

COMP 250: Introduction to Scientific and Technical Communication (Section 01W)
Spring 2012 Course Information & Syllabus

Instructor: R. I. Greenberg
Computer Science Department
Loyola University
Water Tower Campus, Lewis Towers 524
820 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2147

Phone: (773)508-3782 on MWF **Email:** rig@cs.luc.edu **Home page:** <http://www.cs.luc.edu/~rig>

Lectures: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 11:30am–12:20pm in CC-103.

Sometimes lecture notes or a summary may be available on the web. Other than that, if you have to miss a class, get notes from another student; mine are typically pieced together from more than one place with a lot of metacommentary, which makes it hard for anybody but me to follow them. Also get copies of any missed handouts (available on the web site). The handouts are numbered sequentially, starting with handout 0. On handout 0, you need to fill in some information and return it to me promptly so you can be on the email list and get access to the web site for the course.

Office Hours: In LH-205: 1:00–3:00pm on Monday and Wednesday.

These are the guaranteed times to find me except as announced in advance. You should also feel free to look for me at other times or make appointments.

Course Objectives: This course is intended to provide students with knowledge and skills in writing, presentations, and other forms of technical communication expected of them in their future roles as science and technology professionals. The course covers the following topics: principles of organizing, developing, and writing technical information; forms and conventions common to scientific and technical disciplines; presentation of technical information to various audiences; principles and techniques of oral presentations; computer-aided visual presentation techniques.

Prerequisites: COMP 150 or 170 co-requisite.

Textbook: Mike Markel. *Technical Communication*. Bedford/St. Martin's, ninth edition, 2009 (or 2011 copyright with MLA and APA updates).

May purchase hardcopy, which also provides ebook, or ebook alone, which should be about half the price of a new hardcopy. You also may find used copies in the bookstore or online.

Course Requirements: There will be regular homework assignments throughout the semester, and the final exam period will be used for oral presentations. Assignments will carry differing numbers of points that will appear in online postings. Participation on in-class exercises will also be used in semester grading for a possible shift to an adjacent grade (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, or F).

Homework: Only homework turned in by the due date (by class time) is guaranteed to be graded. Any special circumstances that cause difficulty in meeting the deadlines should be brought to the attention of the instructor in advance. If you cannot turn in homework in person, you should put it under the door of LH-205.

Exams: No exams are planned, except that online quizzes on the reading material may be included as assignments. The final exam time slot (1:00–3:00 am on Monday, April 30) will be utilized for oral presentations.

Collaboration: No collaboration is permitted on exams. Other work is to be completed individually or in small groups as specified. On written assignments, plagiarism, including unintentionally failing to cite sources properly is a serious violation. See <http://www.cs.luc.edu/~rig/courses/plagiarism.html>.

Tentative Course Outline and Approximate Schedule:

Recommended readings from the text are shown on a weekly basis. (When selected sections or subsections are listed, it is assumed that you will include the introduction of the corresponding chapter or section.) We'll also drill on various grammar/usage topics from some websites over the course of the semester.

1. (1/18) Administrivia. Introduction to Technical Communication. Chapter 1. Ethical and Legal Considerations. Chapter 2.
2. (1/23) Writing Technical Documents. Chapter 3. Writing Collaboratively. Chapter 4.
3. (1/30) Writing Collaboratively. Chapter 4. Analyzing Audience and Purpose. Chapter 5.
4. (2/6) Research. Chapter 6 and online tutorial "Evaluating Online Sources". Organizing Information. Chapter 7.
5. (2/13) Communicating Persuasively. Chapter 8. Writing Coherent Documents. Chapter 9.
6. (2/20) Writing Effective Sentences. Chapter 10. Designing Documents and Web Sites. Chapter 11.
7. (2/27) Designing Documents and Web Sites. Chapter 11 and online tutorial "Designing Documents with a Word Processor".
8. (3/12) Creating Graphics. Chapter 12 and online tutorial "Preparing Effective Charts and Graphs".
9. (3/19) Writing Proposals. Chapter 16. Writing Informational Reports. Chapter 17.
10. (3/26) Reviewing, Evaluating, and Testing Documents and Web Sites. Chapter 13. Writing Letters, Memos, and E-mails. Chapter 14.
11. (4/2) Making Oral Presentations. Chapter 21 and online tutorial "Preparing Presentation Slides".
12. (4/11) Preparing Job-Application Materials. Chapter 15.
13. (4/16) Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions. Chapter 20.
14. (4/23) Catch up or other material.

University Core

This course qualifies as a writing-intensive course for College of Arts and Sciences requirements. Students should expect three writing assignments of 2+ pages (tentative due dates 1/30, 2/6, and 2/15), one of 4+ pages (3/14), one of 7+ pages (4/11), and a 5-minute oral presentation using visuals (4/30), as well as some smaller exercises and peer review assignments.