

**San José State University**  
**College of Science/Computer Science Department**  
**CS200W, Technical Writing Workshop, All Sections, spring 2011**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Debra Caires, M.S., Coordinator CS100W/200W
<b>Office Location:</b>	MH 218
<b>Telephone:</b>	408-924-5166 (Do not leave voicemails. If I am in the office I pick-up, if not—I DO NOT answer. Email is the most efficient way to contact me.)
<b>Email:</b>	debracaires@yahoo.com (Best way to contact me.)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Monday night 5:15-6:15 (60 minutes—by appointment only— in Sci 311) and Thursday by Appointment (meet in Sci 311) and Wednesday all day by Appointment Online Office Hours: You will need to set-up a Google Group and distribute the URL and E-mail address to everyone in the class. I will only accept E-mails that are well written and the questions are numbered (not in paragraph form) during online office hours. Create a folder labeled “Debra” for my responses. Be sure to keep your questions short and to the point. Saturday Night: 8:00 p.m. till 10:00 p.m. Sunday Night: 8:00 p.m. till 10:00 p.m. Section 01: Monday, 6:15-9:00 p.m.
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	
<b>Classroom:</b>	Sci 311
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Graduate Upper Division Standing
<b>GE/SJSU Studies Category:</b>	GWAR

### **Course Description**

The purpose of Technical Writing, CS200W, is to develop advanced proficiency in college-level writing and contemporary research strategies and methodologies through preparation of proposals, technical reports, and presentations based on peer-reviewed scholarly research. Participants broaden and deepen written, verbal, and non-verbal communication skills such that the mastery of discourse accepted in academia, industry, and the international business sector is achieved by practice and evaluation within the preparation of subject-related reports, project proposals, and personal discourse. \_

All course assignments will be related to issues concerning careers in computer science, biotechnology, business, and industry; all written, verbal, and non-verbal communication will be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.

We will cover principles and practices of effective writing in the workplace. Technical, scientific, and electronic-mediated writing will be introduced. Each assignment includes audience and organizational needs, visual rhetoric, information design, electronic publication, ethics, technical

style, usability testing, and team writing.

### **Course Goals**

- 1) To explore the theoretical basis for practice and research in technical communication so that we may better understand how the field is developing and what directions it may take in the near, and distant, future.
- 2) To explore how technical communicators build new knowledge, and to engage in these processes ourselves as future practicing professionals in the computer science.
- 3) To understand, generally, how theory and the results of research can shape practice and to learn how we may apply specific theoretical approaches and research results to our own work.
- 4) To foster reflective practice, laying a foundation for a career that involves professional writing.
- 5) Understand some of the features and processes of technical and professional discourse communities.
- 6) Specify and adapt to the constraints of specific rhetorical situations, including audiences, purposes, and uses.
- 7) Develop strategies for accommodating multiple audiences in one document and for accommodating both technical and lay audiences.
- 8) Learn strategies for making documents accessible and user-centered. These include setting the context and creating pathways through a document.
- 9) Learn to strategically orchestrate elements of document design, including type, spacing, and color
- 10) Design and integrate scientific tables and figures in a user-centered format.
- 11) Develop individual and collaborative writing processes appropriate for technical documents.
- 12) Learn superstructures and conventions for common technical documents such as correspondence, reports, proposals, and instructions.
- 13) Refine writing style for more strategic clarity, concision, coherence, cohesion, and emphasis.

Technical Writing is a field and a profession with a unique history and distinctive practices. Likely few, if any, of you will become professional technical writers. But you will become professionals possessing specialized knowledge and information in the field of Computer Science. To convey your knowledge to diverse audiences in unique settings necessitates that you become accomplished, professional technical communicators. As technical communicators you will craft messages using ever changing and increasingly powerful, integrated, and convenient media. While writing remains the undeniable focus of this course, you will also have opportunities to develop your speaking and visual design skills. Ultimately, this course will prepare you to communicate knowledge and information through various means to multi-level audiences of experts, professionals, and laypersons.

The Technical Writing CS200W option focuses on the concepts and terms of technical writing and on such forms as definitions, descriptions, process explanations, and technical reports.

Students will read, analyze, and interpret material from technical fields, and will practice research and writing skills appropriate for technical topics.

### **Course Outcomes:**

- 1) Students will understand and know how to follow the stages of the writing process (prewriting/writing/rewriting) and apply them to technical and workplace writing tasks.
- 2) Students will be able to produce a set of documents related to technology and writing in the workplace and will have improved their ability to write clearly and accurately.

- 3) Students will understand the basic components of definitions, descriptions, process explanations, and other common forms of technical writing.
- 4) Students will be familiar with basic technical writing concepts and terms, such as audience analysis, jargon, format, visuals, and presentation.
- 5) Students will be able to read, understand, and interpret material on technology. They will have an appreciation for some of the ideas, issues, and problems involved in writing about technology and in workplace writing.
- 6) Students will be familiar with basic sources and methods of research and documentation on topics in technology, including on-line research. They will be able to synthesize and integrate material from primary and secondary sources with their own ideas in research papers.

**SJSU COURSE GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, AND NO CREDIT

**Student Learning Objectives**

SLO 1: Students shall be able to refine the competencies established in Written Communication IA and IB as summarized below:

SLO 2: Students shall be able to express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse.

SLO 3: Students shall be able to organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences, including appropriate editorial standards for citing primary and secondary sources.

**Course Assignment Grades are as follows:**

4.00 or an A  
3.70 or an A-  
3.30 or a B+  
3.00 or a B  
2.70 or a B-  
2.30 or a C+  
2.00 or a C  
1.70 or a C-  
1.30 or a D+  
1.00 or a D  
0.70 or a D-  
0.0 or an F = Missing or unacceptable work

Unlike essay writing, technical writing is defined by a set of standards often rendered as document templates. Faithfully following prescriptions for documents is often portrayed as the exclusive or single goal of technical writing. It is not. However, document templates will help you organize your ideas by offering a working outline. These templates also provide for transitions among ideas. As you will see in the following grading criteria, emphasis is placed on the writer clearly defining the audience, rhetoric development, clearly presenting the purpose, and a professional presentation of each document.

All assignments are graded using a **standardized rubric (included in the course reader and/or emailed)** and are assessed as follows:

A: The overall communication and presentation show a high level of understanding and perspective. This assignment should be well-conceived and descriptive. The author must have a clear understanding of the audience. The work's purpose and objectives are clearly and convincingly stated. Concise background material clearly sets the context, frames, and introduces the subject. Technical content themes are logically stated and organized and support the overall objective. Data and descriptions are objectively stated and separated from interpretations. Content is detailed and suggestive. Conclusions are persuasive and well-supported by the data. The prose is easy to read. Exhibits a defined sense of unity and purpose. Includes topic, paragraph, and sentence transitions, and contains no major and few minor grammatical or technical errors. Graphics, when used, are highly informative, well-designed, and easy to interpret. The document template is used professionally, flawlessly.

A-: Generally means you meet all criteria for an 'A' except presentation and problems with one or two criteria. Audience and purpose may be clear, for instance, but you failed to develop an idea. For example, a proposal that addresses the criteria provided in an RFP (Request For Proposal) but fails to develop a section pertaining to the budget.

B: Paper presents content clearly and displays a firm grasp of the material but without as much focus and perspective as an 'A' paper. Successful effort is evident throughout the paper. Slight inconsistencies in identifying audience. The work's purpose and technical objectives may be somewhat ill-defined. Background material sets the context, frames, and introduces the subject. While well-written and adequately detailed, some sections may lack complete development and coherence. Unevenness in presentation and content. No major grammatical errors; some minor grammatical errors but none that disrupt an easy reading of the paper. Graphics are informative, intelligible and support the content of the paper. The document template used may be missing a minor element.

B+: Exceeds the criteria for a 'B' in one or more areas. For example, the purpose of the paper may possess greater clarity. Audience is clearly identified and the contexts governing the explanation and interpretation of the information are well-detailed. Greater consistency in execution than a 'B'; better paragraph development and coherence among sentences for example.

B- A lack of connection among, for example, audience and purpose. A number of presentation errors affect the meaning of the sentences or structure of the text. A somewhat stronger relationship among the elements of the paper -- audience, purpose, content, style -- than a "C" paper. Still, the paper lacks full development of ideas and demonstrates some problems weaving together a complete understanding of the content with a clearly identified audience, purpose, and context.

C paper: Displays a reasonable grasp of the technical content but little original thought. The purpose of the work is inconsistently presented. The audience cannot be clearly identified. While understandable, the purpose and objective are not presented in relationship to the context set in the opening. Treatment of the topic is general. Lapses exist in coherence, organization, and development. Contains errors in technical content. Technical content marginally supports the conclusion. Some major grammatical errors and frequent minor grammatical errors. The paper is difficult to read and lack flow. Graphics do not support content objectives. The document template used may be missing a major element; a required section of a proposal for example.

C+ Exceeds the criteria for a 'C' in one or more areas. Perhaps more imagination in thought and explanation. Greater consistency in determining audience, purpose and objective. Fewer errors in

technical content and somewhat greater coherence in the presentation and the conclusion. Fewer grammatical and cosmetic errors. An easier read than the 'C' paper.

C- The elements of the paper -- audience, purpose, content, style -- are unclear and appear unrelated. For example, a final report about a weapons controversy may deal with a number of different systems in only a cursory way. No explanations are given about how the topics of the paper lead to one another. Presentation errors suggest no revision.

D (of any variety) or F paper

I will ask you revise 'D' or 'F' papers until you receive, minimally, a 'C-'. You have the choice of whether or not to revise. If you choose not to revise, you will receive a failing grade.

### **Late Assignment Reminder!**

Deadlines are to be met. Barring personal crisis, family emergency, or severe illness (please let me know ahead of time), all late papers will be subject to 10% grade off per day late. Except for abrupt emergencies, no requests for extensions will be heard within 24 hours before the due date (that includes for reasons of computer malfunctioning, minor illnesses or being "behind"). Finally, please refer to the revision policy (below) in considering whether or not you should turn in an "unfinished" formal writing assignment or submit a professional memo (covered in lecture), requesting an extension.

Given the nature of our formal assignments, I will NOT accept late submissions in person; additionally, do not slide documents under my office door, give to my office mate (Dr. Jeff Smith—as he is not your instructor for CS200W), or hand-in to the CS office staff (they have been advised not to take late assignments). **If you are submitting your Proposal midterm late, you will need to mail the document in via mail carrier (FedEX, UPS, USPS, etc.) to:**

**SJSU: Computer Science Department  
Attn: Debra Caires, Coordinator CS200W/200W  
One Washington Square  
208 MacQuarrie Hall  
San Jose, CA 95192-0249**

All other assignments, if late, will need to be turned in during the re-write submission time and date (no exceptions). You will forfeit your re-write opportunity for increasing your grade. However, you will not be penalized for missing the first submission time slot IF, AND ONLY IF, you submit an Extension Memo, along with a cover sheet, asking for an extension.

### **Revision Policy**

You can revise formal writing assignments during the semester. See the schedule for dates that the revisions are due. DO NOT misplace your original graded document, as you cannot increase the grade (for submission) without it. All revision assignments must also have the original graded rubric included. Note: the Midterm Proposal and the Final Poster assignments DO NOT have revision components.

### **Document Hardcopy Submission Guidelines:**

**ALL assignments submitted for credit must following the following and be in this order:**

- 1) Typed—no exceptions
- 2) Stapled (top left corner) (Exceptions: Proposal)
- 3) Cover Sheet on top of submitted document (format emailed to you)—no cover sheet equals no-credit—sample will be emailed to you the first week of class
- 4) Rubric for grading purposes (rubrics found in Course Reader)—make sure your name is on the Rubric
- 5) Document, for grading, in correct order (given on the Cover Sheet)

6) Turnitin.com submission receipt (when requested)

### **Course Policies**

Because you may be working with technologies that are unfamiliar to you, this course will require your patience and time to deal with technology. Here are the technologies you should have ready access to for the course:

An E-mail account that lets you attach and receive files - this means that you need to have enough of your storage quota left to handle files for class. If you have an @sjsu.edu account and use something like Outlook for e-mail, you'll be fine. Accounts from third-party Internet Service Providers will also work, provided you have a POP or IMAP account.

Internet Access - you'll need a reliable way to browse the Web and store web-enabled files.

You will need Microsoft Office (we use Readability and Usability statistics embedded in the program) or similar office software, especially Word and PowerPoint. If you work from home, you should be prepared to transfer files across platforms and versions of software, if necessary.

Web authoring software - We'll be completing some web-related work, so it will be helpful to have software that supports web authoring. Even a simple visual editor such as Netscape Composer will be useful if you don't have access to a more full-featured package such as Dreamweaver or FrontPage. For editing HTML, you can use a plain text editor like Notepad, though you can also use other code editors too if you like. For image creation and processing it will be handy, though not always essential to have access to Photoshop or a similar program.

In addition to having access to these technologies, you'll also need a positive attitude towards learning technologies with which you may be unfamiliar. In most cases, you will not need to be extremely experienced in the specific program or procedure you will be asked to do. Rather, you have to be patient and curious enough to keep trying until you learn the best way to work.

### **Attendance & Participation Policy**

Attendance and participation in this class are very important. In this class, much like a lab, you will do much of the work in collaboration with your peers and in the time provided for class meetings; it can be difficult or impossible to make-up missed work. When working in collaboration with your classmates, a lack of participation will lead to animosity among your peers and, often, a poor end result for the entire team. Additionally, you will find that this course is mainly a "collaborative" class and not strictly lecture in format. Be prepared to jump-in and work, as many tasks will be required for submission in either hardcopy or email softcopy directly after lecture.

### **Assignment Policies**

You must complete ALL major assignments in order to pass this class.

Production guidelines for each document will be discussed in class. Please follow them. If you hand in documents that do not conform to the guidelines, they will be returned to you for correction before they are graded and/or receive a no-credit

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out the assignments you missed and arrive prepared for the next class. Sign-up and stay in-touch with your Google group for this purpose.

**Drop Information:** College and departmental guidelines require serious and compelling reasons

to drop a course. Grades alone do not constitute a reason for dropping a course (see College catalogue).

**Late assignments**, that cannot be rewritten, will receive a grade 10% (per day) lower than marked. Late assignments with a rewrite component, will forfeit the rewrite option for a grade increase.

**Rewrite Policy:** Students may increase a grade by one if the following rules are followed:

1. Original assignment was turned in on time and includes ALL required parts.
2. Rewrite is submitted on the date instructor states it is due.
3. Rewrite is placed in the order instructor has stated.
4. Original graded assignment and rubric accompanies the rewritten document.
5. No exceptions.

### **Computer Responsibilities**

You have the following computer-related responsibilities in this class:

You are expected to store primary and backup copies of your work, including drafts, e-mail, and notes, on your home directory and on backup media. Be prepared in the event that one of these backup methods fails! You are expected to check your e-mail regularly for updates to the schedule, new assignments, and messages. You are responsible for spending time outside of class to hone your computer skills and become knowledgeable with applications that are unfamiliar to you. You are free to work on any computer you like to use outside of the class. However, you must be prepared to convert all in-class work, shared files for group projects, and electronically submitted files to the appropriate format (including computer platform, application, and version). You are responsible for learning and making any necessary cross-platform translations between machines.

Think of the network environment in this class as your workplace. Adapting to new computer systems, platforms, and software will be increasingly important as you progress in your professional development.

Make sure you always bring your computer to class and an USB drive.

A Note about Academic Integrity: The CSU Student Handbook defines various forms of academic dishonesty and procedures for responding to them. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with these policies.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism and Cheating are examples of student code violations at SJSU. All students caught cheating will be reported to the university and their grade will be dropped.

At SJSU plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

**1.2.1** The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work; and

**1.2.2** Representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawings, sculptures or similar works as one's own.

**WARNING:** Students are required to turn-in **ALL** assignments to <http://www.turnitin.com> and provide their instructor with a printout of the report. Assignments submitted without the report will be returned to the student and given “**no credit**” for the assignment (No Credit equals an 'F'). No exceptions.

Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. You should assume that I've made good decisions about the content and structure of the course; I should assume that the assignments you hand in are yours (that you are the one who produced them); and so on. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process. Technical Writing is an activity that relies heavily on collaboration; members of a writing team work with other writers, editors, programmers, engineers, human factors specialists, managers, and even customers. It would be unrealistic of me to assume that you will work in total isolation; that's not the way that the best jobs are done. (Some of the most unusable products, interfaces, and documents we encounter were developed by people who would not or did not work with others.) So, bounce ideas off each other and offer each other suggestions on how to improve assignments. By working with each other, you can increase your learning and understanding. Some of the projects for this class will be done as group projects. I'll expect that you understand the difference between "working together" and merely copying. I'll also offer explicit guidelines for turning in work that has been co-authored so that we can negotiate the terms of working together. Please ask if you have questions about the way your team is working and how your work, as an individual, will be evaluated.



**Subject to change based on class needs and Instructor's discretion**

<b>Portfolio Assignment</b>	<b>Weighted Units</b>	<b>Date Due (See Class Calendar)</b>
<b>Hybrids 1-15</b>	CR/NC	
Résumé and Cover Letter for Job Fair	3 Units	
Career Center Job Fair 3 contacts and Thank You Letter	CR/NC	
Literature Review (2 Peer Review Articles for Litee Case Study)	3 Units	
Internal Proposal	6 Units	
Proposal (Case Study) Group Gantt Chart	10 Units	
Poster Presentation: Final Exam (Litee Case Study)	8 Units	
	Units/30= Ending Grade	

**Weighted Units for Grading**

Each Unit =s a weighted grade. Example: Literature Review=s 3 units or if awarded a B it is calculated as 3 x 3.0=9.0

**Required Materials and Items for CS200W (No Exceptions)**

- 1) Access to Google Groups and/or Yahoo groups (once signed-in—update your profile with a photo)
- 2) Account with Turnitin.com (class code and password will be emailed first week of class)
- 3) Access to the Internet, an E-mail account, and patience
- 4) Removable media (USB Drive)
- 5) 4 Manila Folders and 4 Pendaflex (hanging folders) with Label Tabs
- 6) Course Reader for CS200W (Maple Press delivers the 2nd week of class)—cost will be \$40 (cash or check payable to Maple Press)
- 7) The Bedford Handbook (Paperback) by Diana Hacker (Author) Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's; 7 edition (or any edition will work) (November 18, 2005) ISBN-10: 0312419333 or ISBN-13: 978-0312419332
- 8) CD's (2) with Cases (no exceptions)
- 9) Microsoft Office (if using Open Office you will need to find and download plug-ins for items we will be using in class)
- 10) 3" Binder for the Course Reader and handouts

**Writing Helps and Resources****Tutoring**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

The SJSU Writing Center offers one-on-one tutoring to all SJSU students. Our Writing Specialists (tutors) are upper-division and graduate students who have met a rigorous GPA requirement and are highly trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines. Writing Specialists will help you find a topic, organize your paper, cite sources, avoid plagiarism, and use correct grammar and punctuation. We understand the special needs of students learning English as a second language and returning students, and we're experts in all phases of writing. You can make a tutoring appointment online through our Online Reservation System.

Online helps:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/writingresources/onlineresources/>

### **Computer Science Librarian**

Rob Bruce

(408) 808-2046

Robert.Bruce@sjsu.edu

"If you need research assistance, I'm available at the following times and locations:

MONDAYS, 3pm - 4pm: Live Online Chat via Ask a Librarian

MONDAYS, 5pm - 6pm: Second floor Reference desk, King Library,

I'm also available by appointment."

### **Disability Resource Center**

Disability Resource Center

Administration Building 110

One Washington Square

San José, CA 95192-0168

(408) 924-6000 (Main Office)

(408) 924-6542 (Deaf and HoH)

(408) 808-2123 (ATC)

Mon / Tues 9:00am - 5:00pm

Wed 10:00am - 5:00pm

Thurs / Fri 8:00am - 4:00pm

**Please note: Due to budget reductions, the DRC and all its programs/offices will be making adjustments in their services. Please be sure to read the important notice: DRC Service Levels Affected.**

### **MEDIA SERVICES**

Media Services--a unit of Academic Technology

One Washington Square

San José, CA 95192-0026

(408) 924-2888 Located in: IRC 1st Floor

Spring Hours:

Mon - Thur 7am-9:45pm

Fri 7am - 4:45pm

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

## **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's Catalog Policies section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at [http://www.sjsu.edu/academic\\_programs/calendars/academic\\_calendar/](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/). The Late Drop Policy is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University's Academic Integrity policy, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html)

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at: <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.