

Graduate Technical Writing Section

01 CS 200W

Fall 2024 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 08/16/2024

Course Description and Requisites

Graduate technical writing workshop to develop advanced communication skills that will meet the professional needs of computer scientists, along with research methodologies and proper documentation for the master's thesis project.

Prerequisite(s): Graduate standing. Allowed Declared Major: Bioinformatics, Computer Science, Data Science, Mathematics, or Statistics. Or instructor consent.

Note(s): This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program. This course does NOT satisfy the undergraduate GE Area Z requirement.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Course Format

You will attend two weekly class meetings, on Tuesday and Thursday at the scheduled class time, and will complete assignments in class and online. Please note that the course has been designed with the assumption that all students will regularly attend class meetings.

Course materials are organized on Canvas in a series of weekly modules. You can find all content on Canvas: readings, videos, quizzes, detailed assignment instructions, assignment drop boxes, general course information, and links to useful information. Canvas modules usually open two weeks before we discuss their associated topic in class so that you can complete readings and review any other information before coming to class.

Classroom Policies

- I begin each class at its scheduled start time. Please arrive before class begins! Late entrances and early exits are highly distracting to your classmates and to me.
- Some activities, like in-class assignments and quizzes, cannot be made up and if you arrive late or miss class that day you will not earn points for those tasks. In general, you'll know in advance when we'll be working on an assignment in class. Quizzes are given at random but I will drop two quiz scores to allow for occasional absences.

- If you know that you will be absent on a certain day, please let me know via email.
- I may make changes to assignments and the course schedule but will notify you of this in advance.
- While in class please do not check your phone, read unrelated materials, or do homework for another class. Unless we are working on an in-class assignment or activity, I will expect your laptop to be closed and your cell phone put away out of sight. If you need to use your laptop to take notes, or need to check your cellphone because you are a caregiver, please notify me via email or see me during my office hours.
- It is important to me that all students feel welcome and comfortable in my classroom. If you have a problem with the classroom environment, or the behavior of one of your classmates, please speak to me privately about the issue so that it may be resolved.

Textbook and Technology Requirements

There is no course textbook; all readings and other materials will be found on Canvas or will be distributed to you in class. However, you will need to have access to the following: a working laptop/tablet, PowerPoint or Google Slides, reliable internet access, a webcam and a microphone (can be integrated into your computer or external), and a printer. **Technology issues will not be accepted as an excuse for late work - so have backup!** For help with technology problems, visit the IT Service Desk page here: [SJSU IT Service Desk](#).

To prepare for the course you should do the following:

- Visit [SJSU IT Software Installation Page](#) and download Microsoft Word (for PC and Mac) and PowerPoint (available at NO CHARGE to SJSU students)
- Locate a couple of printing stations on campus (one is outside the CS office on the 2nd floor of MacQuarrie Hall)

Canvas Website

[Go to one.sjsu.edu](http://one.sjsu.edu) to begin your Canvas login.

I send group communications to my students through Canvas Announcements, so I suggest that you adjust your Canvas Notifications settings so announcements are forwarded to the device you check most frequently. To do this:

- Go to Canvas
- Click on your Account tab, and then on the Notifications tab
- Navigate to the Announcements bar and make the appropriate selections.

You may also use this procedure to have Canvas notify you of approaching assignment due dates. For Canvas help, call eCampus at (408) 924-2337 or [go to the eCampus Canvas help page](#).

Submitting Assignments to Canvas

- Assignments are submitted when they are fully uploaded to Canvas. Do not wait until the last minute to submit an assignment, because uploads may take some time and miss the submission deadline.

- A deadline of 11:59 pm means 11:59:00: an assignment submitted after that time will be marked late by Canvas.
- DO NOT email an assignment to me or submit it as an attachment to a comment if the dropbox is locked. I cannot offer feedback on assignments submitted in this way or use any associated grading rubric, and thus the assignment WILL NOT be graded.
- Assignments are graded as uploaded to Canvas; incorrect, blank, or unreadable files will receive no points. Avoid this by clicking on the "View Submission" option after uploading your work to ensure you have submitted a correct and readable file. **Do this every time you upload an assignment!**
- Assignments can be submitted unlimited times before a deadline; I will grade the final submission. If you submit an assignment by the due date and then decide to re-submit it for grading during the late period, a late penalty will be assessed.

Formatting Writing Assignments

- Major writing assignments except for the resume must be written using Google Docs.
- You'll use the same file for the first and the final draft of the writing project; do not create separate files for each draft.
- When you submit your assignment, you'll upload it from Google Drive and also submit a direct link to the doc as a submission comment.
- Sign into Google Drive using your SJSU email address, so that I can view your editing history and track changes between your first and final draft.
- Any writing assignments submitted in an alternate format will not be graded.

Late Policy

- Late work is accepted up to 48 hours after a due date, except where otherwise indicated.
- **Work submitted up to 24 hours late will receive a 10% penalty, and work submitted from 24 to 48 hours late will receive a 20% penalty.** These penalties are based on the total points possible and are automatically assessed by Canvas.
- **After 48 hours, no late assignments are accepted;** the assignment dropbox will close and you will NOT be able to submit assignments or access quizzes/exams. Ungraded course content, like videos and readings, remains available throughout the semester.

Exceptions are made to this policy only in rare circumstances; for example, for a long illness.

Writing in CS200W/Getting Help with Writing and Research

All of the writing you do in this class will be developed according to the process model of writing which has four steps: planning, drafting, revising, and editing. You will submit two drafts of each writing assignment and will receive feedback on the first drafts from me and from your peers. You will also be asked to participate in at least one conference with me during which we will discuss your final project of the semester, the literature review. Of course, you can receive additional writing help by attending my office hours or working with a writing tutor.

If you find writing a challenge, I encourage you to work with the SJSU Writing Center, which offers one-on-one tutoring services and workshops on a variety of writing topics. For more information, visit the Writing Center website: [Visit the SJSU Writing Center](#). You can also find a link to the Writing Center on

the course Home Page on Canvas. Note that the services provided by the Writing Center are **free** to all SJSU students.

To obtain help with the library research you will be conducting for this class, please contact the SJSU Computer Science Subject Librarian Anamika Megwalu via email: anamika.megwalu@sjsu.edu.

Plagiarism and Cheating

I place a high value on the honest pursuit of knowledge and have zero tolerance for plagiarism and cheating. Submitting a writing assignment that contains text that is **not your original written work** is a violation of the SJSU policy on cheating and plagiarism, which reads as follows:

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University and the [University's Academic Integrity Policy \(Academic Senate Policy S07-2\)](#), requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all alleged violations of the Academic Integrity Policy to Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Plagiarism or cheating on a written assignment will result in a score of zero and administrative sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have previously submitted or plan to submit for another class, please speak with me before doing so. Should you be tempted to cheat because you find an assignment challenging, the better course of action is to contact me for help.

Using the Turnitin.com Dropbox

You will submit all of your major writing assignments to Turnitin.com, an application that checks assignments for plagiarism and for AI use.

This course includes a zero-value Turnitin.com dropbox assignment that you can use to check any writing assignment for plagiarism before you submit it for a grade. You can use this dropbox as many times as you would like throughout the semester; any submission that you make to this dropbox will not be added to the Turnitin student submission database.

The Turnitin dropbox is for the use of students in this class only; please do not submit the papers of other students to the dropbox.

Program Information

Diversity Statement - At SJSU, it is important to create a safe learning environment where we can explore, learn, and grow together. We strive to build a diverse, equitable, inclusive culture that values, encourages, and supports students from all backgrounds and experiences.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Compose** with a clear focus on purpose, scope, and audience.
2. **Critically observe and discuss** the composing processes of self and peers.
3. **Write** using a variety of technical writing formats.
4. **Organize and produce** papers and documents according to discipline-based editorial and citation standards, using IEEE style.
5. **Create** appropriate graphics to accompany a report.
6. **Effectively use** library resources and electronic databases pertaining to their discipline to carry out research.
7. **Distinguish** between scholarly and non-scholarly published literature as well as **define** the characteristics of good scholarly writing in terms of content, format, and style.
8. **Organize, analyze and synthesize** information from various sources to **develop** a literature review.
9. **Determine** the difference between plagiarized and non-plagiarized text.
10. **Organize and deliver** an effective oral presentation for a professional audience.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Quizzes: On random days throughout the semester, you will be given a short 'pop' quiz featuring questions on topics discussed during the prior class session or in your assigned readings. The quizzes are typically distributed at the beginning of class and are worth 5 points each; sometimes, an in-class activity will count as a quiz. If you are not in class when the quiz takes place you lose any points available; quizzes cannot be made up. There will be ten quizzes offered and the lowest two quiz scores will be dropped.

Job-related correspondence: You will prepare a targeted résumé highlighting your education, accomplishments and relevant job experience, and will also practice writing job application materials (e.g. a cover letter or email) using the established conventions and protocol of professional communication.

Project proposal: At the beginning of the semester, you will select a research topic of interest and later will write a project proposal that includes a description of the project's importance, how the project will be implemented, a work plan for carrying out the project, and a description of possible challenges presented by the project. This assignment has two parts: first, you will write a one-page description of your topic and then you will write the full project proposal. You will submit one draft of the topic worksheet and two drafts of the proposal.

Literature review: Using the topic you selected for your proposal, you will write a literature review of scholarly sources (books, peer-reviewed journal articles, refereed professional conference proceedings) that describe work already completed in your research area. The review will be written following IEEE editorial standards and will include at a minimum a title page, an abstract, a table of contents, the review itself, and a list of references in IEEE format. You will submit two drafts of the literature review.

Oral presentation: At the end of the semester you will present the topic of your project proposal/literature review in a TED/Grad Slam-type, 3-minute long presentation that uses a maximum of three PowerPoint slides (plus a title slide).

Writing exercises: You will complete brief exercises throughout the semester focusing on various aspects of academic writing, including grammar, editorial style, and formatting.

Schedule of Assignments/Points Possible

Assignment/Learning Outcomes	Points
Orientation Assignment	20
Pop Quizzes (CLO 1-10)	50
Knowledge Checks (CLO 1-10)	90
Resume (CLO 1-3)	
- First Draft (5 pts. peer review/40 pts. first draft)	45
- Final Draft	75
Cover Letter (CLO 1-3)	
- First Draft (5 pts. peer review/40 pts. first draft)	45
- Final Draft	75
Project Proposal (CLO 1-4, 6)	
- Topic Worksheet	25
- First Draft (10 pts. peer review, 40 pts. first draft)	50
- Final Draft	75
Literature Review (CLO 1-6, 8)	
- First Draft (10 pts. peer review/90 pts. first draft)	100
- Final Draft	250
Grad Slam Presentation (CLO 5,10)	100
Total	1,000

✓ Grading Information

Here are some facts about how your grades will be determined in this course:

Grade Calculation: Points are awarded based on how well an assignment fulfills the requirements outlined in the assignment prompt and the grading rubric. To earn as many points as possible on your submissions, read every assignment prompt carefully, review the grading rubric, and talk to me if you have questions BEFORE you submit the assignment.

Grading Turnaround: I aim to return your assignments within two weeks of submission or sooner.

Grading Issues: My evaluations are informed by years of experience as a writing instructor and extensive reading of student writing. I know your grades are important to you and I grade your work carefully. Thus, unless a technical error has been made, your grades are not negotiable or debatable and will not change after they are posted. If you make an appointment to see me during my office hours I will assume that you want to discuss how you might improve your writing and not argue about a grade. I will not discuss grades in the classroom.

Feedback: While I offer extensive feedback on first drafts of writing assignments, simply correcting the errors I point out does not guarantee a perfect score. My feedback highlights the most substantial gaps in a submission, and is not meant to be a comprehensive edit.

Also, I do not review assignments *before* I grade them, as that requires me to act as an editor and not as an evaluator. However, during office hours I will answer specific questions that you have about your work and whether or not it meets an assignment's requirements.

Final Course Grade: Your final course grade will be the letter grade equivalent of the percentage that is shown on Canvas after the final assignment of the semester is completed and graded (see the chart below). I do not round grades or offer grade bumps, and there will be no extra credit or extra work offered after the semester ends.

Grade Chart:

97%+ = A+	93%<97% = A	90%<93% = A-	87%<90% = B+	83%<87% = B	80%<83% = B-
77%<80% = C+	73%<77% = C	70%<73% = C-	67%<70% = D+	63%<67% = D	60%<63% = D-
Below 60% = F					

CS200W Grading Rubrics

My goal is to assign grades in as fair a manner as possible and I use detailed grading rubrics for all assignments. The grading levels on these rubrics are based on how well your submission fulfills the requirements of the assignment prompt and the needs of the readers of your documents.

In general, the CS200W rubric rating levels correspond to the following grades:

Exceeds Expectations = A+ (100%)

Exceeds/Meets Expectations = A (95%)

Meets Expectations = B (85%)

Approaching Expectations = C (75%)

Below Expectations = D or below (65% or >)

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

All learning activities can be found in the Canvas modules and should be completed before coming to class on the day that they are assigned. This course schedule is subject to change, with fair notice.

Week	Class Date/Day	Topic	Assignments Due
1	8/22/24 Thursday	Introduction to CS200W	Learning Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read all orientation pages Assignment Due Monday, 8/26/24 (submit to Canvas): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who Are You? Note that you must complete the first module to access the other course modules!
2	8/27/24 Tuesday	Technical Writing Basics Part I	Learning Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read <i>Key English Grammar Concepts</i>
2	8/29/24 Thursday	Technical Writing Basics Part II	Learning Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Markel & Selber <i>Writing Effective Sentences and Capitalization Basics</i> Assignment Due Monday, 9/2/24 (submit to Canvas): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge Check: Technical Writing Basics

3	9/3/24 Tuesday	Writing Resumes - Analyzing a Job Posting	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the Resume Basics section in the <i>SJSU Career Center Resume Guide</i> • Review <i>Sample Resumes</i> <p>Assignment Due Today (in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find, save in .pdf form and print an online posting for a job or internship in your field, and bring to class for keyword exercise.
3	9/5/24 Thursday	Writing Resumes - Writing Effective STAR Statements	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Using the STAR Method to Write a Dynamic Resume</i> <p>No Assignments Due This Week</p>
4	9/10/24 Tuesday	Peer Review of Resume	<p>Assignment Due Today (in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring printed copy of your resume to class for peer review
4	9/12/24 Thursday	Writing Cover Letters	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>CS200W Introduction to Writing Cover Letters</i> • Read <i>SJSU Career Center Cover Letter and References Guide</i> • Review <i>Sample Cover Letters</i> <p>Assignment Due Monday, 9/16/24 (submit to Canvas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume First Draft for Instructor Review
5	9/17/24 Tuesday	Peer Review of Cover Letter	<p>Assignment Due Today (in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring printed copy of your cover letter to class for peer review
5	9/19/24 Thursday	Plagiarism and Paraphrasing	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>All About Paraphrasing</i> • Read <i>Department of Computer Science Policy on Plagiarism</i> • Read <i>CS200W Research Topics and Research Questions</i> <p>Assignments Due Monday, 9/23/24 (submit to Canvas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover Letter: First Draft for Instructor Review • Knowledge Check: Plagiarism and Paraphrasing

6	9/24/24 Tuesday	IEEE Formatting and Citation	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>CS200W IEEE Style - Formatting and Citation</i> • Read <i>CS200W IEEE Quick Reference Guide</i> • Read <i>Formatting Headings in Small Caps in Word</i> • Review <i>IEEE Style Manual and IEEE Reference Guide Online</i> to familiarize yourself with the contents
6	9/26/24 Thursday	IEEE Formatting and Citation	<p>Assignment Due Monday, 9/30/24 (submit to Canvas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume: Final Draft • Knowledge Check: IEEE Formatting and Citation
7	10/1/24 Tuesday	Library Orientation	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Conducting Research in the SJSU Library</i>
7	10/3/24 Thursday	Writing Problem Statements/Proposal Topic Fact Sheet	<p>No Learning Activities</p> <p>Assignments Due Monday, 10/7/24 (submit to Canvas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover Letter Final Draft • Proposal - Topic/Problem Fact Sheet
8	10/8/24 Tuesday	Introduction to the Project Proposal	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Writing the CS200W Project Proposal</i> • Read <i>Project Proposal Informational Handout</i> • Read <i>Sample Documentx</i>
8	10/10/24 Thursday	Concision and Flow in Academic Writing	<p>No Assignments Due This Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on your proposal to prepare for Writing Workshop!
9	10/15/24 Tuesday	Writing Workshop (Proposal)	
9	10/17/24 Thursday	Peer Review of Proposal	<p>Assignment Due Today (in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring printed copy of your proposal to class for peer review <p>Assignment Due Monday, 10/21/24 (submit to Canvas)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal: First Draft for Instructor Review

10	10/22/24 Tuesday	Introduction to the Lit Review	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Lit Review Quick Reference</i> • Read <i>What is a Literature Review?</i> by M. Harvey • Review <i>Sample Lit Reviews</i>
10	10/24/24 Thursday	Analyzing a Lit Review	<p>Assignment Due Monday, 10/28/24 (submit to Canvas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Check: Analyzing a Lit Review (begun in class)
11	10/29/24 Tuesday	Organizing and Synthesizing Literature	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Synthesizing Literature Step-by-Step</i> <p>Assignment Due (in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Check: Organizing and Synthesizing Literature
11	10/31/24 Thursday	Introducing a Lit Review/Scientific Illustrations	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Sample Introductions (1-3)</i> <p>Assignment Due Monday 11/4/24 (submit to Canvas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal: Final Draft
12	11/5/24 Tuesday	Writing Abstracts	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>All About CS200W Abstracts</i>
12	11/7/24 Thursday	Peer Review of the Lit Review	<p>Assignment Due Today (in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring printed copy of your literature review to class for peer review <p>Assignment Due Monday, 11/11/24 (submit to Canvas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature Review: First Draft for Instructor Review
13	11/12/24 Tuesday	Giving a Grad Slam Presentation	<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Grad Slam Handout</i> • Read <i>Grad Slam Scoring Rubric</i> • Read Assignment Prompt: <i>Grad Slam Style Presentation of Research</i>

13	11/14/24 Thursday	Designing Effective PowerPoint Slides	Assignment Due Today (in class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Check: Designing Effective PowerPoint Slides
14	11/19/24 Tuesday	Conferences on Lit Review	No Class Meeting Today
14	11/21/24 Thursday	Conferences on Lit Review	No Class Meeting Today Assignment Due Next Week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on your lit review to prepare for Writing Workshop!
15	11/26/24 Tuesday	Writing Workshop (Lit Review)	
15	11/28/24 Thursday	Thanksgiving Holiday	No Class Meeting Today - Thanksgiving Holiday
16	12/3/24 Tuesday	Grad Slam Presentations	Assignment Due Monday 12/2/24 (submit to Canvas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/3 Presenter Upload of Presentation Slides
16	12/5/24 Thursday	Grad Slam Presentations	Assignment Due Wednesday 12/4/22 (submit to Canvas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/5 Presenter Upload of Presentation Slides Assignment Due Monday,12/9/24, (submit to Canvas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature Review - Final Draft