



Department of

Technical Communication

Mercer University

SYLLABUS FOR TCO 498:

Graduation Exhibit for Technical Communication (1 Semester Credit)

Mercer University, Macon, Georgia

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Prerequisite: Senior Status

Co-Requisite: TCO 496

Public presentation of portfolio, seminar, or other senior capstone exhibits. Required for students selecting TCO 496, Internship.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this exhibit, students have demonstrated these abilities:

- To define and describe the professional field of technical communication to a public audience
- To display typical products produced by technical communicators, along with indications of what constitutes excellent quality
- To meet or exceed the professional, technical, organizational, and ethical standards of technical communicators in the work environment, as demonstrated by employer evaluations
- To demonstrate and explain the value that technical communicators add within corporate environments
- To demonstrate ability to function as a self-managed professional, creating learning objectives and evaluating performance
- To provide evaluative feedback to help the TCO department improve its curriculum and to assist other students who will be seeking internships.

COURSE STANDARDS:

The Graduation Exhibit provides a final demonstration of a student's readiness to enter the profession of technical communication and to make significant contributions. Additionally, it provides a way for the department to display evidence that students have met or exceeded the learning objectives for the curriculum. Because it is a public exhibition and presentation, students are reminded that the highest professional standards will be met. These exhibits directly affect the public awareness of and evaluation of the Technical Communication Department.

GRADING STANDARDS:

To earn a Satisfactory grade, students must successfully complete the course requirements listed below. While a "C" grade is passing, students are expected to perform at least at the "B" level. Grading will include both written and oral elements of the seminar, with feedback from professors, students, and visitors. The Employers Evaluation will be carefully considered, along with the Final Work Report, the Professional Log, the Seminar, the Display, and the Portfolio.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Prepare and deliver an informative, inspiring seminar presentation to TCO students, faculty, and guests. This seminar will include what you learned and how; how well your Mercer TCO courses prepared you for success; recommendations to the department for improvements; and advice to students who will be seeking internships in the future.
2. Display your portfolio of work products in a professional manner.
3. Create a visual display that serves to build public awareness of the technical communication profession.
4. Provide a copy of your seminar presentation to the department chair and handouts for the audience.

All materials are due no later than the time of your internship seminar presentation.

SCHEDULING YOUR SEMINAR:

Approximately two weeks before the end of your internship, contact the professor to determine the schedule for the seminar presentations. Seminars may be scheduled in groups if possible or individually if necessary. They are typically about a half-hour long with question/answer sessions at the end. Professional dress is expected.

INVITING YOUR SUPERVISOR:

You are encouraged to invite your supervisor(s) and other friends to your seminar. Please notify the professor in advance so that adequate room is reserved. Please provide names and job titles of any company guests.

Final Work Report, Portfolio, Display TCO 498

I. Work Report

Purpose

The Final Work Report that you submit when you return to school following your TCO Internship is an important part of the learning experience. In it, you reflect on your entire experience, evaluate your own learning, describe your own growth and development as a professional, and make recommendations to the department regarding its curriculum and focus. This feedback loop is an integral part not only of your learning, but also of the Technical Communication Department's commitment to continuous quality improvement in our program.

Preparation

Your Learning Objectives and your daily log or journal will form primary resource materials for your work report. Review all the materials at hand and set aside some time to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate your whole experience. Learning occurs in many areas of your life, both personal and professional. Feel free to share all of these, but please keep in mind that your work report will form a part of our departmental archives and will be open to review by students following after you.

Contents

Use your textbook from TCO 341 as a guide to producing your final report. Typically, these parts will be included:

- Letter of transmittal
- Title page, identifying you, the company, your supervisor, job title, dates
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Body of the report
 1. Introduction--explains the setting, the job you were hired to do
 2. Narrative--reports what you did on the job
 3. Analysis and Evaluation--discusses the nature and performance level you achieved, pros and cons, questions or concerns, observations and reflections
- Recommendations to the department
- Portfolio (included or separate cover)

Please review reports done by previous interns and try to exceed their standards as you prepare your own.

II. Portfolio

- **Description of Contents**

The portfolio is an accumulation of the deliverables you have developed during your internship. Adhere to the company standards for privacy or protection from disclosing proprietary information. For example, you may be able to show a product in your Seminar, but not be able to keep it in the portfolio as an example of your work. In this case, be certain that you have developed enough materials to demonstrate your competency in the various professional tasks expected from technical communicators at Mercer University.

- **Display Copy**

As a part of the materials that you turn in, prepare a portfolio to leave with the department to be displayed on its open shelves. Companies, students, and faculty may seek access to these display copies for a number of purposes. Prepare an attractive cover and spine for your materials, so that they are easily identified with your name, date, etc.

III. Graduation Exhibit: Seminar and Visual Display

- **Planning and Scheduling the Seminar**

Approximately three weeks prior to the ending of your internship, contact the department chairperson to schedule your public seminar. Depending upon the number of TCO interns at the time, the seminar may be a group or individual event. You may invite your supervisor, friends or family to your seminar; please let the department chair know of the number expected to attend, so that adequate space may be reserved. Typically, you will have about half an hour to present your internship experience and answer questions.

- **Audience and Purpose**

The audience should be identified as potential employers, faculty members, and upper-division TCO majors. The purpose of the internship is not only to display your activities and knowledge gained on the job, but also to exemplify the highest standards of professional presentational skills. A copy of your presentation and a videotape of the seminar will be handed in at the end of your presentation.

- **Preparing the Visual Display**

In order to make your experience concrete to attendees at the seminar, prepare a visual display that informs and extends awareness of such topics as the company and its business; the description of the job you held; the deliverables you produced, etc. Include a small photo of yourself, along with your name and the company's name. Usually this display will be left with the TCO Department; however, if the materials are not appropriate for public access (proprietary), the display may be returned to the company.