

# Professional and Technical Writing

ENGH 388 · Course Syllabus · Fall 2023 · 3 Credits

## Instructor

Professor [Alice Wrigglesworth](mailto:awriggle@gmu.edu)  
[awriggle@gmu.edu](mailto:awriggle@gmu.edu)  
she/her/hers



## Office Hours

Wed. 2:00–6:00 PM  
G646 or via [Zoom](#)

## Location

Classes will take place in G210

## Course Website

[Blackboard](#) ([MyMason Portal](#))

## Course Calendar

Click to go to [Course Calendar](#)

## Course Information

Welcome to ENGH 388! This course aims to equip you with essential tools to communicate effectively in various professional settings and to diverse audiences. Through studying the core theories and practices of professional and technical writing, you will develop an understanding of how to write clear, concise, and well-organized documents such as reports, proposals, and instruction manuals. Additionally, you will learn how to tailor your writing to the needs and expectations of your audience and how to adapt your writing style to different industries and disciplines. While there is no definitive formula for effective workplace communication, you will explore some common genres (emails, letters, memos, reports, instruction manuals) and conventions (documentation, style, design) utilized across different fields. You will learn how to identify these genres and conventions and adapt them to fit your specific needs when interning or working in any professional context, be it at a think tank, a game design company, a multinational corporation, or donor-driven nonprofit.

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to analyze rhetorical situations to recognize the expectations of readers of professional genres, such as emails, letters, resumes, reports, and instruction manuals.
- Students will be able to understand, apply, and test the conventions used in professional and technical genres, related to usage, documentation, style, and design.
- Students will be able to produce a range of professional and technical texts of relevance to future career fields, by engaging in a recursive process of inventing, shaping, drafting, testing, and revising.

## Prerequisites

Students must have completed or transferred in the equivalent of ENGL/ENGH 100 or 101 before enrolling in the class. **Recommended prerequisite: ENGL/ENGH 302.**

## Methods of Instruction

This course will prioritize active learning during our scheduled class times. As such, often, this course will follow a “flipped classroom” model. That is, throughout the semester, you will be assigned readings and other lecture materials to read or complete before a given class. Then, when you come to class, we will put what you have done or read to practice.

You can expect each class to include some combination of the following: instruction, group work/collaboration, independent writing, project development. You will find the readings and work you need to complete ahead of each class in the Course Calendar.

## Required Materials

You do not need to purchase a textbook for this section of ENGH 388. Instead, you will be provided with open access texts, articles, and videos via our Course Calendar. The required materials you will need for this course section are: Laptop, Mason ID, [MS Office](#) (Word, PowerPoint). You may also find it useful to have a [Google Account](#).

## Evaluation

This is a 1,000-point course that comprises the following graded assessments:

Major Assignment Assessment*	Due*	Points/Weight
<a href="#">MA 01: Professional Development</a>	Day, date, time	200 pts (20%)
Draft e-Portfolio + Postscript: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Profile</li><li>• Resume</li><li>• Contact</li><li>• Portfolio pieces (x3)</li></ul>	<i>Wed. 20 Sep. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	25 pts
Draft Cover Letter + Postscript	<i>Sun. 24 Sep. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	25 pts
Final e-Portfolio + Cover Letter + Revision Memo	<i>Sun. 15 Oct. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	150 pts
<a href="#">MA 02: Professionalization Report</a>		300 pts (30%)
Draft Professionalization Report + Postscript	<i>Fri. 20 Oct. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	50 pts

Revised Professionalization Report + Revision Memo	<i>Wed. 25 Oct. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	50 pts
Final Professionalization Report + Revision Memo	<i>Fri. 9 Nov. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	200 pts
<b><u>MA 03: Instruction Manual</u></b>		<b>200 pts (20%)</b>
Draft Instruction Manual + Postscript	<i>Wed. 22 Nov. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	50 pts
Final Instruction Manual and User Experience Report + Revision Memo	<i>Fri. 8 Dec. (11:59 pm KST)</i>	150 pts
<b>Non-Major Assignment Assessment</b>		
<b>Low-Stakes Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classwork (CW)</li> <li>● Discussion Board posts (DB)</li> <li>● UX Testing (UX)</li> <li>● Peer Review (PR)</li> </ul>	<i>Various dates</i>	<b>200 pts (20%)</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<i>Every class + conference</i>	<b>100 pts (10%)</b>

\*subject to change

## Class Policies

### Attendance

There is no attendance grade for this class, however, you are expected to attend class and attendance is checked and logged daily. Absences impact a students' "Participation" grade and "Low-Stakes Work" grade.

To be eligible to participate in UX testing and peer review activities, you **must** attend the class attached to the activity.

### Blackboard

Blackboard (Bb) is the university's official platform for course grading, course information, assignments, and submissions. All course content, grades, and assignment feedback will be available via Bb for this course. Similarly, all assessments, with the exception of classwork, should be submitted via Bb. You can log into Bb using your Mason username and password.

To access Blackboard:

- Go to <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/>

- Enter your Mason user-ID and password
- Click on the “Courses” tab on the left-hand side of the page
- Click on our course name/code in your list of “Current Courses”
- If this course does not appear in your list of “Current Courses” menu, please let me know.

This class will make extensive use of Blackboard. There you’ll find a copy of this syllabus, our course calendar, your assignment sheets, links to readings and slides, and more. Likewise, you’ll post assessments to “Discussion Board” and “Major Assignments” here.

Familiarize yourself with our Bb early in the semester. You should use Bb daily to check “Announcements,” submit assignments, view feedback and grades, and check the course calendar. Check “My Grades” regularly for feedback from me. Check “Announcements” on Bb regularly for updates about the course.

Some students report their Bb Calendar shows Fairfax time/Korea time, depending on the device they are using. Note that all assessment/assignment deadlines are due Korean Standard Time (KST), regardless of the time they show to be due on Blackboard.

### Email

To meet university-wide privacy regulations, faculty, staff, and students must use their @gmu.edu account for all email communications. Email makes it easy to contact your professors, but it also requires that you think about the expectations of your audience. I will respond to communications within 24 hours during the work week. Click [here](#) for some tips for emailing me and your other professors.

### Late Work

**Life Happens Passes.** Each student has three one-day Life Happens Passes. Each pass gives you an extra 24 hours beyond the original due date of any assessment/assignment, with the exception of drafts for testing, peer review, or any work due the day of your conference. Life Happens Passes cannot be used in any of these instances. If needed, you may use all three passes on a single assignment, one on three different assignments, or any other combination.

To use a Life Happens Pass, you will need to do two things. First, you will need to email me with the subject line “LIFE HAPPENS PASS” before or shortly after the due date/submission time. In the body of this email, include your name, course code, G number, and the name of the assignment you are submitting late. (Click [here](#) to see a sample email.) Then, when you submit the assignment, type “LIFE HAPPENS PASS” in all caps and the number you are using for the assignment in the comment box when you submit the assignment.

The late work policy varies by assignment type:

**Low-Stakes Work.** Typically not accepted late; assessments worth more than 20 points will be accepted late at the instructor’s discretion and graded with penalty.

Life Happens Passes **may be used** for most low-stakes assessments with the exception of drafts for UX testing and peer review.

**Drafts for UX Testing or Peer Review.** Drafts accepted late and graded with penalty (5% per day),

however, you must submit a draft that meets the minimum requirements for the assignment before the UX testing or peer review class to be eligible to participate in or receive credit for the peer review activity. See the relevant date in the Course Calendar for additional requirements.

Life Happens Passes may be used for UX testing and peer review assessments.

**Major Assignments.** Accepted late with a 5% penalty for every calendar day the assignment is late. Life Happens Passes may be used for major assignments' final drafts to avoid a grade penalty.

## Participation

Participation is 10 percent of your course grade. Each regular class meeting is worth three points towards your "Participation" grade. You earn full points for a class period only by being on time and being actively engaged—not by merely being present. You can be in class and earn no participation credit if you are disengaged, doing work for another class, using phones or computers for non-class related purposes, or are rude or disruptive.

Because I recognize the complexities of your busy adult lives, you have two "free" absences to use throughout the semester. Save them for when you really need them. All other absences, except those resulting from mandated government or military service, result in a zero for participation. If you are absent, you are still responsible for over-viewing the class slides and completing pre-readings and any assessments attached to the class.

If you are frequently late, you may lose class-participation points.

Conference week takes place in Week 11. Conferences are mandatory and worth 20 points of your "Participation" grade.

## Technology

**Blackboard.** See "Blackboard" above under "Class Policies."

**Laptop.** You will need to bring a laptop or similar to all class meetings.

**OneDrive and MS Word.** We will use OneDrive and MS Word throughout this course for group work. All Major Assignments (MA) should be submitted as a MS Word document. [Click](#) for instructions on free access to Microsoft 365 Apps for Enterprise.

**Voice and Video Recording Policy.** Please ask for permission before using a phone or any other type of recording device to voice or video record a class, meeting, or conference. Do not record or share classes or instructional videos; this is a privacy violation for all course users and an Honors Code violation.

**Zoom.** Any online classes will be conducted via Zoom. Office hours will be available both in person and via Zoom. You will find the links to my Zoom office hours in our Blackboard.

## UX Testing and Peer Review

This class comprises several testing and peer review days. You must arrive to class on time and have submitted a major assignment first draft inclusive of minimum first draft requirements prior to the

beginning of the class start time to participate in/receive credit for testing or peer review. Life Happens Passes **may not be used** on drafts for UX testing or peer review.

## Grading Policies

This course uses the following grading guidelines:

A+ 100-97.5% | A 97.4-93% | A- 92.9-90% | B+ 89.9-87.5% | B 87.4-83% | B- 82.9-80% | C+ 79.9-77.5% | C 77.4-73% | C- 72.9-70% | D 69.9-60% | F below 60%

## Assessment Weights

This course is designed as a 1000-point course. In “My Grades” in Blackboard, ignore the “weighted grade;” only the “total grade” is relevant to the grade structure of this course.

## Feedback

To meet the varying learning styles of students, and the obvious time constraints imposed by a one-semester course, students will be provided with various types of feedback throughout the semester, including general, holistic, rubric, oral, grade only, and peer. Click [here](#) to read about the types of feedback provided in this course. Click the comment bubble in “My Grades” on Blackboard to view any written feedback provided.

## Grading Criteria

**Major Assignments.** Drafts and revisions will be graded for completion. Final major assignments will be graded using the rubric on their respective assignment sheets.

**Grading Scale.** Outstanding (100%), Excellent (95%), Good (85–90%), Satisfactory (80%), Below Par (75%), Not Acceptable (0%)

**Low-Stakes Work.** Low-stakes work will be graded based on completion and on a scale; you must be in the relevant class to be eligible to receive “classwork” points attached to the class. If it is clear you have attempted the assignment in good faith and that you have put in an honest effort and completed all parts of the assignment, you will receive full credit. If you are missing parts of the assignment or completed a different assessment, you will lose the appropriate number of points based on the percentage of the assignment you completed. The generosity of this grading will diminish over the semester.

**Grading Scale.** Completed Satisfactorily (100%), Needs Work (80%), Below Par (60%), Incomplete (or similar) (40%), Not Acceptable/Passing (0%)

## Midterm Grades

You will receive a midterm grade based on the work of the first half of the semester. The midterm grade’s purpose is to help you understand how well you are doing so that you can make any adjustments necessary. It is not meant to predict your final grade, as the work in the second half of the semester is weighted more heavily. Midterm grades will be posted to [Patriot Web](#).

## University Statements

### Mason Diversity Statement

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services, and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study, and personal growth. [Click](#) to access the full Mason Diversity Policy.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, military status (including veteran status), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, pregnancy status or genetic information. [Click](#) to access the full Mason Non-Discrimination Policy.

### **Title IX Mandatory Reporting Statement**

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason Korea’s Deputy Title IX Coordinator pursuant to University Policy 1202 and 1412. [Click](#) for more information about Title IX.

### **Mason Academic Integrity Statement**

It is expected that students adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code as it relates to integrity regarding coursework and grades: “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie in matters related to academic work.” Refer to the [Mason Korea Academic Integrity](#) for more information about our Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism.

### **Honor Code and Statement on Plagiarism**

It is expected that students adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code as it relates to integrity regarding coursework and grades: “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie in matters related to academic work.”

More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found at the Office of Academic Integrity website at <http://oai.gmu.edu>. Two fundamental principles to follow at all times are that:

- All work submitted must be your own.
- When using the work or ideas of others, you must properly attribute sources.

Mason’s English Program recognizes that appropriately attributing sources is a learning process. This class will include direct instruction in source integration, documentation, and citation strategies in a range of rhetorical situations, and follows the [CWPA Best Practices for Defining and](#)

[Avoiding Plagiarism](#). Instructors in the English Program support the Mason Honor Code, which requires them to report suspected instances of deliberate plagiarism to the Mason Honor Committee. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism or have difficulties completing an assignment, please ask your instructor.

**Self-plagiarism.** Students should also be careful to avoid self-plagiarism—the practice of reusing their own academic work in two courses or contexts. You need to secure an instructor’s approval in every instance in which previous research and portions of previous writing might be used in two different courses. Failure to consult with the instructor might result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or a referral to the Mason Korea Committee of Academic Integrity. If you wish to use your research or writing from another course, project, or context in our course, please speak to me first.

### **AI Generated Text Policy**

We have multiple writing assignments in this class. Because the act of composing a response in your own words increases your learning, it is important that you complete the task yourself, rather than rely on an artificial intelligence or AI tool. This will help strengthen your performance in this class on later assignments and activities, as well as help you develop professionally and succeed in your career goals. You should be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course.

Policy related to ChatGPT and other AI generators will differ by course, depending on the course’s learning objectives and outcomes. In the context of this course—a composition/writing course—work prepared by ChatGPT or any AI generator is considered and will be treated as cheating. If your instructor suspects the use of an AI generator or similar, she will use a Chat GPT detector, and you may be asked to explain your work and/or the is

### **Student Resources**

#### **Office Hours**

My office hours, or “Student Drop-In Hours,” are there for you to use. Whenever you want to talk about an assignment, something that happened in class, your revision plan, etc., please drop by my office hours either in person or via Zoom. If you want to speak with me outside of class but cannot meet at these times, please email me, and we will find another time to meet. My office hours are held in person in G646 or [click](#) to join via Zoom.

#### **Writing Support**

[Academic Resource Center](#). “The Mason Korea Academic Resource Center (ARC) is in the business of looking at your papers! In particular, students are advised to meet with a writing tutor at the ARC to help with your major assignment writing. You are invited to utilize the faculty and student tutor services at a variety of stages in your academic activities.” [Click](#) to schedule an appointment.



**The Writing Center.** “The University Writing Center supports writers at George Mason University through one-to-one consultations at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to the final phases of polishing. In these consultations, writers can try out ideas and approaches with a well-trained student staff comprised of attentive readers and listeners from a variety of disciplines.”

Take advantage of The Writing Center as you work on written assignments in this course. You can book free appointments to meet 1:1 with a tutor or to submit a draft for written feedback. Tutors will work with you on any phase of a writing project. In addition to free individual tutoring sessions (by appointment), the center has an [outstanding website](#) that offers resources for writers. You can book appointments to meet with a tutor on Zoom or submit a draft for written feedback. [Click](#) to watch this short video about how to schedule an appointment. [Click](#) to schedule an appointment. For information, contact [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu). Note that The Writing Center is located on the Mason Fairfax Campus and thus follows Eastern Standard Time (EST). **Counseling & Wellness**

Mason Korea offers counseling and wellness services for all Mason students through both individual and group settings. [Click](#) for more information about the services provided or to schedule an appointment. Alternatively, you can schedule an appointment by calling (032) 626-6142 or emailing [wellness@gmu.edu](mailto:wellness@gmu.edu).

### **Disability Services**

Disability services are available for students with physical, learning, and psychological challenges. [Click](#) for more information about eligibility and accommodations. To apply for a disability accommodation, contact Jiye Chang, Director of Academic Affairs, by calling (032) 626-5005 or emailing [jchang22@gmu.edu](mailto:jchang22@gmu.edu).

### **Libraries**

Use the GMU Libraries online to help with your research. Use your Mason ID to log into the online [Mason libraries](#). The library’s website offers tutorials, research resources, and databases that we will use throughout the semester. [Click](#) to access Mason Libraries. Alternatively, visit the IGC Library on this campus for assistance with research and as a quiet place to write. Use your Mason/IGC ID card to check books out of the library.

### **Important Dates**

#### **University**

- Last day to add classes: 28 August
- Last day to drop classes (100% tuition refund): 4 September
- Last day to drop classes (50% tuition refund): 11 September
- Unrestricted withdrawal period (0% tuition refund): 12–25 September
- Selective withdrawal period (0% tuition refund): 26 September–3 October
- Reading Days: 4–5 December

#### **Holidays (No Classes)**

- Fall recess: 27 September
- Harvest Moon Festival (추석—Chuseok): 28–30 September

- National Foundation Day: 3 October
- Hangeul Proclamation Day: 9 October

[Click](#) for additional information regarding important dates at Mason Korea.

# Draft Course Calendar

The following is a draft calendar for ENGH 388 Tue./Thu. classes. Content is subject to change.

Once the semester begins, refer to [Course Calendar](#)

<b>Week &amp; Date</b>	<b>Class Agenda</b>	<b>Graded and Non-Graded Work</b> due as instructed/indicated below
<b>Week 1A</b> 22 Aug.	Overview Course Syllabus Complete Pre-Course Survey	Read "Course Syllabus" in detail.
<b>Week 1B</b> 24 Aug.	Overview professional and technical communication Overview rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, context)	
<b>Week 2A</b> 29 Aug.	Overview professional communities Research your professional community	
<b>Week 2B</b> 31 Aug.	Overview MA 01: Professional Development Assignment Sheet (e-Portfolio and Cover Letter) Overview professional documents (emails, letters, memos, reports)	DB 01: Professional Community Analysis. Submit to "Discussion Board" by Fri., 1 Sep. (11:59 pm). 20 pts
<b>Week 3A</b> 5 Sep.	Overview audience awareness Overview audience analysis Overview audiences (expert, technical, executive, nonexpert)	
<b>Week 3B</b> 7 Sep.	Analyze and genre-notice professional documents	DB 02: Email. Submit to "Discussion Board" by Fri., 8 Sep. (11:59 pm). 20 pts
<b>Week 4A</b> 12 Sep.	Overview professional language Overview plain language	

	Practice plain language translation	
<b>Week 4B</b> 14 Sep.	Overview documentation, style (font, spacing), design (layout)	DB 03: Memo. Submit to "Discussion Board" by Fri., 14 Sep. (11:59 pm). 20 pts
<b>Week 5A</b> 19 Sep.	Overview testing and peer review training	MA 01: Draft e-Portfolio + Postscript. Submit to "Major Assignments" by Wed. 20 Sep. (11:59 pm). 25 pts
<b>Week 5B</b> 21 Sep.	<b>—Testing—</b> Usability and user experience testing (e-Portfolio)	MA 01: Draft Cover Letter + Postscript. Submit to "Major Assignments" by Sun. 24 Sep. (11:59 pm). 25 pts
<b>Week 6A</b> 26 Sep.	<b>—Peer Review—</b> Provide feedback to a peer's draft (Cover Letter)	
<b>Week 6B</b> 28 Sep.	<b>—Fall Recess—</b> There are no classes today.	
<b>Week 7A</b> 3 Oct.	<b>—National Foundation Day—</b> There are no classes today.	
<b>Week 7B</b> 5 Oct.	Overview MA 02: Report Assignment Sheet Overview sample discipline-specific reports	
<b>Week 8A</b> 10 Oct.	Identifying problems Technical definitions and descriptions Practice writing technical definitions	DB 04: Technical Definition. Submit to "Discussion Board" by Wed. 11 Oct. (11:59 pm). 20 pts
<b>Week 8B</b> 12 Oct.	Analyze and genre-notice proposals Overview documentation	DB 05: Technical Description. Submit to "Discussion Board" by Fri. 13 Oct. (11:59 pm). 20 pts

		— MA 01: Final e-Portfolio + Cover Letter + Revision Memo. Submit to "Major Assignments" by Sun. 15 Oct. (11:59 pm). 150 pts
<b>Week 9A</b> 17 Oct.	Research and content development (report)	
<b>Week 9B</b> 19 Oct.	Draft report	MA 02: Draft Professionalization Report + Revision Memo. Submit to "Major Assignments" by Fri. 20 Oct. (11:59 pm). 50 pts
<b>Week 10A</b> 24 Oct.	<b>—Testing—</b> Usability and user experience testing	
<b>Week 10B</b> 26 Oct.	<b>—Peer Review—</b> Provide feedback to peer's draft	
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>—Conferences—</b> Attend your self-scheduled conference. There are no classes this week.	
<b>Week 12A</b> 8 Nov.	Overview MA 03: Instruction Manual Assignment Sheet	
<b>Week 12B</b> 10 Nov.	Select topic/process (instruction manual)	MA 02: Final Professionalization Report + Revision Memo. Submit to "Major Assignments" by Fri. 11 Nov. (11:59 pm). 200 pts  — DB 06: Topic/Process. Submit to "Discussion Board" by Fri. 11 Nov. (11:59 pm). 20 pts

<b>Week 13A</b> 14 Nov.	Analyze and genre-notice instruction manuals	
<b>Week 13B</b> 16 Nov.	Overview technical language Practice technical language	
<b>Week 14A</b> 21 Nov.	Draft instruction manual	MA 03: Draft Instruction Manual + Postscript. Submit to "Major Assignments" by Wed. 22 Nov. (11:59 pm). 50 pts
<b>Week 14B</b> 23 Nov.	<b>—Testing—</b> Usability and user experience testing	
<b>Week 15A</b> 28 Nov.	<b>—Peer Review—</b> Provide feedback to peer's draft	
<b>Week 15B</b> 30 Nov.	Wrap up Reflection	Complete Course Evaluation. Submit to <a href="#">"Blue."</a> Pretty please. <hr/> DB 07: Reflections. Submit to "Discussion Board" by Fri. 1 Dec. (11:59 pm). 20 pts
<b>Week 16A</b> 5 Dec.	<b>—Reading Day—</b> There are no classes today.	
<b>Week 16B</b> 7 Dec.	<b>—Exam Period—</b> There are no classes today.	MA 03: Final Instruction Manual and User Experience Report + Revision Memo. Submit to "Major Assignments" by Fri. 8 Dec. (11:59 pm). 150 pts