Tom Keating  
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office hours by appointment

Textbook  

Other resources:


--website at www.english.wadsworth.com/burnett6e

Especially helpful for non-native speakers of English:  
Intercultural Communication Center http://www.cmu.edu/icc/. The ICC offers tutoring, writing assistance, and other help with English.

*Technical Writing and Professional Communication* (mentioned above). Along with several other books in the MSE library, this book has information for non-native speakers.

Objectives  
1. You are a better and more confident communicator at the end of the course than you were at the beginning.
2. You realize that technical communication takes place in a context, that writers and speakers must make choices that fit each communication situation.
3. You recognize the importance of analysis, planning, testing, and revision in the writing process.
4. You can effectively critique your own and others’ writing and presentations.
5. You will recognize the ethical and professional responsibilities of technical communicators.
6. You will know these additional seven skills:
   - To plan, write, and revise documents that achieve their purpose and meet the needs of your readers
   - To write clear, concise prose that is easy for readers to understand
   - To produce documents and other forms of communication that conform to standard conventions for format and correctness
   - To participate effectively in a collaborative writing situation
   - To give oral presentations that are interesting and clear
   - To use visual aids effectively in oral presentations and documents
   - To provide helpful feedback to your peers on their writing and presentations.
How the course works

I teach the course as a seminar. Class sessions are a mix of lectures, discussions, revision exercises and “workshop” activities. With your help, I will tie some seminar work to writing and speaking you must do for other classes.

To keep the seminar flexible, I have not written a semester syllabus. Rather, I will post assignments on Blackboard as we go along – no later than the Friday before they are due.

Class participation is essential. Your responses and inputs from your careers may have profound impacts on others, so please be willing to share them with class members.

Be prepared to discuss all assigned readings during class.

Grading

Grading is pass-fail. Attendance is mandatory. It is also a significant part of your grade. Missing more than one class will seriously jeopardize your chances of passing.

Grades are a representation of an assignment’s worth rather than an evaluation of your preparation or your personal value as a person. Please keep that distinction in mind.

All of these count toward your grade:
- Attendance and Participation
- Homeworks (readings, written assignments, and presentation self-critiques)
- Class work (participation, presentations, writing, exercises, quizzes and presentation critiques)

You will be graded as follows:
- 1 pt. Attendance
- 1-2 pts. Weekly Homework
- 1 pt. Quizzes (about Reading Assignments or Previous Class’ content)
- 1-2 pts. In-class exercises

To pass, you must average at least 80% for all your work.

Handing in homework

All homework submissions must conform to submission guidelines and be on time in order to have a chance to earn full credit. Late submissions will receive a 20% reduction for each day it is late, starting with 12:01 p.m. on Tuesdays.

Guidelines

You must submit an electronic copy of each assignment with the Assignment Submission Template as a cover sheet (available on Blackboard under “Assignments”).

- Send assignments as PDFs to Blackboard before noon on Tuesdays.
- Have access to a copy of your submitted assignment to use during class.
- Contact me before class if you will miss a class. Be professional—communicate with me.

Doing an assignment over

I reserve the option to offer a student the opportunity to “do over” an assignment, with an agreed-upon deadline. The grade on the “do over” will be averaged with the original grade.