



Grays Harbor College  
English 235  
Technical Writing  
5 Credits

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**Course Description:** This course emphasizes techniques of technical writing and the preparation of informal and formal technical reports commonly found in vocational, technical, and business environments. 5 Lecture hours. Satisfies writing skills requirement for the AA degree.

**Prerequisites:** A grade of "C-" or better in ENGL 101.

**Aims and Objectives:**

Technical writing necessitates that students become familiar with foundational knowledge in the area of research: procedures, vocabulary, and concepts. The concepts and procedures serve as important tools for problem solving, and the vocabulary of research is essential for effective communication and critical evaluation of research findings. In addition to the aims and objectives, technical writing necessitates that students develop an understanding of the various kinds of research, including procedures, vocabulary, and concepts.

**Essential Academic Learning Requirements, statewide academic standards developed by the Washington State Commission on Student Learning, addressed in this course include the following:**

- 4 Competency in the Disciplines
- 4 Literacy
- 4 Critical Thinking
- 3 Social and Personal Responsibility
- 3 Using Resources

Aims and Objectives, Continued:

1. The student will write clearly and effectively.  
(*Competency in the Disciplines, Literacy, Critical Thinking*)

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 1.1 develop concept and design
- 1.2 use style appropriate to the audience and purpose
- 1.3 apply writing conventions

2. The student will write in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes. (*Competency in the Disciplines, Literacy, Critical Thinking, Using Resources*)

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 2.1 write for different audiences
- 2.2 write for different purposes
- 2.3 write in a variety of forms
- 2.4 write for career applications

3. The student will understand and use the steps of the writing process. (*Competency in the Disciplines, Literacy, Critical Thinking, Using Resources*)

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 3.1 prewrite
- 3.2 draft
- 3.3 revise
- 3.4 edit
- 3.5 publish

4. The student will analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of written work. (*Competency in the Disciplines, Literacy, Critical Thinking, Social and Personal Responsibility, Using Resources*)

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 4.1 assess own strengths and needs for improvement
- 4.2 seek and offer feedback

Textbook:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

#### Methods of Instruction:

Course material will be presented in discussion, lecture, and laboratory formats. This course focuses on writing-skills development. Good writing comes through hard work and dedication to the principles of composition. The course will employ the following specific methods of instruction:

Reading and discussion of the ideas and terms presented class and in the text and in supplemental readings as assigned.

Writing skills practice through reading about, discussing, and exploring the principles of composition and the conventions of technical writing

Drafting and revision of papers and projects

Conferences or written comments on final drafts of essays

#### Sequence:

##### Unit I

Principal Principles: Principles of Technical Writing or  
A Modest Proposal: Research Proposal

- Introduction to Research and Technical Writing
- Planning a Research Proposal
- Variables, Research Problems, and Hypotheses

##### Unit II

Figures Don't Lie, But Liars Can Figure: (Re)Searching for the Truth

- Locating and Reviewing Related Literature
- Subjects, Participants, and Sampling

##### Unit III

"There are three types of liars: liars, damned liars, and statisticians." : Research Measurement and Design

- Research Measurement
- Statistical Techniques
- Research Designs

**Rules and Requirements:**

**Attendance:** Attendance is required in the course. In-class work cannot be made up if it is missed, and your ability to keep up with your classmates will suffer if you are absent. If you cannot attend a class due to illness or family emergency, please notify me prior to class. Students are responsible for materials covered in each class and must make arrangements to obtain the notes of another student if unable to attend.

**Deadlines:** All assignments that are to be completed outside of class, including reading assignments and exercises, must be completed by class time on the day they are due. If you do not keep up with the assignments, you will quickly fall behind, and it is quite difficult to get caught up. If you anticipate difficulty in meeting a deadline, let me know before an assignment is due. If I think a brief extension is warranted, I will be open to setting a new deadline.

**Plagiarism:** I take it as a given that, in accordance with the ethical standards of education, you will do your own work. I assume, therefore, that any assignment you turn in consists of your ideas, your research, and your treatment of the information.

**Instructor and student expectations:**

**Instructor expectations:** The instructor will enthusiastically lecture, provide meaningful assignments, stimulate discussions, provide timely feedback on assignments and tests, and be available to counsel and assist students on a regular and arranged basis. The instructor is responsible for the following areas: professional preparation and scholarship, knowledge of subject matter, classroom management, and interest in education.

**Student expectations:** Students are responsible for consistent attendance and participation in class and satisfactory completion of assignments, papers, and examinations.

Classroom decorum: The college classroom must be a working and learning environment in which adults treat one another with respect. Students who demonstrate a disregard for working, learning, adult behavior, and respect for others' ideas may be asked to leave the classroom. Since many of the issues we will be discussing may be controversial, it goes without saying that we all will present our views in a socially and academically appropriate manner, without sarcasm or ridicule, no matter how outrageously pathetic and sorry a particular point of view may be.

Students with disabilities: Students who have documented disabilities that require accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the disability support services coordinator as well as the instructor of the course in order to ensure that together we create an optimal environment for education achievement.

## Methods of Evaluation: Grading

Points will be assigned for each course requirement and overall grades will be determined by accumulated points.

### 1. Three 100-point quizzes:

#### Unit I

Principal Principles: Principles of Technical Writing or  
A Modest Proposal: Research Proposal

- Introduction to Research and Technical Writing
- Planning a Research Proposal
- Variables, Research Problems, and Hypotheses

#### Unit II Quiz

Figures Don't Lie, But Liars Can Figure: (Re)Searching for the Truth

- Locating and Reviewing Related Literature
- Subjects, Participants, and Sampling

#### Unit III Quiz

"There are three types of liars: liars, damned liars, and statisticians.": Research Measurement and Design

- Research Measurement
- Statistical Techniques
- Research Designs

### 2. Research Proposal, to be completed in two sections.

3. American Psychological Association mastery assignments, including summative APA take home quiz, and other collaborative and cooperative technical writing assignments.

### 4. One 100-point comprehensive final examination.

A	100 to 94 %
A-	93 to 90 %
B+	89 to 87 %
B	86 to 83 %
B-	82 to 80 %
C+	79 to 77 %
C	76 to 73 %
C-	72 to 70 %
D+	69 to 67 %
D	66 to 60 %
F	Below 60 %

## A Modest Proposal: Research Proposal Guidelines

Your completed research proposal must include the following items:

### I. Title Page

### II. Abstract (you will write this last)

- A. Give a brief summary of the entire study, including the problem, methods used, and major findings.

### III. Introduction

#### A. Purpose of the Study

1. The purpose of this study is as follows: (one sentence only).
2. What one study is your study most directly based on? (give citation)
3. How does your study build on previous research?
4. How will your study contribute to knowledge about your subject?

#### B. Research questions, Hypothesis, and Objectives

1. In what form are you stating your research purposes (questions, hypotheses, or objectives)?
2. List your research questions, hypotheses, or objectives.
3. What theoretical framework does your study relate to? Describe the theoretical framework and indicate how your research questions, hypotheses, or objectives relate to it.

### IV. Literature Review

- A. Review and critique the studies that relate to the problem being investigated. Include level I, Level II, and Level III research. Provide a detailed evaluation and comparison of at least 10 studies relating to your topic. It should be well organized using APA style headings and citations.

Exordium: Introduction

Narratio: Background Information

Propositio: Claim

Partitio: Forecasting Passage

Confirmatio: Support, Main Body of Essay

Confutatio: Summary of Opposing Views  
Refutatio: Opposing Views are Refuted  
Peroratio: Conclusion

## V. Methods and Design

### A. Research Design

1. Describe the research design that you will use for your study: descriptive, correlational, comparative, causal comparative, experimental, quasi-experimental.
2. What are the threats to the internal validity of your research design? What will you do to minimize these threats?
3. What are the limitations to generalizability (external validity) of the findings that will result from your research design? What will you do to maximize the generalizability of your findings?
4. Give operational definitions for key constructs in your study.
5. If there is a treatment or intervention, specify what it is.

### B. Sampling

1. Describe the characteristics of the population that you will study, and whether you will sample from this population or study it in its entirety.
2. Identify your sampling procedure and explain why you selected it.
3. Indicate the sampling unit.
4. Indicate the size of your sample, and explain why that sample size is sufficient.
5. Indicate whether the sample will be formed into subgroups, and if so, describe the characteristics of the subgroups.

### C. Variables

1. Specify the dependent variables in your study.
2. Specify the independent variables in your study.
3. What other variables, if any, will be considered in your study?

D. Instruments and Measures

1. List the measures that you will select or develop for your study.
2. Indicate how your measures will assess each variable in the study.
3. For each measure, indicate which types of validity and reliability are relevant, and how you will check them.

E. Data Analysis Procedures

1. What kinds of data do you expect to generate from the study?
2. What statistical method(s) will you use to analyze your data?
3. How will you present your data? Include in your proposal any tables or figures that you would expect to use (With hypothetical findings).

VI. Results, Discussion, and Conclusions

- A. What conclusions would you expect to be able to make regarding the research questions using the analyses and procedures you have specified?
- B. What limitations to the conclusions would there be, given the analyses and procedures you have used?

VII. Ethics and Human Relations

- A. What risks, if any, does your study pose for your research participants? What steps will you take to minimize these risks?
- B. How will you gain entry into the setting in which you will collect data?
- C. How will you gain the cooperation of your research participants?

VIII. Timeline

- A. Create a timeline listing in order all the major steps of your study. Also indicate the approximate amount of time that each step will take.

## IX. References

- A. List all of the sources cited in the report in APA format.

All Research Proposals must be in the preceding format. Nonconforming papers will be rejected without review. The total paper length must not exceed 20 pages, 12-point font, including attachments. A Research Proposal must be in a single volume and must include the sections outlined above. Please follow Cavin's Principles of Composition. Papers will be graded on content, structure, and presentation.

Research Proposals will be completed in two sections:

- (1) introduction and literature review and
- (2) methodology.

The introduction should consist of background, context of the problem, purpose of the study, research question(s), definition of terms, and rationale regarding the significance of the study. Include citations in APA format and visual representations (charts, graphs, figures) as appropriate. The introduction should be about 5 pages.

The literature review should provide a detailed evaluation and comparison of at least 10 studies relating to the topic. It should be well organized using APA style headings and citations. It must include an APA style reference page. The literature review should be about 7 pages. The introduction and literature review must be submitted on or before \_\_\_\_\_.

The methodology section should include information addressing research design, description of the population and rationale for sampling or data collection, variables as applicable, hypotheses or research questions, and data collection and analysis. The methodology section should be about 5 pages.

The final research proposal should have an APA style cover page, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology section, reference pages, and appendices as appropriate. The final research proposal should be around 15-17 pages.

Final proposals must be submitted on or before \_\_\_\_\_.

English 235: Technical Writing  
 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES  
 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Follow the steps below. Get peer and teacher signatures to move on to each step.

Step	Task	Peer Sign	Teacher Sign
1. COMMIT TO TOPIC OR SELECT ALTERNATE TOPIC	Turn your topic into a research hypothesis. It should take the form of a claim of fact.		
2. WRITE QUESTION	List specific research question that you will seek to answer.		
3. FIND RESOURCES	Conduct a preliminary literature review and record valid sources of information on RIS.		
4 TAKE NOTES	Gather and document evidence to support your claim.		
5 MAKE OUTLINE	Organize your information into the quantitative research proposal format.		
6. WRITE ROUGH DRAFT	Following your outline, write your proposal in well-constructed paragraph form.		
7. WRITE REFERENCES	Using information from your RESOURCE INFORMATION SHEET, write references page using APA style.		
8. MAKE REVISIONS	Edit and revise your rough draft following the Principles of Composition.		
9. WRITE FINAL PROPOSAL	Accurately revise your corrected draft following the Principles of Composition.		
10. SUBMIT FINAL PROPOSAL	Turn in your completed research proposal.		

## RESOURCE INFORMATION SHEET

Conduct a literature review and record valid sources of information on the RESOURCE INFORMATION SHEET. Record the information that is needed for each type of source. You may not need to use every line for every source.

Source Code A Type of Source:

Author:

Title of Article:

Title of Book or Periodical:

Publisher:

Date of Publication:

City and State of Publication:

Volume or Issue:

Pages Used:

APA FORMAT:

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Source Code B Type of Source:

Author:

Title of Article:

Title of Book or Periodical:

Publisher:

Date of Publication:

City and State of Publication:

Volume or Issue:

Pages Used:

APA FORMAT:

If you are not sure what would be a good topic for you to use as a claim for your quantitative research paper, ask around. Ask your friends, co-workers, significant others, whomever. They will know what is important to you, because, chances are, you bore them with the minute details of that particular topic on a semi-regular basis. The most important thing about this assignment is to pick a topic about which you actually care. Pick a topic that is of interest to you. What is it that gets you fired up? Only you can answer that question. I cannot tell you how many papers I have read over the years about the death penalty, abortion, euthanasia, gun control, etc. These topics have been done to death. Pick a topic that is of interest to you and turn it into an argumentative claim. With that in mind, here are a few basic misconceptions about research paper writing.

1. You can learn everything about writing in a class, in one quarter. Unfortunately, there is no trick or device or weekend workshop that will magically make writing easier. Good writing comes through hard work and dedication to the principles of composition.

2. You can learn about writing just by talking about writing. Writing is a craft, not an art, and it must be practiced almost constantly. Writing is not just something to be done when an assignment is due. Writing, like anything else worth doing well, must be practiced on a regular basis. Follow the research procedures in the Research Paper Guidelines

3. Writing is naturally exhaustive, dissatisfying work. Writing is hard work, but it shouldn't be torture. If you follow each of the steps in the Research Paper Guidelines, the tasks associated with the writing process won't be nearly as difficult.

4. You can write a research paper without reading. Not true, my friends. You need constant exposure to examples of good writing. The more you read, the easier it is to write. You need a constant source of input in order to get any sort of quality output. Reading will spark ideas that you may not have considered on your own. Supporting your claim with information gathered from reliable resources is the key to any good research paper. Make sure your resources focus on your claim.

5. You can learn to write without caring very much. You have to want to write. Wanting a good grade or wanting to impress me, won't work. Pick a claim that is of interest to you and support that claim with evidence and reasoning.

6. Nobody expects you to write well or like writing. Writing is not just something that a few anti-social people called writers do. For the course of this quarter, you are a writer. Call yourself a writer.

7. You will learn by being told everything you do wrong. The only thing you'll learn by this method is to dislike the task of writing. If you write for no other purpose than to avoid making mistakes, you are doing yourself a great disservice. The more you try to write to avoid error, the worse you will write. I can and will give you feedback. I will only give you feedback that is constructive and helps you to improve.

8. You will write well by following a formula. When good writing happens, you might not even be aware of it. The more you try to make good writing happen, the more you'll prevent good writing. You won't master good writing by plugging your information into a formula. Instead, start with your claim, find support for your claim, and arrange your paper in a logical manner.

Writing is not a large vocabulary. Writing is not a brand new idea about a topic. Writing is not the last word on a topic. Writing is not profound thinking. Writing is not extraordinary experience. The goal of good writing is not to prove that a topic is absolutely true or absolutely false. Good writing is very often a little bit of both: true and false. Don't set out to convince everyone at once. Don't assume that your reader is your enemy. Don't try to do impossible things. Start with a topic that is important to you. Turn your topic into a research hypothesis. Make an assertion. Support your claim with evidence and reasoning.

Cavin's Principles of Composition

1. \_\_\_\_\_ correct \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. \_\_\_\_\_ appropriate \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Check \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Prefer the \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. Be \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. Be \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. Prefer the \_\_\_\_\_ word to the almost  
\_\_\_\_\_ word.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ follows \_\_\_\_\_ .
10. \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ .