**ENG 331 (ONLINE): Communication for Engineering and Technology  
or, How to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse and Other Disasters**

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Office Location: Rick’s Annex

Office Hours: Available by email until 9:00pm, or by appointment.

**Course Description**

This course is designed for engineers and students in related technical fields. The point of this class is to expand, explore, and improve on technical communication skills, both written and oral. You will consider how to write and speak for various professional audiences; how to adapt your communication organization and style to your audience’s needs; and enrich your written communication with oral reports and visual aids. This course aims to accomplish these goals while also providing a creatively challenging atmosphere where popular culture and technical communication mix together to form an atmosphere that will be fun and informative.

**A Note On Zombies**

Our class mission is to write scientific and technical documents that will prepare us to survive a zombie apocalypse. Projects and assignments will draw on students’ various academic backgrounds to ensure society’s survival. During such a disaster, we will:

* **Consider technical communication as a response to specific rhetorical contexts:**-How do we plan for a biochemical infection versus an alien invasion?  
  -How do we communication in times of crisis versus times of stability?
* **Interrogate rhetorical systems of power that affect our ability to respond:**-How do we address accessibility to technology, which intersects with histories of tribal land policies, national literacy campaigns and more?  
  -What sign systems are most effect to a mixed audience, one that includes traditionally marginalized groups.
* **Address multiple ethnical concerns:**-Who are we responsible to in a disaster response?  
  -How do we conduct cost analyses when lives are at stake?
* **Work together to rebuild society through specific documented courses of action:**  
  -What does our writing and communication *actually do* in the world?  
  -What kind of a future will our technical documents build?

**Required Course Materials**

**There is only one book that you are required to purchase for this class. It is *The Zombie Survival Guide* by Max Brooks. It will cost around $12.99 on Amazon, and can be read through Kindle on your iPad, phone, laptop, and desktop. The rest of the material, I will upload to Moodle.**

We will be using two books for this class:

-*The Zombie Survival Guide: Complete Protection from the Living Dead* (Max Brooks, 2003)  
-[Amazon Link](https://www.amazon.com/Zombie-Survival-Guide-Complete-Protection-ebook/dp/B000FBJAOG/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=the+zombie+survival+guide&qid=1557521261&s=gateway&sr=8-1)

-*Technical Communication in the Twenty-First* Century (Dobrin, Keller, and Weisser, 2009)

**Learning Objectives**

Each course in the writing and speaking category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. communicate effectively in specific writing or speaking situations, which may include various academic, professional, or civic situations.

2. understand and respond appropriately to the critical elements that shape communication situations, such as audience, purpose, and genre.

3. critique their own writing or speaking and provide effective and useful feedback to enable other students to improve their writing or speaking activities.

4. demonstrate critical evaluative thinking skills in locating, analyzing, synthesizing, and using information in writing or speaking activities.

The following are the ten learning outcomes for English 331 as described by the Professional Writing Committee and the English Department:

1. Students will become familiar with the purposes, audiences, and conventions of written communication in the contexts they expect to work in after graduation: industrial, governmental, and applied research environments.

2. Students will be able to recognize and construct effective arguments for a variety of audiences and to adapt these to the formats and conventions of professional documents and genres.

3. Students will be able to apply principles of document design and incorporate visual elements in order to meet the needs of different professional audiences.

4. Students will be able to construct presentations appropriate for professional audiences and to apply the principles of effective oral communication.

5. Students will be able to communicate effectively using electronic media appropriate to their professional fields and learn the relationships between written communication and oral and visual supplements.

6. Students will be able to participate effectively in the writing process by planning, drafting, revising, and critiquing professional documents.

7. Students will be able to collaborate effectively in teams to create, review, and revise documents.

8. Students will be able to analyze and justify the persuasive strategies and professional conventions they use in their own writing.

9. Students will be able to describe ethical implications of communication situations in professional contexts.

10. Students will be able to locate, analyze, and use information appropriate for selected professional documents and communication tasks, as well as practice precision, clarity, and appropriateness of verbal expression for different readers.

**Assignments and Grading**

All assignments listed below have a corresponding assignment sheet that can be found on the week that the assignment is due. Each assignment sheet will expound on what my expectations for the assignment are, and how contract grading will function for that assignment. If you have questions regarding the assignment, please refer to the assignment sheet first, and then email me with questions/comments/concerns that are not included there. Your misunderstandings regarding expectations of assignments on assignment sheets are MY RESPONSIBILITY and I need to know about them as quickly as I can so that I can rectify the situation.

**Fact Sheet and Infographic** **10% of final grade**

This assignment challenges students to create a one-page fact sheet and infographic to inform survivors of the zombie apocalypse. In addition to the fact sheet and infographic, students will be required to write a one-page memo explaining their rhetorical choices.

**Professional Portfolio** **10% of final grade**

Students will be expected to write a cover letter and create a resume appropriate for a job with the Undead Response Unit. Job descriptions will be listed on the associated portfolio assignment sheet.

**Bad News, Everyone!** **15% of final grade**

Students will be expected to communicate a particularly disastrous event to an audience appropriate to the incident. Students will also recommend a course of action that the audience should consider in dealing with the catastrophe. Students will also be expected to write a one-page memo explaining their rhetorical choices.

**Group Survival Manual** **25% of final grade**

Students will be put in groups and expected to construct and user-test a survival manual for the zombie apocalypse. In addition to the survival manual, each individual student will be expected to write a two-page report explaining the rhetorical choices you, personally, took towards this work, and how you see your team’s rhetorical choices impacting the project overall.

**Formal Proposal 15% of final grade**

Students will be expected to identify a zombie-related disaster from popular media (comics, videogames, movies, books, etc.) and create a proposal for How The Situation \*Should\* Have Been Handled.

**Disaster Archive 25% of final grade**

This assignment will be in-lieu of a final exam. Students will be expected to develop a cohesive archive of case studies related to disaster-response. This assignment will pivot from focusing on zombie-related apocalypse scenarios into focusing on how technical communication has impacted real-world disaster responses.

**How I Grade**

I grade this class via contract grading. This means that you choose your grade according to the level of effort you want to put into an assignment. No surprises.

For each assignment, you will be given a list of requirements that you must meet in order to receive a certain grade. If you do particularly well in the letter category you choose, I’ll add a plus (+) to your grade. If you don’t do as well, then I’ll add a minus (-) to your grade. I define “doing well” as turning in assignments that are error-free, organized, and well written. I define “not as well” as turning in assignments with multiple written errors, formatting errors, or evidence of minimal effort. I choose to use contract grading because it communicates clear expectations for each assignment.

**Grade Scale**

The following scale will be used to issue grades at the end of the semester: A+ = 100-97, A = 96-93, A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60; F = 59-below.

**Late Work**

Due to the fast nature of summer semester, I, unfortunately, cannot accept late work without documentation that something serious happened that did not allow you to complete work. Summer semesters are 5 weeks long, and we’re doing an insane amount of reading, writing, drafting, and learning, and it is very easy to get behind if you do not stay on top of work. If you are struggling, EMAIL ME IMMEDIATETLY and we will attempt to work out a solution.

**Weekly Schedule**

***Technical Communication in the Twenty-First = TC2***

***The Zombie Survival Guide: Complete Protection from the Living Dead = ZSG***

***White Space is Not Your Enemy = WSNYE***

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| **Date** | **Topics** | **Assignments Due** |
| **Section 1** | Audience Analysis, Professional Writing, and **Fact Sheet Infographic**  **Read:**  **TC2** 2-21, 22-43, 200-269, 270-305  **ZSG** 1-27 **WSNYE** 2-8, 22-32, 34-44 | **Fact Sheet Infographic due: September 6 by 11:59 pm** |
| **Section 2** | Job Ads, Resumes, and **Professional Portfolio**  **Read:**  **TC2** 332-365, 396-439  **UW Writing Center Link** (link on Moodle)  **Cornel Optimal Resume Center** (link on Moodle) | **Professional Portfolio due: September 27 by 11:59 pm** |
| **Section 3** | How 2 Email, Group Working, **Group Survival Manual & Bad News, Everyone!**  **Read:**  **TC2** 524-557, 558-589  **ZSG** 28-123 | **Bad News, Everyone! due:**  **October 11 by 11:59 pm**  **Group Survival Manual due: October 18 by 11:59 pm** |
| **Section 4** | How 2 Proposal, **Formal Proposals**  **Read:**  **TC2** 590-635,TC2 658-699  **ZSG** 124-181  **Pfugfelder --** Reddit’s “Explain Like I’m Five”: Technical Descriptions in the Wild File (article on Moodle) | **Formal Proposal due:**  **November 8 by 11:59 pm** |
| **Section 5** | **Disaster Archive**  **Read:**  **Sauer --** The dynamics of disaster: A three‐dimensional view of documentation in a tightly regulated industry File  (article on moodle) **Williams, McDonald and Brainard –** How to Write a Case Study for Public Affairs  **Herreid** – Exercise in Style: Is There a Best Way to Write a Case Study? |  |
| **Final Exam** **Period** | **Disaster Archive** and Wrap Up | **Disaster Archive Due:**  **December 10 by 11:59 pm** |

**Course Policies**

***Attendance Policy***

Class participation and attendance are essential to the learning process. Attendance for this class is mandatory. Investment in this class is expected. In order to do well in this course, you must show up to class with your reading and assignments completed and ready to fully engage with the material and your peers. By joining this class, you are making an **ethical commitment** to participate in a semester-long learning community that will help each of us learn and grow.

Excused absences will not negatively impact your participation grade while unexcused absences may. **You will only be able to make up a missed assignment at the discretion of the instructor.**

If a situation emerges that might impact your attendance please contact me ASAP to discuss possible solutions. For information regarding NCSU’s attendance policy, go to:

<http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-3>

Per University regulations, excused absences must fall into one of two categories: sanctioned anticipated situations and documented emergency situations. Anticipated situations (e.g., participation in official University functions, court attendance, religious observances, or military duty) **must be submitted in writing at the beginning of the semester or one week prior to the anticipated absence.** Emergency absences (e.g., student illness, injury or death of immediate family member) **must be documented by the Student Organization Resource Center 515-3323 within one week following the emergency**. Make-up work will be allowed for excused absences only.

***Incompletes***

A grade of "Incomplete" is reserved for exceptional situations where students are prevented from finishing course work on time. The University policy in regard to incomplete grades may be viewed at the [Academic Affairs website](http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/grades_undergrad/REG02.50.3.php).

All grades of incomplete will be left to the discretion of the instructor in regard to the student's needs and performance. If you experience a problem during the semester that may require an incomplete grade please see the instructor as soon as possible.

***Academic Integrity***

The Departments of English and Communication are committed to upholding the University's honor code. To read the University policy on academic integrity please see the [Code of Student Conduct](http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php)

The University and the Depts. of English and Communication assume all students are familiar with these standards and procedures. If you have any questions about academic dishonor or doubts about what constitutes a violation please see your instructor.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

* Using papers or speeches from another class.
* Using another student's paper or speech from any class.
* Copying a speech or a paper from the Internet.
* The egregious lack of citing sources or documenting research.

*If you're not clear on what is or is not plagiarism, ASK. The BEST case scenario if caught is a zero on that assignment, and ignorance of what does or does not count is not an excuse. That being said, I'm a strong supporter of*[*Fair Use*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_Use)*doctrine. Just attribute what you use--and, again, ASK if there's any doubt.*

***Disabilities***

Your instructor will do their best to accommodate any reasonable request from students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations offered by the University and the department, students must register with [Disability Services for Students](http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/) at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653.

While your instructor will help, it is the student's responsibility to tell/notify instructors of any problems. Please make instructors aware of known problems as early as possible for the most efficient and adequate help. If you encounter problems during the class let your instructor know as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to help you get the most out of the class.

***Equity Policy***

All persons regardless of age, race, religion, gender, physical disability or sexual orientation shall have equal opportunity without harassment in the Communication Department courses and program. Any harassment should be reported immediately to the classroom instructor.

***Trans Inclusive Syllabi Act***

In an effort to affirm and respect the identities of transgender students in the classroom and beyond, please contact me if you wish to be referred to using a name and/or pronouns other than what is listed in the student directory. I will adhere to your pronouns and chosen name. Any intentional or repeated misgendering/dead-naming/misuse of pronouns should be reported immediately to the classroom instructor.