

**Middlesex Community College**

**Fall 2013**

**ENG 202 Section 30**

**CRN 3641**

3 credits/3 lecture hours

Class Day & Time: Online

Classroom: Online

Professor: John F. Ward

Email: [JWard@mxcc.edu](mailto:JWard@mxcc.edu)

Office Hours: By arrangement

(In person or via email or Skype, according to mutual schedule)

Skype: johnfward103

**Required Text, Resources**

- Pfeiffer, William Sanborn. *Technical Communication: A Practical Approach*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2013.  
A copy of this text is on reserve at the Jean Burr Smith Library in Chapman Hall on the main campus, and at the Meriden Center. You may use it for up to 2 hours in either place. It is available for purchase (new or used), for rent, and as an electronic book.
- *Reliable* access to computer, Internet, email
- *Reliable* access to Blackboard, MyCommnet

**Please read this syllabus carefully. It is involved in your first assignment.**

**Section I – Narrative, Policies**

**Communication**

Since we do not have in-class meetings, email and Blackboard announcements are the ways we will stay in touch. You need to be sure you are in regular touch with the email address that Blackboard uses – the address *the college assigned you* when you registered – so I can contact you when I need to. You also need to be sure to sign in on a regular basis, to check for announcements. The bottom line: It is *your responsibility* to stay in touch. “I didn’t see the announcement” will never be an excuse. Neither will “I couldn’t check my email because [insert reason here].” When you need to contact me, *please use the email address at the top of this syllabus* – not the internal Blackboard messaging function. (We will be using that function for the Collaborative Projects.) When you contact me by email, I will receive the email right away and will be able to reply promptly.

**Overview**

This will be a *fast-moving course*, especially in the beginning, requiring you to read and study one or two chapters each week and to juggle two assignments at the same time – a weekly “solo” assignments and the collaborative projects that will stretch over the two-week periods of many modules. The six collaborative projects will require you to interact online with your classmates – three times working in pairs, three times working in small groups. In these collaborative ventures, you must take initiative, organize your resources,

and accomplish the stated goals – just as you would in a real-world professional technical writing environment. Finally, near the end of the course, we will shift our attention to a project in which you will research and profile a major company, producing 15 or more pages of narrative and data describing what the company does and how it fits into its industry or community. (Specific guidelines and requirements for this project are available throughout the term under the “**Company profile**” section of Blackboard.) You must manage all three of these components to do well, so time and resource management will figure prominently into your success.

## **Planning**

*Two notes of caution:*

**First**, do not leave the first phases of your Company Profile (the final project in this class) to the last minute. The assignment is already available for you to review. There will be plenty of time in which to research and produce the profile, but it will help tremendously if you can spend some time throughout the term thinking about what company you might want to profile and preparing your research strategy, so you are ready to get right to work when that phase of the class begins.

**Second**, do not leave the collaborative projects to the last minute. You have two full weeks to do each of them. Late or sloppy, last-minute assignments will be penalized.

## **Tech Support, Tutorials**

For all technical help and tutorials concerning MyCommNet and Blackboard, visit the Distance Learning web page at <http://mxcc.edu/distance>

This page has the phone number and hours for the Student Support Center and for the Distance Learning department. You may call the Student Support Center or Distance Learning for help. The Student Support Center has extended hours.

On the Distance Learning web page, there are links to Blackboard tutorials, Blackboard FAQs, Online Orientations, Campus Orientations, downtime, download center, etc.

Meanwhile, on every Blackboard site, there are two links: “Getting Started” and “MxCC Help.” In these two links, the help contact information and tutorials are included. If you are unable to resolve issues, you may contact me, but I have far less experience with these matters than the people mentioned above.

## **Blackboard Downtime**

The “Blackboard Maintenance Window” is **every Sunday from 6 to 10 a.m.** That means that Blackboard **may be down at any time** during those hours, or in extreme cases for all four of those hours. Also listed as times of “intermittent downtime”: daily, between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. Please plan accordingly.

(Source: <http://www.mxcc.edu/Content/Downtime.asp>)

## **MyCommnet and Blackboard**

You do not need to sign in to MyCommnet, in order to get to Blackboard. You can get to Blackboard by going to <https://learn-cc.ct.edu> and entering just the numerical part of your Banner ID (12345678) and then your regular Commnet password. It saves a step. (If you are on campus, you will still need to log in to the network first.)

## **Course Description**

This course examines the conventions of writing in various professional contexts. You will write and edit technical, scientific, or business documents with particular attention to audience analysis, document design, and research documentation. Formats may include memos, standard letters, proposals, progress reports, abstracts, résumés, and specialized workplace projects. Instruction emphasizes mechanical and grammatical correctness, conciseness, and readability of all documents. Collaborative projects will also be stressed, imitating the group dynamics of real-life work environments.

Prerequisite: English 101.

## **General Objectives**

You will learn to write effective communications for the technical workplace in science, business, and industry, with emphasis on clarity and correctness, and to work with teammates on projects.

## **Specific Outcomes**

You will ...

### **Content**

- learn to compose a variety of technical communications;
- learn to focus on users' needs in generating technical information;
- learn to design effective graphics;
- learn to recognize ethical issues in the workplace;
- learn various ways of delivering technical information by reading professionally written examples;

### **Organization**

- learn to place ideas in effective sequences;
- learn to create clear, helpful connections between sentences and paragraphs;

### **Mechanics**

- learn to use correct grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling;
- learn to use correct forms of documentation as needed;

### **Form**

- learn to compose in a variety of standard formats: memos, standard letters, résumés, proposals, etc.;

### **Style**

- learn to write in a concise and consistent manner emphasizing order and logic;
- learn to use appropriate vocabulary to promote clarity;

### **Process**

- learn to produce professionally acceptable writing through revision;
- learn to manipulate form and information on a computer.

## **Core Competencies**

This course is important because it provides you skill development in scientific and industrial writing, especially important for the workplace, and practice in collaborative

efforts. Additionally, English 202 meets all general education core competencies but one: Mathematical Reasoning.

- **Communication:**

The interactive process through which there is an exchange of verbal and/or nonverbal information.

- **Cultural Awareness:**

Acknowledgement that society is diverse with groups of individuals possessing differing beliefs, values, attitudes, and customs that are shared from one generation to the next.

- **Social and Civic Responsibility:**

Behavior that demonstrates adherence to legal/ethical standards established by society.

- **Critical Thinking:**

Modes of reasoning including analyzing data, evaluating alternatives, setting priorities, and predicting outcomes.

- **Mathematical Reasoning:**

Determination of approach, materials, and strategies necessary to solve a problem.

- **Technology Utilization:**

Use tools of the trade to achieve a specific outcome.

These core competencies are important personally, academically, and professionally.

The outcomes, as stated in the syllabus, are covered in this course. This course may be used to meet program requirements in General Studies and other select programs.

### **Online Decorum**

Our online environment is a classroom, with multiple people sharing a common space and time. It should be treated as a professional environment. To maximize learning, please:

- Treat your classmates with respect and consideration.
- Use appropriate academic, professional tone and language in ***all*** email, assignments, online discussions, and communication. Clearly, this means no swearing, slang, or deviations from course focus, as these behaviors undermine your credibility as a participant, invalidate your work, and interrupt the classroom setting.
- Special Note: Please use **Standard English** in assignments, discussions, emails, etc. Text messaging abbreviations, such as "i," "r," and "u," are **unacceptable** for any English course, especially a 200-level one, and will result in grade deductions for the work in question.

### **"Attendance" and Deadlines, in General**

- What does attendance mean when a class is taught online? You are expected to log in to Blackboard and to the class ***on a regular basis***, to stay current with work, and to be up to date on any changes that may have to be made to the schedule (due to storms or other unplanned system outages, for example).
- You need to make sure you are in regular touch with the email address Blackboard uses – the college-issued email address – so I can contact you when I

need to. Consult Distance Learning or IT in Wheaton Hall for details about getting access to that address, if you need help. I will send a test email via Blackboard on the first official day of class – Aug. 28. If you do not receive the test that day, then ***you are responsible*** for making whatever changes you need to make so that you will receive subsequent email from me via Blackboard.

- Assignments are due according to the posted deadlines. If no time is specified, the standard deadline for assignments is 11:59 p.m. on the specified day. Late submissions will be marked as such, and grades for late submissions will be reduced according to when the assignment is received. You are responsible for being adept at negotiating Blackboard, and for making sure you have a back-up plan in case you lose Internet at your home, so that your assignments are submitted in a timely manner. (We will deal with system-wide outages, such as major storms, as they arise.)

### **Submitting Assignments**

- **Written assignments** (Letters, memos, reports, etc.) will be submitted within the modules in which they are assigned. Most assignments should be submitted as Word documents (\*.doc or \*.docx). Some collaborative documents are “submitted” within the framework of the group file exchange, which will be explained in those assignments. Treat every document as you would a professional assignment at work.
- **Discussion posts** are linked from within Modules. Unless otherwise noted, first posts are due by the end of the day Thursday (midnight) and final replies are due by the end of the Module week (midnight Sunday).
- **Messaging** is a tool on the left bar of your Blackboard course screen. It is not the same as email. Each time you log in, you should check to see whether you have received messages from your classmates or group-mates, but do not use “Messaging” for contacting me. Use standard email. My address is at the top of this syllabus.
- If you are unsure about how to do any of this, get support from Distance Learning (<http://mxcc.edu/distance>). Remember – it is your responsibility to know how to submit your assignments, and to do so on time.
- Plan ahead, because having questions or issues at the last minute ***will not*** be an excuse for late submissions.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

Please submit work that is ***original to our class*** (not recycled) and of which ***you are the sole author***. (The obvious exception is in collaborative assignments, for which several students are credited as authors. In that case, make sure each student who contributed gets appropriate credit.) If you quote or paraphrase from outside material in anything you submit – whether the work is your own, or was written by you and your classmates – cite the outside material *according to MLA style* (as you would in ENG 101, which is a prerequisite to this class). There is information on how to do that on the Research wep page linked from Blackboard. If you have questions, ask, because work that violates college policy *may result in a zero* for that assignment, and can have further consequences. As stated in the catalog: “Both plagiarism and cheating are grounds for a

student's immediate dismissal from the college." If you have questions about whether something is allowed, be sure to ask ***before*** you submit the assignment.

(See below under "Misc. College Policies," or in the college catalog, for the complete policy.)

### **Final Grades**

Final grades will be noted A through F. You may inquire, though, at any time about your grades, by visiting "My Grades" on Blackboard.

#### **Final Course Grade Formulation**

- 35% Weekly Assignments (individual)
- 25% Module Assignments (collaborative)
- 20% Weekly Discussion Posts and Replies
- 20% Final Project

### **General Criteria for Assignments**

- A and B assignments are above average in application of the lesson(s) under consideration, and show a command of organization, style, mechanics, grammar, punctuation, and support with evidence (when necessary) knowledge of technical writing formats and conventions. These assignments are also framed in an appropriate point of view to demonstrate knowledge of audience. Lastly, these assignments follow the directions fully.
- C assignments may contain issues with grammar, punctuation, mechanics, usage, organization, development, and/or support. Assignments may not fulfill or strive to fulfill appropriate format, tone, organization, style, etc., particular to technical writing formats. Problems may exist with adequate development and/or support and accurate MLA documentation. Overall, there is room for improvement in accurately and comprehensively demonstrating knowledge of technical writing formats and conventions.
- D or F assignments are those that do not meet the assignment, contain numerous errors, lack logical organization, and/or focus on generalities rather than development. Overall, there is substantial room for improvement in accurately and comprehensively demonstrating knowledge of technical writing formats and conventions. Editing and proofing may also be needed.

### **Withdrawals**

Students who wish to initiate a "**W**" (**a withdrawal with no grade**) must submit the appropriate form to Records. The deadline for withdrawing with a "W" is Tuesday, Nov. 12. For more information on this procedure, refer to the catalog and the college calendar. Please also consult with your advisor and the Financial Aid Office (if applicable).

### **Misc. College Policies**

#### **ADA Accommodation Statement**

"Students with physical or learning disabilities who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact the Counseling Office. After disclosing the nature of the disability, students are urged to discuss their needs with individual instructors. This should be done

at the beginning of each semester. Instructors, in conjunction with appropriate college officials, will provide assistance and/or accommodations only to those students who have completed this process.” For more complete information, contact Disability Support Services (D.S.S.) at 860-343-5879.

### **Academic Honesty Statement**

“At Middlesex Community College we expect the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in accordance with the Board of Trustees’ Proscribed Conduct Policy in Section 5.2.1 of the Board of Trustees’ Policy Manual. This policy prohibits cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, unauthorized access to examinations or course materials, plagiarism, and other proscribed activities. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another’s idea(s) or phrase(s) and representing that/those idea(s) as your own, either intentionally or unintentionally.”

### **Religious Accommodation Statement**

If your religious obligations conflict with the course calendar requirements, and if you wish to request an accommodation, you must make your request in writing prior to the date of the assessment or activity you will miss and preferably at the beginning of the semester. When requesting a make-up quiz, test, exam, assignment, or activity, state the reason for your request and the date(s) on which your religious obligation(s) will conflict with the course calendar requirements. Also, if your religious obligation/holiday is unfamiliar to your instructor, you may be asked to provide a calendar which shows the published date(s) of your religious observance(s) or holiday(s).

### **Inclement Weather Statement**

In the event of inclement weather either before the start of a day when classes are in session or during the *school day*, *you may check for information on delayed openings, college closings, class cancellations, etc* by listening to the radio and television stations listed below. Additionally, a message will be posted on the MxCC website at [www.mxcc.commnet.edu](http://www.mxcc.commnet.edu) and an announcement made on the college’s main phone number, (860) 343-5800. (*When calling the main phone number, be sure to choose option 1 from the menu for school closings.*) If classes are already in session, everyone on campus will be notified of any changes. Decisions to cancel classes or close the college early will be made as soon as practicable.

#### Radio Stations

WMRD 1150 am  
WHCN 105.9 fm  
WRCH 100.5 fm  
WTIC 1080 am  
WTIC 96.5 fm  
WZMX 93.7 fm  
WKSS 95.7 fm  
WPOP 1410 am  
WURH 104.1  
WWYZ 92.5 fm  
WAVZ 1300 am

#### Television Stations

WFSB – 3  
WTNH - 8  
WVIT-TV Channel 30 (NBC)  
WVIT - 30  
Fox 61 Morning News

WELI 960 am

WKCI 101.3 fm

Off Campus Sites:

The MxCC Meriden Center will comply with the Middletown campus policy. Exception: In the event of extreme weather only in the Meriden area and the Middletown campus determines to hold classes, the decision to cancel classes at the Meriden Center will be determined by the MxCC Meriden Center Director and the Dean of Finance & Administration.

The Old Saybrook off-campus site will comply with the Middletown campus policy. Exception: In the event of extreme weather only at the off campus site, the decision to hold or cancel classes at this extension center will be made by our campus extension program director. Faculty should call the Continuing Education Office at (860) 343-5865.

***Note: Off-campus sites are ultimately subject to the cancellation policy of the school in which MxCC holds classes.***