Text: Markel, Technical Communication (8th ed)

Catalog Description: A composition course which introduces the writing and research skills needed in business and technology fields. Emphasis is placed on technical organizational patterns, readability of texts, research methods, and proper documentation. Prerequisite: ENGL 110 (C or better).

Course Purpose and Goals:

English 125 explores the kinds of thinking and writing one must use in business and technical fields. We will consider analysis in its descriptive and evaluative forms and exercise this kind of thinking as we write memos, proposals, and reports. We will also explore the rhetorical questions surrounding the piece of writing: Who will read this? How will it affect them? What do I want them to think/feel/do?

You will learn to use headings, bullets, and other formatting devices to improve the readability of your work. You will learn to present visual material (pictures, tables, charts, graphs, and diagrams) correctly. You will develop your skills as a researcher, in the library, on the internet, in your major department, and in the community.

Remember that, for most people, writing only BEGINS when they put words to paper. While the memos and critiques may seem short and simple to prepare, they will require clarity, conciseness, and attention to presentation and rhetorical effect. You should expect to do plenty of REwriting this semester; we will use peer groups and a series of drafts to help you learn the formatting techniques and polish your work.

Course Policies and Grades:

1. Since English 125 is a discussion/workshop course, you should plan to attend regularly. Your classmates and writing group will need your ideas, suggestions, and thoughtful responses; you will benefit from their comments, as well. If you get sick and miss several classes, be sure to arrange with me a way to "make up" for your absences in a responsible and timely manner.

2. Please type or word-process your work. Late papers, tests and quizzes will be accepted for full credit only if you make prior arrangements in writing, and then only at my discretion. Exceptions to this policy may be made, again, at my discretion. If you are ill or an emergency arises, be sure to keep me informed—do not vanish and then expect credit for missed work! If the instructor does not have an email from you prior to your absence, you cannot make up missed work.

3. SAVE ALL YOUR WORK for this course--notes, drafts, other students' responses, returned assignments...when you revise on the computer, make a paper copy of each revision session! This is your "proof of authorship," should it ever be required. It is also your protection if a computer virus (or whatever) kills your program.

4. This class will meet during the scheduled final exam period, Wednesday May 7, 2008 10:00a.m. Check the time, and plan your plane tickets, etc., accordingly.

5. Plagiarized material will be dealt with according to the policies in the Student Handbook. Be sure to cite (APA format) any sources you use in preparing materials for class.

6. If you have a disability that may make it difficult for you to successfully complete this class, please be sure to talk with me the first day of class so we can make accommodations. Disabilities must be documented in the Student services office.
Learning Activities--Abilities/Portfolio Project:

This course meets the Communication Ability, Writing Skill, at level 2. The student should be able to:

- Process information to produce writing that clearly and accurately summarizes and/or reports.
- Write well-developed, focused essays.
- Search for information and insert research appropriately.

The formal report provides the best evidence for completion of this ability, and may be used as the “abilities project” for this class.

GRADES will be determined using the following percentages:

- Memos/Web page demonstrating writing strategies (4)—20% (60 pts)
- Reading Quizzes and Midterm Exam--20% (60 pts)
- Group Projects (2)—20% (Brochure, Informal report) (60 pts; 30 pts each)
- Literature Review-10% (30 pts)
- Formal Report—15% (45 pts)
- Participation (in class activities)—10% (30 pts)
- final exam--5% (15 pts)

General Course Plan and writing assignments:

| Week 1-2 | Introduction to Technical Writing  
| Chapter 1 | Introductions; create Newsletter  
| Read Chapter 1 and memo format  
| Memo on technical document and qualities of technical writing  
| Sunflower Example |
| Week 3 | Group Project: Create a Brochure  
| Chapters 5, and 13 | Brochure (presenting information): Audience analysis and document design  
| Read ch. 5 and 13 |
| Weeks 4-8 | Writing Strategies; Designing Web Pages  
| Chapters 9-11, 14, 15, 20, and 21 | Object description  
| Writing instructions/Process description  
| Extended Definition--Web page format (presenting information--an online brochure)  
| Using a chart or graph; rules for inserting figures (ch 9)  
| Week 9-10 | Group Work: Informal (Short) Report  
| Chapters 18 | Informal report--based on experimental data (interpreting) |
| Weeks 11-15 | Formal Report  
| Chapters 19, 12, and Appendix A | Literature Review (research activities) --APA Style  
| Formal, researched report (synthesizing and interpreting your research) |
| Week 17 | Final Exam: Chapter 22 | Final Exam--Powerpoint presentation of your formal report. May 7, 2008 10:00a.m. |