appropriate to the writing purpose.
4. Work collaboratively in all phases of technical communication.
5. Gain technical knowledge associated with online collaboration.
6. Learn to gather, evaluate and document substantive research.
7. Apply organizational patterns to support a writing claim (thesis) logically.
8. Use design techniques to increase readability.
9. Communicate technical information in written documents and in oral presentations.
10. Follow legal and ethical guidelines for technical writing.
11. Complete short writing assignments as well as longer documents that require planning, research, analysis and organization

### After successfully completing the course, the student will be able to:

1. Apply basic technical writing and editing skills required for workplace applications, including electronic communication.
2. Show layout and design skills required for effective technical communication.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal and ethical responsibilities associated with technical writing.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how to communicate collaboratively and individually in the workplace.

**Topical Outline of Instruction**
1. Learn the problem-solving approach to technical writing.
2. Write to express rather than to impress across all audience levels.
3. Use formatting appropriate to the writing purpose.
4. Work collaboratively in all phases of technical communication.
5. Gain technical knowledge associated with online collaboration.
6. Learn to gather, evaluate and document substantive research.
7. Apply organizational patterns to support a writing claim (thesis) logically.
8. Use design techniques to increase readability.
9. Communicate technical information in written documents and in oral presentations.
10. Follow legal and ethical guidelines for technical writing.
11. Complete short writing assignments as well as longer documents that require planning, research, analysis and organization.

**Course Requirements**
1. Read assigned text.
2. Complete all assignments on time.
3. Attend classes.
4. Participate actively in classroom discussion.
5. Participate in group assignments, both in the classroom and out of class.
6. Complete quizzes with a passing grade.

**Student Evaluation and Grading**
Each major written assignment will earn a letter grade based on format, content and syntax. Lesser assignments will be acknowledged with a check mark and appropriate written comments. Grades are assigned as follows:

A = 94-100 Honor Level Work

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86 High Quality Work

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79 Requirements Met at Acceptable Level of Performance

C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D = 65-69 Requirements Met at Minimal Level

F = <65 Class Requirements Not Fulfilled at Acceptable Level

**Format**

To earn A+ (100%) of the formatting grade, students must follow the requirements for each assignment.

**Content**

Students must include all the necessary information to provide substance and credibility to their document.

**Syntax, Mechanics, Grammar and Spelling**

Instructor's comments regarding grammatical errors will be coded using Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* as a guide. For instance, if you find "S1" noted in the margin of your paper, the sentence lacks parallelism. You will find help for this particular problem in "Sentence Style 1" of the Hacker guide. Grammatical errors will reduce grades. All written assignments must be computer generated, following the guidelines presented in class.

**Course Grading**

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| Final written report | 25% |
| Collaborative oral presentation | 15% |
| Quizzes | 20% |
| Written assignments | 35% |
| Other* | 5% |

*Regular attendance will increase a final grade; habitual absenteeism will reduce a final grade.

**Required Textbooks**

- *Technical Communication, 11ᵗʰ ed.*, by Mike Markel, Bedford St. Martin's, with MLA update
- *A Writer's Reference, 7ᵗʰ ed.*, by Diana Hacker, Bedford St. Martin's

**Division Policies**

1. Late work will drop a letter grade per week late. Assignments turned in more than four (4) weeks late will receive a failing grade.

2. Any student who submits work done by someone else will, at the least, receive a failing grade for that assignment and must re-do the assignment. Should the instructor see fit, the student involved will be referred to the Dean of Students for a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, which may result in the student's receiving a failing grade for the class. *See* also the Plagiarism Statement below.

3. Any activity, conversation or behavior that is not considered appropriate for the classroom or professional environment will result in the request that the behavior cease. If it does not, the student(s) involved will be dismissed from class and referred to the Dean of Students. Referred students may not return to class until they have met with Dean of Students, Department Chair and instructor.

4. Use of cell phones and other electronic devices during class that is not for class purposes is prohibited. Cell phones do not need to be turned off, but they should be set to vibrate or silenced during class. Class time is for class activities only.

5. Personally owned computers are not required but are highly recommended. All students have access to free Autodesk software downloads available at http://students.autodesk.com. If you do not have access to your own computer to complete your work, the SMCC Student Computer Lab (located in the Ross Technology Center) is open Monday-Friday, 8:00am-9:30pm. At least 3-6 hours of homework time per week outside each 3 credit course is normal and to be expected.

6. Hours for faculty members are posted on the faculty member's door. You can make appointments with faculty via e-mail.

7. Only SMCC e-mail addresses will be used by faculty to communicate with students. E-mails between student and faculty must meet the following criteria: (a) must have a subject line which refers to the class code, and (b) must be signed with student's full name. *See* the full e-mail etiquette policy in R:\General\Department Policies.

8. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class. ***Please note that if students are late for a class, it is their responsibility to review their attendance and make sure they have been marked Tardy rather than Unexcused Absence.*** Excused absences may be granted through prior communication with the instructor. The decision to excuse an absence is made by the individual instructor. Students may withdraw from a class up to the twelfth (12th) week in the semester to avoid a failing grade. Make note of the class withdrawal deadline date and time in the Student Handbook and academic calendar on the portal. No more than three (3) classes may be missed in a row. If a student fails to attend two classes in a row he/she will receive a warning e-mail. If no correspondence has been made and the student fails to show up for the third class, the

student will receive an Administrative Failure (AF) for the class. Students who have missed a total of five (5) classes will receive an AF.

9. All students are expected to take notes and maintain them for reference purposes throughout the class and future classes. Students are also responsible for their own backup of course work. If work is lost, it is NOT SMCC's responsibility to find or replace it.

## End-of-Course Evaluation

Students complete evaluations for each course attended at SMCC. Evaluations are submitted online and can be accessed through the student portal. Students can access the course evaluations beginning one week before the end of classes. The deadline for submission of evaluations occurs Monday at 5 p.m. following the last day of the class. You will receive an e-mail to your student e-mail account when course evaluations are available.

## ADA Syllabus Statement

Southern Maine Community College is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and employer. For more information, please call (207) 741-5798. If you have a disabling condition and wish to request accommodations in order to have reasonable access to the programs and services offered by SMCC, you must register with the Disability Services Coordinator, Sandra Lynham, who can be reached at 741-5923. Further information about services for students with disabilities and the accommodation process is available upon request at this number. Course policies about online testing are modified to suit each individual's accommodations.

## SMCC Pay-for-Print Policy

Each semester students receive a $20 printing credit. The balance resets at the end of the semester and any remaining credits are removed. The College's pay-for-print system monitors printing on all printers (including those in general access labs, library printers, Tutoring Services, Campus Center Lounge and technology labs). Be sure to log OUT of the system when you've finished your printing, to prevent unauthorized access to your account. Students can check the number of pages they have printed by using the Printing Balance tool available on SMCC computers (located in the lower right corner of the screen, near the clock). Departments with work study students who need to print documents for the department should contact the Help Desk at 741-5696 to have a special account set up. To find ways to reduce your printing charges, please go to the IT Help tab on My SMCC. If you have questions about the pay-for-printing policy or your printing charges, please contact the Help Desk at 741-5696 or send an e-mail to helpdesk@smccme.edu.

## Refunds

Print jobs are eligible for a refund in the event of mechanical or electronic error on the part of the printer, print server, or software used to submit the job. Jobs are not eligible for a refund in cases where the job was not set up correctly, was submitted multiple times, or the student is not satisfied with the result. To request a refund, please bring the offending print to the IT Department in the basement of the Ross Technology Center. Refunds will be granted in the form of a credit to the student's account.

## Add-Drop Policy

Students who drop a course during the one-week "add/drop" period in the fall and spring semesters and the first three days of summer sessions receive a 100% refund of the tuition and associated fees for that

course. Please note any course that meets for less than the traditional semester length, i.e., 15 weeks, has a pro-rated add/drop period. There is no refund for non-attendance.

**Withdrawal Policy**
A student may withdraw from a course only during the semester in which s/he is registered for that course. The withdrawal period is the second through twelfth week of the Fall and Spring semesters and the second through ninth week of twelve-week Summer courses. This period is pro-rated for shorter-length courses, usually 75 percent of course meeting times; please check with the Registration Office. To withdraw from a course, a student must complete and submit the appropriate course withdrawal form, available at the Registration Office. This process must be completed either in person or by using SMCC e-mail accounts.

**Plagiarism Statement**
If an instructor suspects that a student has knowingly committed a violation defined in the Maine Community College System Policy on Student Grade Appeals and Academic Misconduct, the instructor has the authority to review the alleged misconduct and determine the grade that the student should receive for the assignment and the course. The instructor may assign a failing grade for the assignment or course and may require the student to complete additional work for the course. The instructor may consult with the department chair and/or the College's chief academic officer prior to making such decisions. If a student seeks to challenge an instructor's determination, the student should submit a grade appeal. Grade appeal forms are available in the Advising Office on the South Portland Campus or in the administrative offices in the Learning Commons on the Midcoast Campus. An instructor may also refer the matter to the College's disciplinary officer for review under the procedures of the MCCS Student Code of Conduct.

**Projected Reading Assignments and Class Schedule**
**NOTE:** Reading assignments are found in *Technical Communications, 11 ed*., by Mike Markel, and are to prepare for discussion in the following week's class. Please check e-mail on a regular basis to confirm assignments.

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| August 30 | **Course Introduction** |
|  | Reading Assignment for 9/6: Chapters 1 and 2 |
| September 6 | **Intro to Technical Communication; Ethical and Legal Considerations** |
|  | Reading Assignment for 9/13: Chapters 3 and 4 |
| September 13 | **Writing Technical Documents; Collaboration** |
|  | Reading Assignment for 9/20: Chapters 5 and 6 |
| September 20 | **Audience and Purpose; Researching Your Subject** |
|  | Reading Assignment for 9/27: Chapter 7 |

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| September 27 | **Organizing Information** |
| | Reading Assignment for 10/4: Chapters 8 and 9 |
| October 4 | **Communicating Persuasively; Emphasizing Important Information** |
| | Reading Assignment for 10/11: Chapter 10 |
| October 11 | **Writing Grammatically Correct Sentences** |
| | Reading Assignment for 10/18: Chapter 11 |
| October 18 | **Designing Print and Online Documents** |
| | Reading Assignment for 10/25: Chapter 12 |
| October 25 | **Creating Graphics** |
| | Reading Assignment for 11/1: Chapters 13 and 14 |
| November 1 | **Document Review; Correspondence and Memos** |
| | Reading Assignment for 11/8: Chapter 15 |
| November 8 | **Job-Application Materials** |
| | Reading Assignment for 11/15: Chapters 16 and 17 |
| November 15 | **Writing Proposals and Directives – Collaborative Memo Due** |
| | Reading Assignment for 11/22: Chapter 18 |
| November 22 | **Writing Recommendation Reports** |
| | Reading Assignment for 11/29: Chapters 19 and 20 |
| November 29 | **Writing Lab Reports, Definitions, Descriptions and Instructions** |
| | Reading Assignment for 12/6: Chapter 21 |
| December 6 | **Oral Presentations** |
| December 13 | **Oral Presentations continued - FINAL REPORT DUE** |