

Technical Writing Workshop

CS 100W

Fall 2025 Section 01 In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/15/2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Anne Cheilek

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Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 1:30 - 2:30 pm, or by appointment (in person or over Zoom)

Course Information

An upper-division technical writing workshop designed to develop advanced communication skills that will meet the academic and professional needs of computer science students. Students must earn a final grade of "C" or higher to receive credit for this course.

Course Format: In-person instruction and discussions.

Classroom: Boccardo 225

Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 - 1:15 pm

Course materials such as the syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas course website. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any course updates.

Course Description and Requisites

Advanced writing through preparation of technical reports and presentations. Improving skills for writing subject-related reports, project proposals and personal resumes through practice and evaluation. Course assignments will be related to issues concerning careers in computer science.

Writing in the Disciplines: Satisfies the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) if passed with "C" or better.

Prerequisite(s): A3 or equivalent second semester composition course (with a grade of "C-" or better); completion of core GE; and upper division standing. Or Graduate or Postbaccalaureate level. Allowed Declared Majors: Computer Science or Mathematics

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

For a class like this one, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is essential that you are in class every day, on time, and ready to participate in class activities and discussions. If you know that you will be absent on a certain day, please let me know via email. **Note that in-class participation constitutes 15% of your grade.**

I reserve the right to make changes to assignments and the course schedule but usually notify you of this via email and Canvas at least 48 hours in advance.

Show respect for others at all times, in both your language and behavior. Part of this class may involve disagreeing with your classmates, but we will do this respectfully and courteously. If you have a question at any time about what is appropriate, please contact me for guidance.

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.

Do not hand in any assignments that you are not willing to share: peer review is an integral part of this class.

Program Information

Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses develop students' abilities to communicate effectively in their major course of study and in their careers. With an emphasis on critical thinking, these upper-division core courses advance students' understanding of the genres, audiences, and purposes of college writing while preparing them for successful communication in their chosen professions. Completing Writing in the Disciplines with a C or better is an SJSU graduation requirement.

Writing in the Disciplines Learning Outcomes Upon successful completion of a Writing in the Disciplines course, students should be able to:

1. explain, analyze, develop, and critique ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse;
2. organize and develop complete discipline-specific texts and other documents for both professional and general audiences, using appropriate editorial and citation standards; and
3. locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing;
4. produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, and clarity of expression.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 8000 words, at least 4000 of which must be in revised final draft form.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of CS100W, students should be able to:

1. Understand how to follow the stages of the writing process (prewriting/writing/rewriting) and apply them to technical and workplace writing tasks.
2. Produce a set of documents related to technical and workplace writing tasks and have improved their ability to write clearly and accurately.
3. Understand the basic components of definitions, descriptions, process explanations, and other common forms of technical writing.
4. Define basic technical writing elements, such as audience analysis, use of jargon and visuals, and citation, formatting and presentation.
5. Read, understand, and interpret material (based on primary and secondary research) related to advanced technology, and have an appreciation for some of the ideas, issues, and problems involved in writing about technology and in workplace writing.
6. Understand basic sources and methods of research and documentation on topics in technology, including online research, and synthesize and integrate material from primary and secondary sources in a research-based technical writing project.
7. Determine the difference between plagiarized and non-plagiarized text.

Course Materials

This course does not have a textbook, but selected readings will be made available on Canvas. Students will be responsible for selecting and locating additional resources in support of their writing projects.

Materials students are required to bring to each class meeting include:

- laptop computer with internet connectivity and word-processing software
- notebook reserved just for this class with pages that can be removed and handed in
- pen or pencil

For most assignments, students will need word-processing software capable of producing .doc or .docx files.

Course Requirements and Assignments

The writing assignments for this course will give you experience writing in several genres and in all phases of the writing process, including: prewriting, writing, revising, and editing. The course is divided into three units:

Technical Writing: In this unit, students will work on refining the clarity and specificity of their language through the study of a variety of technical-writing genres. Students will begin by creating two sets of instructions (500 words each) detailing complex processes in a way that can easily be understood by the layperson. Next, students will use discipline-specific protocols to design and write a bug report (1000 words), a document addressed to technical experts detailing a failure in an application or website of the student's choice. Students will also work in groups to create an advocacy document promoting an on-campus service or resource. (WID learning Outcomes 1,2,3,4.)

Research and Persuasive Writing: For the assignments in this unit, students will choose a public-policy issue involving technology to research and write about. Your topic should be one that you, as a computer scientist, have some special insight into, and one that you care about. (Some examples might be the regulation of AI or cryptocurrency.) First, you will write a research paper (1000 words) looking into the current state of the problem and analyzing possible fixes, technological or political. Next, you will create and deliver a presentation recommending some specific action that you think will help rectify the problem. This presentation should adapt the information from your research paper, but should advocate a particular course of action. (WID learning Outcomes 1,2,3,4.)

Professional Writing: In the final unit, students will choose a job listing of interest and prepare a targeted cover letter and résumé highlighting their education, accomplishments and relevant job experience. Both documents will follow established conventions of professional communication. Students will also set up an effective LinkedIn profile and write a request for a letter of recommendation. (WID learning Outcomes 2,4.)

Assignment	Word Count	WID learning Outcomes	Points
Technical Documents	2500	1, 2, 3, 4	215
Tech Policy Research Paper	1500	1, 2, 3, 4	180
Tech Policy Presentation	500	1, 2, 3, 4	135
Professional Documents	1500	2, 4	310
Final Portfolio	1500	2,3,4	30

✓ Grading Information

This course must be passed with a C or better, as a CSU graduation requirement. Your grade will be calculated in the following way. The course total is 1020 points:

- Technical Writing Assignments —215 points (21% of your grade)
- Tech Policy Assignments —315 points (31% of your grade)
- Professional Writing Assignments — 300 points (29%)
- Final Essay — 30 points (3%)
- Participation — 150 points (15%)

Writing Assignments will receive letter grades according to the following criteria:

- The “A” writing assignment is organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment’s requirements, written in a clear and compelling voice. There is evidence of considerable engagement with the topic and effort put in towards the mastery of details as well as structure.
- The “B” writing assignment responds to the topic suitably, but it may not be as fully developed or as comprehensive as an “A” essay. There is evidence of some engagement with the topic and effort put in towards the mastery of details as well as structure.
- The “C” writing assignment will complete the minimum requirements of the assignment, but it may not be fully developed in fundamentals or in details.
- The “D” writing assignment will neglect to meet all the requirements of the assignment or may be superficial in its treatment of the topic. It may lack development or fail to stay on topic. It may contain errors that interfere with reader comprehension.

Participation is a crucial part of this class. In particular, discussions of material and peer review are key parts of the learning process. Therefore, it is essential that you are in class every day, on time, and ready to participate in class activities and discussions. If you know that you will be absent on a certain day, please let me know via email.

If you cannot make an assignment deadline, please contact me BEFORE THE DUE DATE. Unless an arrangement has been determined in advance, **late work will not receive full credit.** Grades for late assignments (those without prearrangements) will be reduced by 10% the first week, and an additional 10% thereafter.

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS USAGE:

Since reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are integral to the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by you, the student. Therefore, any use of artificial intelligence systems, such as ChatGPT, to complete essays or other assignments constitutes a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. (<https://sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>)

AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

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.