



# Written Communication

## Course Syllabus

Spring 2012

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## Course Description:

Written Communication focuses on developing the skills you need for effective writing, both in daily living and on the job. You will recognize and deal with written communication strengths and weaknesses through class activities, individual assignments, and discussions. You will practice the pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing stages of the writing process. Grammar, sentence structure, idea organization, and writing style will be emphasized.

## Course Objectives:

Written Communication is designed to help students improve specific writing skills (Course Competencies) and develop certain character traits (Core Abilities). These competencies and abilities are listed below:

### Course Competencies:

- Establish document purpose.
- Apply audience analysis techniques.
- Generate ideas for writing.
- Research outside sources.
- Synthesize information from sources.
- Organize document content.
- Employ rhetorical strategies.
- Write final text from drafts.
- Design document format.
- Respond to/Give reader feedback
- Verify English usage against conventional terms.

### Core Abilities:

- Act with integrity
- Communicate effectively
- Demonstrate effective critical and creative thinking
- Demonstrate global and social awareness

### Required Textbooks:

- *The Elements of Technical Writing* by Thomas A. Pearsall. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Allyn & Bacon, 2010.
- *Easy Writer: A Pocket Reference* by 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Andrea A. Lunsford. Bedford St. Martin's, 2010.
- *Written Communication Computer Help Manual* by Mary Jae Kleckner

## My Objectives:

My goal is to make you all more effective and confident writers, which can be valuable whether you plan to find a new job or simply advance in your current one. Learning to organize and explain your ideas and argue your points clearly and logically can help you:

- adapt more easily to sudden and unpredictable changes in the workplace;
- increase how credible and competent others perceive you to be; and
- become more influential and successful in getting what you ask for.

In short, although you may not need it every day, being able to “turn on” formal writing and speaking ability when you need something is a decided advantage when it comes to getting jobs, promotions, assistance, and respect.

## Course Expectations:

Part of my job is to help prepare you for the workplace. Employers have little to no patience with chronic or unexcused absenteeism, habitual tardiness, and constant failure to meet deadlines or quality standards. The following expectations are based upon MSTC’s core abilities and are designed to help get you into habits that will prepare you for working in “The Real World.” *They are non-negotiable:*

**Do your own work.** I will not tolerate plagiarism. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is. The penalty for plagiarizing written assignments can range from a failing grade on the assignment to a failing grade in the course, depending upon the severity of the offense. Penalties are issued at my discretion.

**Read the instructions.** I provide specific instructions for each assignment. If you choose not to follow them, you will receive a zero on that assignment until you revise it. If you do not understand the instructions, ask me for clarification before the assignment is due.

**Be respectful during class.** Chatting, text messaging, or working on unrelated projects during class does not meet the core ability “Act with integrity.”

If you exhibit these or any other behaviors that do not meet MSTC’s core abilities during class, I will mark you absent for the day and may ask you to leave class.

**Attend class.** You earn participation points for in-class activities. You also get 1 point for telling me in advance when you will be absent. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting the materials you missed from my faculty web site and Blackboard. If you miss more than 6 classes in a row without contacting me, I reserve the right to drop you from the course.

**Meet deadlines.** You are responsible for all assignment deadlines whether you choose to attend class or not. If you miss a deadline, quiz, or in-class exercise without telling me ahead of time, you will receive a zero on it with no opportunity for revision. You may receive up to two 1-week deadline extensions if you ask me the day before the assignment is due.

If you are sick the day of a deadline, you must contact me before class.

**Do revisions.** Final drafts earning less than 80% will get two additional chances to revise, as long as deadlines are met. If after two tries you don’t pass, you’ll keep your highest score.

**Be on time.** You will earn one absence for every three times you come to class late. If you need to leave class early, talk to me before class or I will mark you absent.

**Use your MSTC email account.** To assure everyone has the same information, I often communicate with students through their MY.MSTC email account. Therefore, I expect you to read your campus email regularly (at least 1-2 times a week).

### **MSTC Email Policy:**

All email correspondence to your instructors **MUST** be sent through you’re MY.MSTC email account. For safety against computer viruses and to remove SPAM email messages, your MSTC instructors may delete without reading any email from an account other than your assigned MY.MSTC.EDU address.

If you use any other email account (such as yahoo or hotmail) to contact your instructor – assume that the message will **NOT** be read.

**Be responsible.** It is your responsibility to keep track of your own deadlines and grades in your MyMSTC grade book. If you are worried about your grade, please talk with me before dropping the class.

## Written Communication Grading Scale

Assignments, papers, and other projects will be graded using the following scale:

A: 95-100%	A-: 93-94%	B+: 91-92%	B: 89-90%	B-: 87-88%	
C+: 85-86%	C: 80-84%	C-: 78-79%	D: 72-77%	D-: 70-71%	F: 69% ↓

In the workplace, mediocre writing can cause your documents to be ineffective, disregarded or ridiculed. In this class, you must achieve a cumulative grade of at least 80% to earn a C. *As long as you meet deadlines*, you will have the opportunity to revise nearly all assignments to reach 80% of the possible points. I will also give you specific grading criteria for each assignment. Reading and meeting those criteria can save you both time and points.

### Reasons students end up taking Written Communication more than once:

- ♦ **Apathy.** Students who don't pay attention in class, won't read & follow instructions, and/or don't ask questions tend to struggle with this course.
- ♦ **Attitude.** Students who don't think their communication style influences the way they are treated and/or believe other people's perspectives don't matter tend to struggle with this course.
- ♦ **Academic Preparation.** Students who lack study, reading, and/or writing skills tend to struggle with this course (see resources below).

## Where to find help meeting the grade requirements

If you need additional help reaching the 80% competency rate, you have several options:

### *I can help you.*

Email or call me to schedule an appointment. My contact information and office location are listed on the front page of this

### *A tutor can help you.*

Talk to me or the Student Affairs office (422-5445) to make arrangements for a free personal tutor.

### *The ASC can help you.*

Located at the end of E-Building, the Academic Support Center (ASC) provides free help with your school-related projects and homework.

Stop by, sign in, and work with an ASC instructor. Call (422-5496) for hours of operation.

*To avoid situations in which you might make mistakes may be the biggest mistake of all... Mistakes, obviously, show us what needs improving. Without mistakes, how would we know what we had to work on?*

— Peter McWilliams, *Life 101*

## Where to discuss disability accommodations

If you know you have a recognized disability or suspect that you might have one, it is your responsibility to identify yourself to me and the Disability Services staff in Student Services as soon as possible. Course standards will not be lowered, but various kinds of accommodations are available to you. Adequate and reasonable time will be required to develop and provide appropriate accommodations, so please let me know the first day of class and contact the Disability Services staff in Student Services as soon as possible. It is Mid-State's goal to assist you in your educational plan.

### **Patti Lloyd**

Disabilities Coordinator  
patti.lloyd@mstc.edu  
(715) 422-5452

### **Gina Klukas**

Testing Services Specialist  
gina.klukas@mstc.edu  
(715) 422-5455

## Assignments

Week	Written Assignment	Reading Assignment
1-16-12	Plagiarism Quiz	<i>Lunsford</i> : WRITING Section 1 (pp. 12-25)
1-23-12	Purpose Statement – First Draft/Peer Review	<i>Pearsall</i> : Chapter 1: <i>Know Your Purpose</i> (pp. 2-6)
1-30-12	Purpose Statement – Final Draft	<i>Lunsford</i> : SENTENCE GRAMMAR Sections 7-13 (pp. 60-92)
2-6-12	Audience Analysis – First Draft/Peer Review	<i>Pearsall</i> : Chapter 2: <i>Know Your Audience</i> (pp. 10-18)
2-6-12	Audience Analysis – Final Draft	<i>Lunsford</i> : PUNCTUATION/MECHANICS Sections 19-28 (pp. 106-140)
2-13-12	Business Letter – First Draft/Peer Review	<i>Pearsall</i> : Chapter 4: <i>Write Clearly and Precisely</i> (pp. 34-46) Chapter 10: <i>Formats of Correspondence</i> (pp. 143-153)
2-20-12	Business Letter – Final Draft	<i>Lunsford</i> : SENTENCE STYLE Sections 14-18 (pp. 92-104) LANGUAGE Sections 29-32 (pp. 142-155)
2-20-12	Library Exercise	
3-5-12	Work Plan – First Draft	<i>Lunsford</i> : RESEARCH Section 38-40 (pp. 176-202)
3-5-12	Paraphrasing Quiz	<i>Lunsford</i> : RESEARCH Section 39 (pp. 184-197)
3-12-12	Work Plan Peer Review	
3-26-12	Work Plan – Final Draft	
4-2-12	Research Notes	<i>Lunsford</i> : DOCUMENTATION Section 43 (pp. 253-282) RESEARCH Section 40 (pp. 197-202)
4-9-12	Outline – First Draft/Peer Review	<i>Pearsall</i> : Chapter 3: <i>Choose and Organize Your Content around Your Purpose and Audience</i> (pp. 20-31)
4-16-12	Outline – Final Draft	<i>Pearsall</i> : Chapter 5: <i>Use Good Page Design</i> (pp. 48-62) Chapter 7: <i>Write Ethically</i> (pp. 83-86 & 93-97 only)
4-23-12	Position Paper – First Draft/Peer Review	<i>Lunsford</i> : WRITING Section 3 (pp. 25-38) & Sections 5-6 (pp. 46-58) RESEARCH Section 41 (pp. 202-204)
4-30-12	Position Paper – Final Draft	<i>Pearsall</i> : Chapter 6: <i>Think Visually</i> (pp. 63-80)
5-7-12	Instructions – First Draft/Peer Review	<i>Pearsall</i> : Chapter 9: <i>Formats of Reports “Instructions”</i> (pp. 123-130)
5-14-12	Instructions – Final Draft	

## Important Dates

◆ **Monday, January 16**

First day of classes

◆ **Week of March 12**

Written Communication  
Mid-term Meetings  
*Attendance mandatory*

◆ **Week of March 19**

Spring Break

◆ **Friday, April 6**

*No classes*

◆ **Tuesday, April 24**

Student Advisement Day  
*No daytime classes*

*(classes scheduled after 4:00 p.m. meet)*

◆ **Thursday, May 17**

Last day of classes - Return textbook rentals