Objectives

1. You are a more confident communicator at the end of the course than you were at the beginning.
2. You recognize the importance of situational analysis, planning, and revision.
3. You improve your ability to
   - Write documents that are clear and concise, that achieve your goals and meet the needs of your readers, and that conform to conventions for format and correctness
   - Give oral presentations that are interesting and clear, and that achieve your goals and those of your reader
   - Collaborate with a team to produce high-quality presentations, documents, and other work products
   - Apply the principles of effective communication to improve your own writing and presentations and to give helpful feedback to your peers

Textbook


Recommended resources


*Technical Writing Style*, Dan Jones. On reserve at the SEI library.


Especially helpful for non-native speakers of English:


*Technical Writing and Professional Communication* (mentioned above) has information for non-native speakers. Also look at other books, available in the MSE library.

*Bugs in Writing: A Guide to Debugging Your Prose*, Lyn Dupré. (listed above) Past international students have found this book helpful.

Web sites. There are many websites on aspects of English that non-native speakers usually need help with. Here are three good sites to look at:

*Paradigm Online Writing Assistant* (especially see the 6 problem areas) [http://www.powa.org/](http://www.powa.org/)

Purdue University’s *English as a Second Language Resources, Handouts and Exercises* [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/index.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/index.html)

*Guide to Grammar and Writing* [http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar)
How the course works
Class sessions are a mix of mini-lectures, discussions, and “workshop” activities. With your input, I will adjust the class to meet your needs. Thus, I keep the seminar flexible. Specific assignments will be on Blackboard at least two or three weeks before they are due.

At least one time during the spring, an expert in software engineering will join us. This expert will discuss this or her views, and each time one team will present an overview of their studio project. The remainder of the time will be devoted to informal discussion. After the visit, you will reflect on the guest’s visit in writing.

Occasionally, I’ll ask you to write or speak during class with little advance warning, giving you experience in performing under pressure. I might give some short quizzes to encourage you to read the homework.

Grading
Grading is pass-fail.
All of these count toward your grade:
- homework
- class participation
- class work (presentations, writing, quizzes)
- major paper(s)

You will be graded as follows:
- \( √+ \) (3 points) exceptionally high quality
- \( √ \) (2 points) expected quality
- \( √- \) (1 point) unacceptable quality

To pass, you must average at least a \( √ \) (2 points) for all your work, including class participation.

Ground rules
Handing in homework
- Bring a printed copy to hand in during class. This is the copy I will grade.
- I’d appreciate an electronic version. I prefer to get it in email to lpq@cert.org but you may also use the digital dropbox. Name your file this way: last name-description. [pesante-graphs.docx]
- If you must miss a class, contact Linda (in advance if possible) and arrange to submit your homework. Absentees cannot make up in-class activities or get credit for class participation.

Your grade will drop one level if your homework is late and one level if there are careless errors (see below).

Proofreading
You need to get into the habit of proofreading carefully so that your documents make a good impression on readers. If I find a typo, missing word, or other indication that you didn’t spell check and proofread, I will lower your grade regardless of the quality of the content.

Re-doing an assignment
I reserve the option to offer you a chance to re-do an assignment, with an agreed-upon deadline. The grade on the second version of the assignment will replace the original grade. If the “re-do” is late, the original grade will stand.

See the course Blackboard site for course information, homework assignments, and announcements.