# Rhetoric 310: Business and Technical Communication
**Class: 12:45 pm – 2:30 pm   Tues/Thurs            Lone Mountain 358**


**Instructor:**
Sheri McClure-Baker
Office: McLaren 113
Office: 415.422.5479
Mobile: 559.943.READ (7323)
smcclurebaker@usfca.edu
Office Hours:  Wed: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
                         By appointment on site or via Skype

**Required Texts**
> *Technical Communication* by Mark Markel

**Required Materials**
> USB drive or cloud-based storage
> Highlighter
> Non-spiral bound paper for in class writing


## USF Official Course Description

Students will learn the practices of writing in business and technical fields and contexts. Students will produce several major documents (at least one of them collaboratively) typically used in business and technical environments (such as a proposal, a report, an instruction manual, a trade journal article or a web site, a portfolio of correspondence), and will complete a variety of minor assignments (e.g., a Power Point presentation, an oral presentation, or an instruction sheet). Students will also develop skills in editing for correctness, clarity, and appropriateness of style and tone. Fulfills Core A2.

Instead of simply focusing on document production, we will learn about professional communication practices. In RHET110 you should have learned about how to use your audience to construct your rhetoric, and we will apply that same practice to different types of professional communication in various mediums, such as presentations, resumés, emails, and websites. I will ask you to reflect on how you have constructed individual pieces of rhetoric and compile your best works into a professional online portfolio, which you can either keep private or use for professional development outside the classroom.

## Assessment

### Grading
A 'C-' or better must be obtained for this course. We will use a grading contract in this course, so please see the Grading Contract document for specific details.

### The Professional Portfolio
There are no grades in the business world; there is only success or failure. However, this is academia. The Grading Contract will give you the freedom to build your skills throughout the semester, but the

professional portfolio is where you will present yourself and your communication skills to an outside audience.

The Grading Contract explains the three basic steps to passing this class:

- For a "C" grade, complete everything in the spirit it is assigned, come to class, be engaged.
- For a "B" grade, do everything for a "C" grade *and* be a show quality engagement in class and during external group time.
- The porfolio comes into play for the "A" grade. At the end of the semester, groups from a different class will use a rubric your class has created to assess the strength of your professional portfolios. If you have met the requirements for the "B" *and* your portfolio shows you have a strong grasp of business and technical writing, then you have earned an "A" in the class.

In other words, the portfolio is very important. But the goal of the professional portfolio is not just to get you a good grade; it is to help you create a professional website that features you and your work that you can use to apply for jobs, internships, and other opportunities. We will all use Wordpress.com because it is free, customizable, and can be made entirely private (if you so desire).

The portfolio will be a place to showcase what you have learned and begin to construct your professional persona. It also allows you to continuously develop and revisit your writing throughout the semester, so that you can put your best work forward when quality matters most. You will get feedback from me and from your classmates throughout the semester. What you *learn* from this class is largely dependent upon how engaged you choose to be; what you *earn* in the class is dependant upon engagement and mastery.

**Rubrics**
Each of the four projects will come with additional details about what is expected during the completion of that assignment. We will only use a clearly defined rubric for the professional portfolio read and preparation, but there will be general requirements used to guide your writing and revision. This information will be provided with the assignment of each project.

**Official Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**
Department-wide SLOs ensure that sections of the same course maintain consistency despite being taught by different professors. These outcomes guide all of the assignments in this course.

1. Critical analysis of academic discourse: Students critically analyze linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in long and complex texts from a variety of genres, subjects, and fields.
2. Integrating multiple academic sources: Students incorporate multiple texts of length and complexity within a unified argumentative essay, addressing connections and differences among them.
3. Academic research: Students develop sophisticated research questions and compose substantial arguments in response to those questions, incorporating extensive independent library research and demonstrating mastery of standard academic documentation modes.
4. Style: Students edit their own prose to achieve a clear and mature writing style in keeping with the conventions of academic and/or professional discourse.
5. Revision: Students develop their own revision strategies for extending and enriching early drafts and for producing polished advanced academic writing.

## Attendance

Each student is a vital member of our conversation and therefore the entire class suffers when any one person is missing. For this reason, you are expected to attend and participate in each class session. As stated in the Grading Contract, each student may miss up to four class, which is 86% of our class time, and still maintain a C. **Excessive absences throughout the semester will affect your grade. You cannot learn if you do not attend.**

### Exception

When representing the University of San Francisco in intercollegiate competition (e.g., athletics, debate), students shall be excused from classes on the hours or days such competition takes them away from classes. However, such students shall be responsible for advising their professors regarding anticipated absences and for arranging to complete course work for classes, laboratories, and/or examinations missed.

## Assignments

**All final drafts must be typed.** As for daily assignments, typing is always preferred to hand writing in this class. If, however, it is difficult for the student to obtain access to a computer, papers must be written **legibly** in **blue or black ink** on paper with a clean tear on the left – **no fringed paper** please.

### Group Work & Reflections

You will form groups in Week One and stay with those groups throughout the semester. They will be like your family, and you will be required to meet together outside of class for one hour each week. After these meetings, each of you will write a ½-1 page reflection (150 words minimum) about what you did and how it helped you with that week's work/class concepts. Some reflections will be more guided than others.

### Final Self-Assessment

You must complete a guided self-assessment before meeting with your instructor for your arranged final conference. The assessment will ask you to reflect critically on your progress in the class as evidenced through your porfolio. It will also ask you to assign yourself a letter grade. We will discuss this document, your portfolio, and your overall engagement with the class in your final conference in order to determine your final grade.

### The Units & their Projects

Each unit contains smaller assignments that lead to a larger assignment, which I will refer to as the project. The project might be a mini-portfolio or a paper, and the final unit culminates in a professional portfolio you'll create through wordpress.com. More details will be given at the start of each project.

#### Unit One: Introduction to Technical Communication (Weeks 1-3)

Technical communication provides an important framework (or way of thinking) about written and oral communication, which is why we will begin by reading some foundational tech comm texts. Each week, you will write a 1 page reflection in which you try to make sense of what we have read. At the end of three weeks, you will revise those reflections and add to them to create a more focused document in which you define a few key tech comm concepts and explain how/why they are important to successful business

communication practices. The draft submitted in Week Three should be 3+ pages and reference at 4-6 sources we have read and discussed as a class.

### Unit Two: Constructing a Professional Identity  (Weeks 4-7)
In this unit, we will apply technical communication theories to traditional job-related documentation, like resumes, emails, letters, graphics, and memos. You will write a variety of short business-related documents along with brief reflections during these four weeks. You will then choose 2-3 of these documents to revise and include in your professional portfolio, which is your final project for this course.

### Unit Three: Communicating to a Global Audience (Weeks 8-11)
This unit will help you move from communicating with a local and more known audience to thinking about a larger, global audience. The large project in this unit will be a combination group presentation and proposal or recommendation report. More details will be provided as we get closer to this unit.

### Unit Four: Building a Professional Portfolio (Weeks 12-14)
We will spend this final unit preparing for, building, and assessing your professional portfolios. We will discuss how to write survey questions, and the class will create as assessment questionare we will use to read professional portfolios as outside businesspeople. As noted above, the professional portfolio will be a place to show off what you have learned throughout the class *and* create a professional website you can use and develop throughout yoru professional career.


## Important Dates

All dates are subject to change. This calendar represents only major events in the class. Modules will be posted in Canvas for each project, and will contain all important material along with a detailed calendar of in-class activites and homework.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tues. Jan. 24 | First day of class |
| | Begin Unit One |
| Mon. Feb 20 | Due: Project One |
| | President's Day: No Classes |
| Tues. Feb. 21 | Begin Unit Two |
| Tues. March 6 | Due: Project Two Draft One |
| March 13-17 | Spring Break: No Classes |
| Mon. March 20 | Due: Project Two, Draft Two |
| Mon. March 27 | Due: Project Two |
| Tues. March 28 | Begin Unit Three |
| Th-F Apr. 13-14 | Easter Holiday: No Classes from **4pm on Thurs.** |
| Mon. Apr. 17 | Due: Project Three |
| Tues. Apr. 18 | Begin Unit Four |
| Mon. May 8 | Due: Project Four |
| T & Th May 9-11 | Group Portfolio Assessments and Conference Prep. |
| Mon-Wed May 15-17 | Final Conferences: 15 Minute Time Periods Arranged (Details TBD) |
| | Due: Final Self-Assessment Materials |

# Institutional Policies and Resources

**Confidentiality, Mandatory Reporting, and Sexual Assault**
As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on USFs campus with the University. Here are other resources:

- To report any sexual misconduct, students may visit Anna Bartkowski (UC 5th floor) or see many other options by visiting our website: www.usfca.edu/student_life/safer
- Students may speak to someone confidentially, or report a sexual assault confidentially by contacting Counseling and Psychological Services at 415-422-6352.
- To find out more about reporting a sexual assault at USF, visit USFs Callisto website at: www.usfca.callistocampus.org.
- For an off-campus resource, contact San Francisco Women Against Rape (SFWAR) (415) 647-7273 (www.sfwar.org).

**Time Management and Planning**
Students are expected to spend 2 hours outside of class in study and preparation of assignments for each hour in class. In a 4 unit class, assignments have been created with the expectation that students will engage in approximately 8 hours of out-of-class work per week; in a 2 unit class, students should expect to spend approximately 4 hours per week outside of class in study and preparation. Intensive classes may count the 2 hours of lab time as part of the out-of-class work.

**Academic Integrity**
USF Honor Code: As a Jesuit institution committed to cura personalis--the care and education of the whole person--USF has an obligation to embody and foster the values of honesty and integrity. USF upholds the standards of honesty and integrity from all members of the academic community. All students are expected to know and adhere to the University's Honor Code. You can find the full text of the code online at www.usfca.edu/fogcutter. As it particularly pertains to the Department of Rhetoric and Language, the policy covers:

- Plagiarism—intentionally or unintentionally representing the words or ideas of another person as your own; failure to properly cite references; manufacturing references Working with another person when independent work is required
- Submission of the same paper in more than one course without the specific permission of each instructor
- Submitting a paper written by another person or obtained from the internet.

The penalties for violation of the policy may include a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, and/or a referral to the Dean and the Committee on Student Academic Honesty. In addition, a letter will be sent to the Associate Dean for Student Academic Services; the letter will remain in your file for two years after you graduate, after which you may petition for its removal.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability or disabling condition, or if you think you may have a disability, please contact USF Student Disability Services (SDS) at 415 422-2613 within the first week of class, or immediately upon onset of disability, to speak with a disability specialist.  If you are determined eligible for reasonable accommodations, please meet with your disability specialist so they can arrange to have your accommodation letter sent to me, and we will discuss your needs for this course.  For more information, please visit:  http://www.usfca.edu/sds

**Behavioral Expectations**
All students are expected to behave in accordance with the Student Conduct Code and other University policies (see http://www.usfca.edu/fogcutter/).  Open discussion and disagreement is encouraged when done respectfully and in the spirit of academic discourse. There are also a variety of behaviors that, while not against a specific University policy, may create disruption in this course. Students whose behavior is disruptive or who fail to comply with the instructor may be dismissed from the class for the remainder of the class period and may need to meet with the instructor or Dean prior to returning to the next class period. If necessary, referrals may also be made to the Student Conduct process for violations of the Student Conduct Code.

**Learning & Writing Center**
The Learning & Writing Center provides assistance to all USF students in pursuit of academic success. Peer tutors provide regular review and practice of course materials in the subjects of Math, Science, Business, Economics, Nursing and Languages. Other content areas can be made available by student request. To schedule an appointment, log on to TutorTrac at https://tutortrac.usfca.edu. Students may also take advantage of writing support provided by Rhetoric and Language Department instructors and academic study skills support provided by Learning Center professional staff. For more information about these services contact the Learning & Writing Center at (415) 422-6713, email: lwc@usfca.edu or stop by our office in Cowell 215. Information can also be found on our website at www.usfca.edu/lwc.

**Counseling and Psychological Services**
Our diverse staff offers brief individual, couple, and group counseling to student members of our community. CAPS services are confidential and free of charge. Call 415-422-6352 for an initial consultation appointment. Having a crisis at 3 AM? We are still here for you. Telephone consultation through CAPS After Hours is available between the hours of 5:00 PM to 8:30 AM; call the above number and press 2.

**Student Accounts - Last day to withdraw with tuition reversal**
Students who wish to have the tuition charges reversed on their student account should withdraw from the course(s) by the end of the business day on the last day to withdraw with tuition credit (census date) for the applicable course(s) in which the student is enrolled. Please note that the last day to withdraw with tuition credit may vary by course. The last day to withdraw with tuition credit (census date) listed in the Academic Calendar is applicable only to courses which meet for the standard 15-week semester. To find what the last day to withdraw with tuition credit is for a specific course, please visit the Online Class Schedule at www.usfca.edu/schedules.

**Financial Aid - FAFSA priority filing deadline (undergraduates only)**
March 2 - Priority filing deadline for FAFSA (The Free Application for Federal Student Aid -
 https://fafsa.ed.gov/) for continuing undergraduates.