

English 6389-001 | W 6-8:50pm, Online Synchronous via MS Teams | Fall 2020
Estee Beck, PhD | estee.beck@uta.edu | Carlisle Hall 407 | Office hours by appointment via MS Teams
Adam Stein, MA, Embedded Language Specialist

Welcome to Technical Writing Across the Disciplines. My name is Dr. Estee Beck. I earned a PhD from the Rhetoric and Writing program at Bowling Green State University in 2015. I have been teaching college-level writing for twelve years. I research surveillance and privacy in writing spaces and digital technologies with an eye toward how these topics impact human and machine communication.

The best way to get in touch with me outside of class is through university email. Just make sure to type in my email address in the “to” field. Do not use the auto-populate feature in mavs.uta.edu (if you have a mavs account). Faculty do not have those email extensions and will never receive the email. I also read and respond to emails during intervals Monday through Friday from 10am to 5pm. I will not respond to emails outside of those hours.

Since this is a graduate class with students from multiple disciplines, my online office hours are by appointment to best meet your needs. Just let me know when you would like to meet. We can also meet virtually (video, audio only, and chat) on Google Hangouts or Skype if MS Teams does not work for you.

Prerequisites

This is a graduate course on the topic of writing for the disciplines. As such, I assume each junior scholar and researcher entering this course has the writing competencies outlined by our University’s admissions and State of Texas’ guidelines. However, we all have various levels of writing mastery (including me). Since this is an intensive graduate writing class, if you are concerned with your level of writing expertise, make an appointment with me so that we can figure out an action plan, set goals, and get you the support you need to succeed.

Course Overview

If you have signed up for this course, it is my hope you have an interest in developing your writing habits and learning to write for your discipline. During this semester, you will write a diagnostic essay for me to get a baseline of your writing; you’ll write a semester-plan; target a professional project to revise or write; and, learn some about writing habits, support, and techniques.

This course works if you bring in your own content. Hopefully you have existing research to continue developing, i.e., a proposal, research article, or conference proceeding.

We will learn about academic language phrases most common in research and scholarship, how to identify and correct language use errors, how to adapt and learn new formatting styles, and most importantly—how to support and encourage each other.

Rights of the Learning Community

You and I have the right to a safe learning environment.

This can take many forms. For many here, you have a full course load or heavy lab responsibilities. This can be overwhelming and can breed stress which may or may not effect learning and collaborating with each other. For others, the social and cultural registers of

today's political events—including micro-aggressions and outright discriminatory actions and comments—can lead to diminished learning capacity. In this class, no oppressive cultures or actions will be tolerated. At any time, if you should feel unsafe or unwelcome in this classroom (or in the University), I encourage you to approach me to talk.

You have the right to a useful education.

The purpose of education is to enrich the overall well-being of each person. Higher education extends far beyond the economic benefits that so often pervades cultural discourse surrounding reasons to attend college. However, if at any time, I present, propose or talk about a concept, application or action that feels distant to you, I encourage you to speak up for you and your fellow students. It is entirely possible I may lose sight of the realities you face and your needs for a useful education.

You have the right to accessible learning.

In addition to honoring all the required accessibility guidelines set forth by the University, I promise to make all materials as available as possible. If you have or suspect a disability, I encourage you to communicate with the Office of Disability Services. We will work in concert to make the material in this class accessible.

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Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- support research through organization, structure, and accuracy of writing in commonly accepted discourse conventions for the communities receiving the research,
- develop a cohesively written document for submission to crediting entities (graduate school, journals), and
- identify and correct up to three personal writing errors and continue developing strategies for overcoming additional writing errors.

Required Materials

- *Write Not Matter What: Advice for Academics* by Joli Jensen, ISBN-13: 978-0-22646170-0
- *Writing Science in Plain English* by Anne E. Greene, ISBN-13: 978-0-226-02637-4
- *The Only Academic Phrasebook You'll Ever Need* by Luiz Otávio Barros, ISBN 9781539527756
- *The Writing Workshop: Write More, Write Better, Be Happier in Academia* by Barbara W. Sarnecka, ISBN 9781733484602
- Access to a personal computing device for online synchronous class with audio capabilities [preferably video as well] (the library does have laptops that can be checked out periodically)

For Engineering Students Only:

- *Writing in Engineering: A Brief Guide* by Robert Irish, ISBN 978-0-19-934355-3

Writing Support

In English 5331, you will receive peer and instructor feedback on your drafts of works-in-progress. Peer feedback will occur through MS Teams. You will identify specific traits that are pre-populated by the instructor, e.g., “The summary adequately details the main points of the journal article for readers” and evaluate the overall effectiveness of your peer’s writing on a 5-point scale. You will undergo training on how to evaluate peer drafts, and how to provide quality peer feedback. In addition to training, you will undergo multiple instructor-led peer feedback norming sessions throughout the semester to ensure consistency and quality of feedback for all enrolled. You will provide two peer feedbacks this semester.

The instructor feedback on student writing consists of two types of commenting practices developed from the discipline of writing studies: 1) directive/facilitative commenting, i.e., identification of an error, explanation of the error, and consideration of how to remedy the error; and 2) affirmative commenting, i.e., identification of positive writing traits to support what the writer does well.

Course Projects

Note: All projects due before class begins via MS Teams Direct Message.

Semester Plan: This will be created during class and submitted at the end after reviewing a 1.5 hour long video on developing the semester plan during the first class meeting. **Due: Week 2, Wednesday, September 2**

Diagnostic Essay: Part of mentoring you through developing more writing skills means obtaining a baseline essay on your writing ability at the start of the semester. Based on a list of questions, you will respond to those and submit. **Due: Week 3, Wednesday, September 9**

Peer Feedback: Part of writing in collaboration (and not isolation) is learning how to give quality peer feedback on works-in-progress to those whose work may or may not closely align with your research interests. You will provide two rounds of peer review this semester. **Due: Week 7, Wednesday, October 7, and Week 12, Wednesday, November 11**

Progress Report: You will provide a brief progress report of no more than five (5) double-spaced pages in the format (APA, e.g.) of your discipline sharing with me your status with your individual semester-long project. **Due: Week 10, Wednesday, October 28**

Final Project: You will submit a final project, such a thesis or dissertation prospectus, a research paper, a portion of a dissertation, a conference proceeding, or a substantially revised previous paper, appropriate to your disciplinary standards and status in your program as a master’s or doctoral student. The final project should at least 10 pages in length not to exceed 25 pages. **Due: Week 14, Tuesday, November 24**

Self-Assessment: During the final course hour, we will meet individually, where you will overview your learning and progress throughout the course and receive feedback on your final project. During this session, you will provide a self-assessment of your work and provide a rationale for your final course grade. We will discuss your final course grade during this self-assessment. **Due Week 15, December 2**

Grading

As an employee of the university, it’s my duty to assess your activities and projects. With this expressed, your grade does not determine or measure your learning ability or how you pursued the learning

outcomes of the course. A grade is merely a diagnostic snapshot of what you can produce under guidelines and time constraints.

Authentic learning—the kind that goes beyond rote and short-term memory storage—is not something that I can impart to you. You do this for yourself. Authentic learning is painful (those moments of frustration and/or feeling the limits are modes of authentic learning) and requires deep personal engagement with material. It comes from within yourself and in conversation with communities. Only you can assess how well you learned the material in this course.

For all informal work (in-class activities, discussions), you will receive acknowledgement of work completed by virtue of participation. You will not receive participation points, but rather you will receive verbal and/or written encouragement from me throughout the semester on your informal work performance.

For all major assignments (except the peer review), you will receive copious amounts of feedback (marginal and summative) on the work. You will not receive a letter grade.

You might wonder why this is the policy. I want to encourage you to move away from the pursuit of chasing grades or just settling for what's easy. I want you to work in space where *learning is the currency of value*—not the final grade on a project. What really matters is how you learn the material and the feedback you receive along the way. Not the grade.

At the end of the semester, you and I will meet for your self-assessment. At this time, you will discuss your learning progress, ability to meet deadlines, and writing growth. During this meeting, you will provide a rationale for your final course grade, and we will discuss. What is settled upon during this meeting, will be your final course grade.

Things I will take into consideration during your self-assessment: Did you meet all assignment guidelines? Did you submit your work on or before the deadline? If you didn't, did you ask for an extension well in advance thereby exhibiting responsibility? Did you show progress with your writing over the arc of a semester? What did you learn about your writing habits? What takeaways do you have from the course?

If during the semester, you miss a deadline (or more), not show up for more than one class, then you will be in danger of failing the course. I will reach out to you via email to schedule a meeting.

All grades are assigned along this scale: A=90-100, B=80-89.99, C=70-79.99, F=any grade below 69.99.

Office Hours

I open my office to you as an extension of the classroom, including any virtual meetings or individual tutoring sessions with academic writing. There is no shame or embarrassment in asking for help. However, it is common to feel anxious about approaching one's teacher outside of class.

I promise to respect you and earn your trust through compassionate listening and understanding. As a teacher, I know there is a power-relation between us. While I can do my best to reduce this relation, I hope you think of me as an imperfect and vulnerable person (who may make silly mistakes, but I will own up to them), just like you.

Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule based upon collective or individual needs. I will inform all of you changes at least one-week in advance.

WK 1: 8.26

6:00-6:50: Orientation

7:00-7:30: Daily Writing

7:35-8:50: Semester Plan—VIDEO

Work for Next Class (9.2):

- *Finish the semester plan and be ready to discuss in small groups on MS Teams*
- *Read Chapter 2: Planning Your Time from The Writing Workshop*

WK 2: 9.2

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:30-6:50: What do writers do?

7:00-7:50: Discussion of the semester plan: Lessons learned

8:00-8:50: Your Writing Habits: Inventory & discussion

DUE: SEMESTER PLAN

Reading for Next Class (9.9):

- *Write No Matter What, Part 1 & Part 2*
- *The Practice of Writing, Chapter 3, from The Writing Workshop*
- *Supplemental: For Engineering students only: Chapter 1 of Writing in Engineering: A Brief Guide*

WK 3: 9.9

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:35-7:00: What's holding you back from daily writing?

7:00-7:50: Large group discussion of planning to write

8:00-8:30: Breakout group #1: Discussion of supplemental

8:00-8:30: Breakout group #2: Video on audience and purpose in academic & professional writing

8:35-8:50: Check-in with course project (identify and plan)

DUE: DIAGNOSTIC ESSAY

Reading for Next Class (9.16):

- *Write No Matter What, Part 3*

WK 4: 9.16

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:30-7:00: Writing check-in with peers

7:00-7:50: Fixing Technical Errors with Mr. Adam Stein

8:00-8:50: What are the writing myths you hold?

Reading for Next Class (9.23):

- *Write No Matter What, Part 4*

WK 5: 9.23

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6:00-6:30: Daily Writing
6:30-7:00: Informal progress report on writing
7:00-7:50: Overcoming Writing Myths
8:00-8:50: Giving Peer Feedback

Reading for Next Class (9.30):

- *Scientific Articles, Chapter 5, from The Writing Workshop*
- *Why Write Science in Plain English, Chapter 1 and Before You Write, Chapter 2 from Writing Science in Plain English*
- *Supplemental: For Engineering students only: Chapter 2 of Writing in Engineering: A Brief Guide*

WK 6: 9.30

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing
6:30-7:00: Informal discussion on adjusting the semester plan
7:00-7:50: Organizational Patterns in Scientific and Engineering Articles
8:00-8:50: Fixing Technical Errors with Mr. Adam Stein

Reading for Next Class (10.7):

- Breakout Group #1: *Literature Reviews, Chapter 4, from The Writing Workshop* (for those in disciplines who integrate literature reviews in articles)
- Breakout Group #2: *Design Reports from Chapter 4 of Writing in Engineering: A Brief Guide* (for those in disciplines rely upon review essays from established researchers, i.e., literature reviews are not integrated in articles)

WK 7: 10.7

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing
6:30-7:00: Informal discussion with progress on writing
7:00-7:50: Breakout Group #1: Lecture on Literature Reviews
7:00-7:50: Breakout Group #2: Peer Review
8:00-8:50: Breakout Group #2: Lecture on Design Reports
8:00-8:50: Breakout Group #1: Peer Review

DUE: PEER FEEDBACK DURING CLASS

Reading for Next Class (10.14):

- *Paragraphs, Chapter 8 from The Writing Workshop*
- *Design Your Paragraphs, Chapter 10 from Writing Science in Plain English*
- *Supplemental: For Engineering students only: Pages 151–170 of Writing in Engineering: A Brief Guide*

WK 8: 10.14

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing
6:30-7:00: Informal discussion challenges with daily writing and writing myths
7:00-7:50: Lecture on Writing Coherent and Cohesive Paragraphs
8:00-8:50: Fixing Technical Errors with Mr. Adam Stein

Reading for Next Class (10.21):

- *Sentences, Chapter 9 from The Writing Workshop*

- Old Information and New Information, Chapter 7 and Vary the Length of Your Sentences, Chapter 9 from Writing Science in Plain English
- *Supplemental: For Engineering students only: Pages 171–191 of Writing in Engineering: A Brief Guide*

WK 9: 10.21

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:30-7:00: Informal discussion on the demands of graduate school with time management

7:00-7:50: Lecture on Developing Sentence Variety, Length, and Organization of Content

8:00-8:50: Discussion on semester plan, creating a writing network, and establishing peer feedback

Reading for Next Class (10.28):

- *Words, Chapter 10 from The Writing Workshop*
- *Choose Your Words with Care, Chapter 5 and Omit Needless Words, Chapter 6 from Writing Science in Plain English*
- *Supplemental: For Engineering students only: Pages 192–205 of Writing in Engineering: A Brief Guide*

WK 10 10.28

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:30-7:00: Informal discussion on working through conflict, stress, and writing

7:00-7:50: Lecture on Word Selection and Editing for Conciseness

8:00-8:50: Fixing Technical Errors with Mr. Adam Stein

DUE: PROGRESS REPORT

Note: Swap papers for peer feedback due in two weeks

WK 11 11.4

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:30-7:00: Informal discussion on writing progress

7:00-7:50: Workshopping of Works-in-Progress on the Big Screen

8:00-8:50: Workshopping of Works-in-Progress on the Big Screen

WK 12 11.11

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:30-7:00: Informal discussion on peer feedback versus professional feedback

7:00-7:50: Workshopping of Works-in-Progress on the Big Screen

8:00-8:50: Workshopping of Works-in-Progress on the Big Screen

DUE: PEER FEEDBACK (Complete out of class)

WK 13 11.18

6:00-6:30: Daily Writing

6:30-7:00: Informal discussion on writing progress

7:00-7:50: Workshopping of Works-in-Progress on the Big Screen

8:00-8:50: Workshopping of Works-in-Progress on the Big Screen

WK 14 11.24 (Tuesday)

DUE: FINAL PROJECT

WK 15

Individual Conferences with Dr. Beck for self-assessment grading through December 4th

The university requires I state the following policies verbatim:

Mandatory Face Covering Policy

All students and instructional staff are required to wear facial coverings while they are on campus, inside buildings and classrooms. Students that fail to comply with the facial covering requirement will be asked to leave the class session. If students need masks, they may obtain them at the Central Library, the E.H. Hereford University Center's front desk or in their department. Students who refuse to wear a facial covering in class will be asked to leave the session by the instructor, and, if the student refuses to leave, they may be reported to UTA's Office of Student Conduct.

Attendance

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance.

[Dr. Beck's attendance policy: Since this is a graduate course, the expectation is attending every class. However, emergencies do happen, thus you may miss one (1) class unexcused and without penalty. If you miss more than one (1) class and for each additional missed class you can choose between the following two options:

- 1) an authored five-page essay by you on a topic of my choosing with 1" margins, double spaced due within one calendar week from the absence before class begins via email, or
- 2) a penalty to the final course grade. If there is an extenuating circumstance, e.g., hospitalization, I will work with you so you can make up the work, but you need to inform me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements to keep you on track.)

If you choose the authored five-pay essay, it's your responsibility to contact me for the topic. If you do not contact me, and the one calendar week from the absence passes, you will receive the penalty to the final course grade during the self-assessment meeting.]

While UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Disability Accommodations

UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the

instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Emergency Exit Procedures

This is an online class. There are no emergency exit procedures.

Student Support Services

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers free tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email IDEAS@uta.edu or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.- Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services.

Institution Information

UTA students are encouraged to review the below institutional policies and informational sections and reach out to the specific office with any questions. To view this institutional information, please visit the [Institutional Information](http://www.uta.edu/provost/administrative-forms/course-syllabus/index.php) page (<http://www.uta.edu/provost/administrative-forms/course-syllabus/index.php>) which includes the following policies among others:

- Drop Policy
- Disability Accommodations
- Title IX Policy

- Academic Integrity
- Student Feedback Survey
- Final Exam Schedule