

# TECM 4250

## Manuals and Procedures

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### Course Purpose

Manual and procedure writing is a large part of technical writing. These documents are important to both companies and consumers. They help provide a historical record for company processes and provide consumers with resources to perform tasks and troubleshoot errors. There are many technical and stylistic skills that are needed to ensure you are producing effective documents for end-users. This course will prepare you for writing manuals and procedures in a professional environment.

### Course Objectives

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

- Explain the importance of policies and procedures;
- Identify, craft, and use personas;
- Write a procedure using technical writing best practices;
- Apply a style guide;
- Create reader-focused documentation; and
- Use single-source authoring tools to create documentation

### Textbook and Required Materials

- Writing and Designing Manuals and Warnings, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Patricia A. Robinson
- Microsoft Manual of Style (Available online [here](#))
- Supplemental readings provided on Canvas

You will be required to use MadCap Flare in this course. A free trial is available to UNT students. We'll discuss this more in class as we approach the assignment.

## Assignments

The assignments in this course will help you experience writing documents for end-users in situations similar to a professional environment. Major assignments are in bold.

- **Analyzing Procedures (15%)**
- Creating a Persona (10%)
- **Creating a Procedure (15%)**
- **Working with SMEs (20%)**
- **Training Guide (25%)**
- Professionalism, Quizzes, and Activities (15%)

An overview of each assignment is provided below. Detailed instructions are provided on Canvas and will be discussed in class.

### *Analyzing Procedures — Individual Assignment*

Find an instruction manual in your home and analyze the document. Consider the strengths, weaknesses, and best practices we have discussed. Submit a 1-2 page analysis of these procedures.

### *Persona Assignment — Individual Assignment*

Choose a task (e.g. building a bookshelf or sending an email in Outlook). Using methods discussed in class, build a persona for a user who would complete this task. This persona will be used to help create the procedure for your next major assignment.

### *Creating a Procedure — Individual Assignment*

Using the task chosen and persona created in the previous assignment, create a procedure documenting the process of completing the task. The final procedure must follow technical writing best practices and be appropriately designed. You must use Microsoft Word to complete this assignment.

### *Working with SMEs — Group Assignment*

In small groups, choose a subject matter expert (SME), technical writer, and editor. Your team will choose 3 software or products to create procedures for. With each software or product, your team members will rotate roles. Your team may use Microsoft Word or MapCap Flare for this project.

### *Training Guide — Individual Assignment*

You will choose a software to learn more about. I must approve the software and your plan for your guide. You will write a user manual that includes concept, task, and reference topics about the software you have chosen. You must use MadCap Flare to create this training guide.

### *Professionalism, Quizzes, and Activities*

Your professionalism grade is based on the expectations that I have for you in this course. This includes actively participating in class, complying with all class and university policies, and respecting yourself, me and your fellow peers. Complete assigned readings, activities, any additional quizzes, and conduct yourself in a professional and respectful manner.

# Grading

## *Final Grading Scale*

The following grading scale is applied to your final grade:

**A:** 89.5-100%

**B:** 79.5-89.4%

**C:** 69.5-79.4%

**D:** 59.5-69.4%

**F:** 59.4% and below

## *Assignment Grading*

The following grading criteria is a general guideline for all assignments:

**“A” (90-100%):** A manager would be very impressed and will remember your work when discussing a promotion. Your documents are user-focused, contain excellent content, grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and visual design. The documents are also well-organized, complete, contains the proper formatting and demonstrates a superior understanding of audience and purpose.

**“B” (80-89%):** A manager would be satisfied with your performance, but not impressed. Your documents are well-written, but some issues with grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and/or visual designs exist. The documents are fairly well-organized and demonstrate a strong understanding of audience and purpose.

**“C” (70-79%):** A manager would be disappointed with your performance and would ask for revisions or a rewrite of specific sections before allowing others to view your work. Your documents may have underdeveloped areas or may not be user-focused. The document may also contain errors in grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and/or visual design that affect its readability.

**“D” (60-69%):** A manager would be very disappointed and troubled by your performance. Your documents are not reader-focused and contain several grammatical, sentence structural, mechanical, or visual design errors that affect its readability. The document may also contain incomplete information that prevents the user from completing the full task and a weak understanding of audience and purpose.

**“F” (0-59%):** A manager would look for a replacement for your position. Your work fails to address the assignment’s task and contains serious grammar and mechanical issues that affect the document’s readability. The document is also not user-focused and lacks organization and an understanding audience and purpose. This grad is also assigned for any evidence of plagiarism.

## **Missed/Late Assignments**

All assignments are due via Canvas by 11:59pm CST on the due date unless stated otherwise on Canvas. The submission timestamp determines the time your assignment was turned in.

I will accept missed/late assignments with documentation of significant circumstances (e.g., family emergencies, extended illness, etc.).

### *Major Assignments*

I will accept one (1) late submission on a major assignment. An automatic 15% deduction will be taken. Any late assignments following will not be accepted and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment.

### *Minor Assignments and Quizzes*

No missed/late assignments are accepted for minor assignments and quizzes. Quiz make-ups are not allowed unless documentation of a significant circumstance or illness is provided.

## **Attendance**

Similar to the professional world, attendance is important to ensure you receive all the course content necessary to remain successful in this class. However, I understand that certain circumstances may arise that require you to miss class. You are allowed three (3) absences without penalty. Each missed class after will result in a 10 point deduction from your final grade.

You are responsible for all material covered and ensuring all assignments are completed.

## **Tardiness/Leaving Early**

Tardiness and leaving early can be disruptive to students and cause you to miss important lecture information. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent. Similarly, if you leave class early you will be counted as absent for the day.

If you must arrive late or leave early for a specific reason, please let me know ahead of time and I will be happy to make accommodations.

## **Technology Requirements**

Our classroom has computers for you to use, so you are not required to bring your own device. However, you must have a computer to complete assignments, especially when we get into the MadCap Flare unit. You can check out a laptop through the [Tech Lab](#).

## **Behavior Expectations**

You are expected to remain engaged and respectful during all lectures. Discussions are expected to occur during this course, and your participation is necessary for a successful and productive semester. You are expected to listen and respect your peers. You are also expected to come to class prepared with the assigned text, ready to take notes, and having completed any assigned work and/or reading.

This classroom has computers for you to use for course purposes only. Unacceptable behavior includes surfing the internet, talking with your neighbor, checking email, and working on other assignments.

Students engaging in unacceptable behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct class or other students' ability to learn will be directed to leave the classroom. The instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct (UNT Policy 17.012). The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code applies to your interactions with everyone involved in this course: the instructor, classmates, your project teammates, and invited guests.

### *Cell Phone Use*

Cell phone usage is not allowed during class unless specifically required for an activity (such as a PollAnywhere survey).

## **Academic Integrity**

I follow UNT's policies for student academic integrity. These policies are available [here](#). You are responsible for knowing and following these standards.

## **Office of Disability Accommodations**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course.

You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://disability.unt.edu/>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## Course Schedule

Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus Review</li> <li>• Intro to Policies and Procedures</li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Audiences and Job Tasks</li> </ul>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Task Analysis</li> <li>• Creating Personas</li> <li>• <b>Create a Persona Assignment due</b></li> </ul>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fundamentals of Procedure Writing</li> <li>• Introduction to Style Guides</li> </ul>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and Applying Style Guides</li> <li>• <b>Analyzing Procedures Assignment due (Major Assignment)</b></li> </ul>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying Personas to Writing</li> <li>• Tailoring to Specific Audiences</li> </ul>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Writing Style</li> <li>• Document Design</li> <li>• MadCap Flare Demo</li> </ul>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Review Procedures</li> <li>• Assign Groups for Group Assignment</li> <li>• Industry Professional Guest Speaker</li> <li>• <b>Creating a Procedure Assignment due (Major Assignment)</b></li> </ul>
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with SMEs</li> </ul>
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a Comprehensive User-Guide (Including Multiple Tasks in a Document)</li> <li>• In-Class Group Work</li> </ul>
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-Class Work for Group Assignment</li> <li>• Troubleshoot MadCap Flare</li> <li>• Peer Review of Procedures</li> </ul>
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue In-Class Group Work</li> <li>• Industry Professional Guest Speaker</li> <li>• <b>Creating a User-Guide due (Major Assignment)</b></li> </ul>
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-Source Authoring</li> <li>• Software and Guide Plan due</li> </ul>
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept, Task, and Reference Topics</li> </ul>
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Review of Training Guide</li> <li>• In-Class Workday to Provide Assistance with MadCap Flare</li> </ul>
Week 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the Fundamentals of Procedural Writing</li> <li>• Importance of P&amp;Ps in the Workplace</li> <li>• <b>Training Guide due (Major Assignment)</b></li> </ul>