

**This syllabus is subject to change at any time.*

Course Description

Students examine the elements of good writing in the areas of technical communication, information design, and user experience. Students learn to write effective technical documentation and to apply design techniques in written content to enhance reader experiences and comprehension.

Fees

Online Course Fee \$21.00

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand principles of rhetoric and design thinking and apply them to your writing
2. Identify and demonstrate elements of good technical writing
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the visual and textual aspects of information design
4. Apply rhetoric, technical writing, and information design to a practical, real-world scenario

Instructor



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Course Resources

All resources and readings for this course will be available within each module.

Course Requirements

Each student will:

1. Complete weekly readings and lectures
 2. Complete weekly assignments and discussions
 3. Contribute to the learning of other students by asking questions, starting discussions, and participating in any collaborative activities.
 4. Complete a final project and paper
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Evaluation Methods and Criteria

This course consists of weekly readings and lectures with accompanying assignments. Many assignments build toward a final project. The final paper is a justification paper where you will explain why you made certain writing and design decisions in your project.

- Assignments & Discussions - 160pts
 - Final project - 100pts
 - Final paper - 50pts
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The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade	Range
A	100 % to 93.0%
A-	< 93.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 73.0%
C-	< 73.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 60.0%
F	< 59.0 % to 0.0%

Course Schedule/Outline

- [Wk 1 - Rhetoric & human-centered design](#)
- [Wk 2 - Technical Communication processes / The writing process](#)
- [Wk 3 - Professional writing overview & Signposting/Taxonomy](#)
- [Wk 4 - Writing in a technical communications style / Writing with precision](#)
- [Wk 5 - Instructions and Procedures](#)
- [Wk 6 - Task analysis](#)
- [Wk 7 - What is Information Design?](#)
- [Wk 8 - Gestalt Principles of Design](#)
- [Wk 9 - Simplification & Document Design](#)
- [Wk 10 - The survival of layout](#)
- [Wks 11 - 14 - Final project and paper](#)

Nonattendance Policy

Students May Be Dropped For Nonattendance

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does not plan to attend.) This option is typically used for classes that are full and the instructor is trying to make a seat available for another student, but may be considered for other courses. Requests must be made during the first 20 percent of the course and will be considered on an individual student basis. Students who are dropped from courses will be notified by the Registrar's Office through their preferred e-mail account (see [2018-2019 General Catalog](http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3955) (<http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3955>)).

Assumption of Risk

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at: <http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt/> (<http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt/>)

Library Services

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at libguides.usu.edu/rc. (<http://libguides.usu.edu/rc>)

Online Course Fee

A fee of \$15 per credit is applied to all online courses to sustain current digital technologies and support

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Classroom Civility

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read [Student Code Article V Section V-3](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article5) [_\(https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article5\)_](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article5) for more information.

University Policies & Procedures

COVID-19 Classroom Accommodations

If you face COVID-19 related challenges and feel you need accommodations, you must request those accommodations by filling out the [COVID-19 Questionnaire](https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/questionnaire/index.php) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/questionnaire/index.php\)_](https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/questionnaire/index.php). Upon doing so, the University [COVID CARE Team](https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/if-you-are-sick/care-team.php) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/if-you-are-sick/care-team.php\)_](https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/if-you-are-sick/care-team.php) will contact you to determine your needs and how to support you. The CARE Team will also contact your instructors and provide important direction on how best to accommodate your needs. For additional reference, please see USU's [Attendance and Excused Absence](https://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3160) [_\(https://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3160\)_](https://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3160) policy and the [COVID-19 Classroom Accommodations](https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/operations/accomodations) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/operations/accomodations\)_](https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/operations/accomodations) page.

Reducing COVID-19 Risk

You can help keep classes, events, and activities happening in person this semester by following these steps:

1. **Get vaccinated if you're able.** Vaccines are the best available tool to help stop the spread of COVID-19. They are safe, free, and easy to access.
2. **If you are vaccinated, let USU know.** Please [upload your proof of full vaccination](http://aggiehealth.usu.edu/) [\(http://aggiehealth.usu.edu/\)](http://aggiehealth.usu.edu/) to AggieHealth. If you are exposed to COVID-19, USU's case containment will not require you to quarantine if they know you are vaccinated and you do not have symptoms.
3. **Stay home if you're sick** and [get tested for COVID-19](#) if you have symptoms or have been

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If USU's COVID Case Containment team identifies an uncontained situation in the classroom, you will be notified of any temporary changes to your course delivery method through a Canvas announcement. Please make sure you are receiving immediate notifications of new Canvas announcements. The situation will be handled according to protocols on the [COVID Classroom Exposure \(https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/students/classroom-exposure\)](https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/students/classroom-exposure) page.

Class Seating Charts (For In-Person Classes)

In classes with more than 10 students, a seating chart will be used to track where you are sitting. After the first week of classes, your instructor will tell you how to enter your seat number in Canvas. **You must sit in the same seat for the rest of the semester.** This is extremely important for tracking cases of COVID-19 and helping classes remain in person.

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403 \(http://www.usu.edu/hr/files/uploads/Policies/403.pdf\)](http://www.usu.edu/hr/files/uploads/Policies/403.pdf) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

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- Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done “individually;”
- Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
- Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
- Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: [ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6)
[_\(https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6\)](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6)

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

General Overview

USU strives to provide an environment for students and employees that is free from [discrimination](https://www.usu.edu/equity/non-discrimination.php) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/equity/non-discrimination.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/non-discrimination.php) and [sexual misconduct](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Sexual-Misconduct-Terms.php) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Sexual-Misconduct-Terms.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Sexual-Misconduct-Terms.php). If you experience sexual misconduct or discrimination at any point during the semester inside or outside of class, you are encouraged to contact the [USU Title IX Coordinator](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php) via Old Main room 161 in Logan, [435-797-1266 \(tel:1-435-797-1266\)](tel:435-797-1266), [titleix@usu.edu \(mailto:titleix@usu.edu\)](mailto:titleix@usu.edu), or at [equity.usu.edu/report](https://www.usu.edu/equity/report.php) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/equity/report.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/report.php). You can learn more about the USU resources available for individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct at [sexualrespect.usu.edu](https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/\)](https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/). Resources for individuals who have experienced discrimination are listed at [equity.usu.edu/resources](https://www.usu.edu/equity/resources) [_\(https://www.usu.edu/equity/resources\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/resources).

Required Reporting of Sexual Misconduct

The instructor is designated by USU as a "[reporting employee](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php)" [_\(https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php)

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information to the [USU Title IX Coordinator](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php) [_ \(https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Title-IX-Coordinator.php). The instructor is also required to tell you about [designated confidential resources](https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/resources.php) [_ \(https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/resources.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/resources.php), [supportive measures](https://www.usu.edu/equity/Supportive-Measures.php) [_ \(https://www.usu.edu/equity/Supportive-Measures.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/Supportive-Measures.php), and [how you can file a report](https://www.usu.edu/equity/report.php) [_ \(https://www.usu.edu/equity/report.php\)](https://www.usu.edu/equity/report.php) with the USU Title IX Coordinator.

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](http://www.usu.edu/drc/) [_ \(http://www.usu.edu/drc/\)](http://www.usu.edu/drc/) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, [drc@usu.edu \(mailto:drc@usu.edu\)](mailto:drc@usu.edu)). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Students who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 or who contract COVID-19 may also be eligible for accommodations.

Respect for Diversity

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.usu.edu> [_ \(https://studentaffairs.usu.edu/\)](https://studentaffairs.usu.edu/), (435) 797-1712, [studentservices@usu.edu \(mailto:studentservices@usu.edu\)](mailto:studentservices@usu.edu), TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: <https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services> [_ \(https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services\)](https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services/), (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu> [_ \(http://accesscenter.usu.edu/\)](http://accesscenter.usu.edu/), (435) 797-1728, [access@usu.edu \(mailto:access@usu.edu\)](mailto:access@usu.edu); TSC 315

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- LGBTQA Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa> [\(http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa/\)](http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa/), (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: <https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity> [\(https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity/\)](https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity/), (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:

The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State

University: <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode>

[\(https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/\)](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/)

Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: [Article VII](#)

[\(https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article7/\)](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article7/).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- [Student Conduct](http://www.usu.edu/studentconduct) [\(http://www.usu.edu/studentconduct\)](http://www.usu.edu/studentconduct/)
- [Student Code](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/) [\(https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/\)](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/)
- [Academic Integrity](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6) [\(https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6\)](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6/)
- [USU Academic Policies and Procedures](http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=546) [\(http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=546\)](http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=546/)
- [Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy](http://www.usu.edu/hr/files/uploads/Policies/403.pdf) [\(http://www.usu.edu/hr/files/uploads/Policies/403.pdf\)](http://www.usu.edu/hr/files/uploads/Policies/403.pdf/)

Emergency Procedures

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

Mental Health

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential

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Students are also encouraged to download the [“SafeUT App”](#) (<https://healthcare.utah.edu/uni/programs/safe-ut-smartphone-app>) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Wed Jan 12, 2022	 Say hi! https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583694	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jan 16, 2022	 Try a rhetorical analysis https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583712	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jan 23, 2022	 Technical writing and design thinking https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583711	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jan 30, 2022	 Taxonomy and signposting: Create an outline of this very poorly written how-to guide https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583710	due by 11:59pm
Sun Feb 6, 2022	 Revise for clarity https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583708	due by 11:59pm
Sun Feb 13, 2022	 Rewrite the poorly written Facebook how-to guide. https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583709	due by 11:59pm
Sun Feb 20, 2022	 Complete a task analysis https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583699	due by 11:59pm
Sun Feb 27, 2022	 How has Information Design affected you? https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583695	due by 11:59pm

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Date	Details	Due
Sun Mar 20, 2022	 Discuss the Rob Waller readings (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583697)	due by 11pm
	 Redesign a poorly designed document (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583707)	due by 11pm
Sun Mar 27, 2022	 What have you learned from this week's reading? (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583698)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 3, 2022	 Peer review 1 - Final Project (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583704)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 10, 2022	 Peer review 2 - Final Project (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583705)	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 11, 2022	 Final project - How-to guide (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583702)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 17, 2022	 Peer review - Justification paper (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583706)	due by 11:59pm
	 Final - Justification paper (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583701)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Apr 22, 2022	 Graduate Students - Annotated bibliography (https://usu.instructure.com/courses/703085/assignments/3583703)	due by 11:59pm

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