Description:

This course examines the theories and ideas that inform and validate the practices of academics and professionals working in the broad field of professional communication. Professional communication has emerged as an umbrella term to cover what we know of as “business” communication and “technical” communication. While maintaining a neat and clean binary between the two is difficult if not impossible, part of this course will include the exploration of their similarities and differences and how those qualities are reflected in our own ENGL 304 Business and Professional Writing and ENGL 305 Technical Writing.

Course topics will include:

- An introduction to rhetorical theory for professional communication
- Critical approaches to technology
- Visual rhetoric and document design
- An introduction to many of the current debates from the field such as how to integrate complex subjects like ethics and law into the classroom

This course also serves as a credentialing mechanism for graduate students who wish to teach ENGL 304 and ENGL 305 by providing the necessary pedagogical training in and scholarly context for professional communication. Teaching these courses is a great way to expand your CV and your future professional or academic opportunities.

Readings & Texts:

Johndan Johnson-Eilola & Stuart A. Selber Central Works in Technical Communication

Tim Peeples, Professional Writing and Rhetoric: Readings from the Field

Throughout the semester we’ll be referring to the below two textbooks for our foray into 304 and 305. I did not order them through the bookstore because they are expensive. Please use Amazon or another used book vendor to acquire an older or used edition (preferably only 1 edition back).

ISBN: 1413002838


Additional Reading Materials - eJournals found at: http://www.libraries.wvu.edu

Journal of Business and Technical Communication
Technical Communication Quarterly
IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication
Business Communication Quarterly

Requirements:

304 & 305 Assignments (written and in class presentations) (15%)
Students will be completing a variety of assignments in conjunction with the 304 and 305 curriculum including presentations on WVU majors enrolling in 304 and 305, IP cases, codes of ethics and conduct, and web site design.

Prospectus & Annotated Bibliography (10%)
Students are to prepare a short, 1 page proposal for their seminar papers. In addition, this assignment requires 8 to 10 articles or sources with annotated entries. While it is not a requirement, sources will ideally serve as avenues into researching the final paper. Electronic as well as paper copies are required. Electronic versions will be posted on the 605 course web site.

Article Presentation (10%)
Research an article from one of the current on-line or print journals focusing on technical/professional communications. The purpose of the presentation will be to introduce the class to the journal and of course, expand on the article. Using this article in your annotated bibliography is acceptable.

Research Paper (40%)
A research paper on a topic approved by the instructor is due at the end of the semester. Students are encouraged to make use of the annotated bibliography to begin outlining research interests. Electronic as well as paper copies are required.

Conference Presentation (10%)
Student research papers will be reduced to conference length presentations of approximately 15 - 18 minutes in length. Students will be presenting to each other and providing constructive criticism for their colleagues.

Web Portfolio (15%)
Students will learn the skills necessary to design and build a web site in support of their work in 605 and their teaching.

Additional Requirements
Students are required to attend at least two 304/305 classes throughout the semester. Prior notification to your visit would be appreciated by the instructors.
Course Schedule (subject to change):

[1] Aug. 21  Introduction to the course and its objectives  
- Introductions  
- ENGL 304 & ENGL 305 syllabi  
- Introducing the first 304 assignment  
- Introduction to short assignment on 304 & 305 majors

- **Due:** Short presentations on 304 & 305 majors  
  - (PWR) Intro & Foss, Foss, & Trapp. “Perspectives on the Study of Rhetoric.”  
  - (Central Works) Miller, C. “A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing.”  
  - (304 syllabus) Employment Documents

[3] Sept. 4  Historical Foundations for PWE  
- (Central Works) Connors, R. “The Rise of Technical Writing Instruction in America.”  
- (304 syllabus) Project Topic Forms

[4] Sept. 11  Frameworks, Anxieties, & PWE  
- (304 syllabus) Project Topic Forms (copies of proposed student projects)  
- (305 syllabus) Extended Definition

[5] Sept. 18  Authorship, Invention, & Science  
- **Due:** Article Presentations (1st group)  
  - (PWR) Slack, J., Miller, D. & Doak, J. “The Technical Communicator as Author: Meaning, Power, Authority.”  
  - (course website) Gross, Alan. Excerpt from *Starring the Text: The Place of Rhetoric in Science Studies*  
  - (304 syllabus) Reimbursement Memo
- **Due:** Article Presentations (2nd group)
- (Central Works) Sullivan, D. “Political-Ethical Implications of Defining Technical Communication as a Practice.”
- (course website) Gurak, L. “Ethics and Technical Communication in a Digital Age.”
- (305 syllabus) Mechanical Process

- **Due:** Article Presentations (3rd group)
- (Central Works) Ornatowski, C. “Between Efficiency and Politics: Rhetoric and Ethics in Technical Writing.”
- (course website) Davis, Michael. “Codes of Ethics and the Challenger.”
- (PWR) Porter, J. “Framing Postmodern Commitment and Solidarity.”
- (304 syllabus) Corporate Ethics & Conduct Policies
- (305 syllabus) Codes of Ethics

- **Due:** Ethics/Code of Conduct Assignment Design
- (course website/lessig.org) Lessig, Lawrence. Intro & chs. 1 & 2 from *Free Culture: The Nature and Future of Creativity.*
- (304 syllabus) Current IP Issues
- (305 syllabus) IP Cases


- **Due:** IP Case Presentations
- (PWR) Johnson, R. “When All Else Fails, Use the Instructions: Local Knowledge, Negotiation, and the Construction of User-Centered Computer Documentation.”
- (304 syllabus) Storyboarding and Paper Prototyping

- **Due:** Prospectus w/ Annotated Bibliography (email/print)
- (Central Works) Bernhardt, S. “The Shape of Text to Come: The Texture of Print on Screens.”
- (course website) Tidwell, Jennifer. Excerpts from *Designing Interfaces.*
- (305 syllabus) Scientific or Technical Controversy
[12] Nov. 6  PWE Research Methods  
- (Central Works) Charney, D. “Empiricism is Not a Four-Letter Word.”  
- (304 syllabus) Progress Reports

[13] Nov. 13  Workplace Studies  
- (Central Works) Selzer, J. “The Composing Process of an Engineer”  
- (Central Works) Winsor, D. “Engineering Writing/Writing Engineering  
- (PWR) Anson, C. & Forsberg, L. “Moving Beyond the Academic Community: Transitional Stages in Professional Writing.”  
- (305 syllabus) Abstracts  
- (304 syllabus) Abstracts/Executive Summary

[14] Nov. 20  Writing Processes  
- (PWR) Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Paré. “Virtual Realities: Transitions from University to Workplace Writing.”  
- (304 syllabus) Final Presentation Guidelines  
- (305 syllabus) Portfolio Preparation

[15] Nov. 27  BREAK

[16] Dec. 4  Due: Conference Presentations

Dec. 9  Due: Final Research Papers & Web Portfolio