WELCOME
This syllabus is a contract. It sets forth expectations, responsibilities, instructions, and policies that obligate both instructor and students. Read and consult it throughout the Spring 2015 semester. If you find an error or inconsistency in the syllabus, please accept my apology in advance and notify me immediately. To download the information sheet and current version of the syllabus, please see the course website: http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm. In cases where information in this syllabus differs from what appears on the course website, the website should be regarded as the most current and authoritative source.

I. COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE
ENC 4260.521, Advanced Technical Writing, Spring 2015, CRN 13971. This is a 100% online course in which no meetings are held on campus. However, this is not a “correspondence course” in which one merely writes assignments. Students will also be required to hear lectures, complete assigned reading, and communicate with the instructor (and fellow students, as needed) regularly via email and Canvas.

II. INSTRUCTOR CONTACT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Instructor: Thorold (Tod) Roberts. (Please refer to me as “Mr. Roberts.”) To contact me, send email to tr@sar.usf.edu or thorsdag@comcast.net. (Spell my email address accurately!) Most of our communications will be via email, but if necessary, please phone me at 941-927-2898 (Sarasota office at home) between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. I prefer email because it creates a written record of our communications and because it gives students practice in writing, one of the main purposes of the course. Because I am rarely on campus, do not leave a message on my campus phone or in my campus mailbox.

You have no restrictions on the length or number of emails you may exchange with me, but please use good judgment in this matter. Because of the large volume of email I handle, every message you send must bear your last name and the course number in the SUBJECT line (for example: “Robinson, Question on ENC 4260, Assignment 2”). If a student question or comment appears of general value or relevance, I will send it and my response to all students in the course.

For information on my background, see http://usfsm.edu/faculty-members/prof-thorold-tod-roberts/. For students’ numeric ratings and comments on my past USF courses, see http://www.todroberts.com/USF/Roberts_Evaluations.htm. The RateMyProfessors.com comments regarding my teaching are available here: http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/ShowRatings.jsp?tid=868969.

If you wish to meet with me in person or via Skype, please arrange an appointment. Because of my distance from campus and because all of my teaching is online, I prefer to schedule on-campus meetings when I am present for other faculty activities. I am available via Skype or phone at any reasonable time which we can schedule in advance.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE
From the USF Catalog: (Prerequisites: ENC 2210, or ENC 3310, or Consent of Instructor) Advanced Technical Writing is designed to develop writing skills of a high order: technical exposition; technical narration, description, and argumentation; graphics; proposals; progress reports; physical research reports; and feasibility reports. This course satisfies elective requirements for the Professional & Technical Communication (PTC) major (check with your academic advisor about your individual circumstances).

IV. COURSE GOAL
To help the student advance in knowledge and practice of skills, tools, and work ethic needed for communicating on an advanced level about technical subjects in written English with readers and users in business, industry, organizations, and professional occupations.

V. COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
The objectives of ENC 4260 are for each student to meet the following objectives by the end of the course:
1. Show ability to create clear, concise, and complete messages that meet needs of intended users and readers.
2. Meet stated deadline for assigned project.
3. Show ability to create and transmit messages in such diverse media as print, audio, video, in-person presentation, and internet.
4. Show knowledge and sound judgment in using effective communication concepts, theories, tactics, and strategies appropriate for intended project results.
5. Show ability to interpret and edit messages from advanced Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) and transmit said messages effectively to non-expert users.

Assignments: The assignments draw on the instructor’s decades-long experience as a professional writer and editor serving clients and employers in diverse business settings and as a university teacher of writing. In addition to written assignments, the course involves familiarity with writing handbooks, online lectures, and email exchanges, as detailed in the Schedule of Weekly Assignments below. It also requires the use of computerized word processing using MS Word software, electronic communications, and internet-based research. Each student must have
access to a reliable computer and knowledge of how to use it for word processing, email, internet search, and access to the password-controlled USF Canvas online Learning Management System (my.usf.edu).

The following quotation from the Society for Technical Communication may help you understand the importance of this field of study:

**THE VALUE OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (http://www.stc.org/story/)**

With increasing demand for technical products, the technical communication field has grown. What used to be the strict discipline of creating and editing policies and manuals has now exploded into a rich field of communicating in many media as well as performing user analysis, applying usability methods, creating e-learning, and much more.

Technical communicators have become an asset to many companies with their understanding of technical processes, as well as their ability to communicate information in a clear and usable way to different groups, from consumers to end users. Technical communicators have the crucial job to plan, design, organize, write, edit, and test information. That information may be safety-critical, keeping consumers and employees from harming themselves and others by unintentionally misusing products. That information may also be what makes consumers and employees productive and happy by showing them how to perform their tasks quickly and easily.

Some examples of people within the technical communication field are: content developers, documentation specialists, indexers, information architects, information designers, instructional designers, researchers, teachers, technical illustrators, technical writers and editors, translators, usability and human factors professionals, visual designers, and Web designers and developers.

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**VI. ENC 4260 COURSE CONTENT AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

**Course Content:** Each of the three first writing assignments will be 500-700 words long; Assignment 4 will consist of a 2,000- to 2,500-word project using various media. Assignments may require submission of prose, PowerPoint slides, website composition, and work in other media. Selected readings from a free online textbook ([http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/](http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/)) and other web-based resources will supplement web-posted lectures. All students must submit an online evaluation of the course through exPlorance at the end of the semester.

**Method of Presentation:** Students will perform in a distance-learning environment, with guidance from the instructor. Course objectives and procedures will be presented in the first lecture to be posted on the course website ([http://www.tcdroberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm](http://www.tcdroberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm)) before the semester begins on Jan. 5, 2015. Your official USF email address (not the Canvas “Messages” function) will be used for most communications; if you forward mail from there to your personal address, be sure you are receiving all messages. An individual student’s questions and my emailed responses will be sent to all students if the questions and answers appear to be generally relevant and useful. I welcome student emails about assignments, lectures, or other matters as long as they are focused, relevant, and professional. I try to answer all email promptly. **If you use a mobile phone to receive and respond to email, be sure that you are saving all course-related messages and attachments to your computer. Students who fail to do this will likely encounter problems leading to possible loss of grade points.**

**Canvas and Other USF Technology Tools:** For help with Canvas, USF email, OASIS, or other USF technology, see [http://it.usf.edu/](http://it.usf.edu/), send an email (help@usf.edu), or call 866-974-1222. **IMPORTANT:** Canvas is used in this course to post selected announcements and student grades. **but is NOT used for exchanging ordinary messages.** Instead, students communicate with the instructor via their USF Google email accounts or a personal email account. All official messages from the instructor or the university will be sent via regular email, not Canvas “messaging.” One exception to this is the submission of assignments. These should, in fact, be submitted via Canvas so they can be checked by the TurnITin® plagiarism-prevention software.

**Lectures:** As noted on the course website, you will download two lecture files (.mp4 audio and PowerPoint slides) each week. Depending on the capabilities of your computer, you may need to hear the MP4 files on your computer using either Apple QuickTime or VLC Media Player (see links for these free downloads on course website). **Do not try to hear the lecture audio as a streaming file over the internet -- you may find it interrupted.** Just download and listen to it on your computer while viewing the PowerPoint slides. Save the audio and the slides inside your 4260 folder. The lectures provide important information on written assignments and concepts covered in the course.

**Audio Codes to Facilitate Participation.** To simulate in an online environment the required tracking of student attendance expected in an on-campus class, each audio lecture will contain embedded spoken code words which you must send to me via email by deadlines noted in the Weekly Schedule below. This will ensure that you are listening to the lectures soon after they are posted, and not letting them accumulate for later listening. Regular note-taking on lectures is vital to your success in the course. Failure to send the audio codes by deadline may result in two unpleasant consequences: (1) ignorance about assignment instructions leading to weak performance and (2) a penalty to your grade on a given assignment.

**Email Messages:** As noted above, you will send me all assignments via Canvas. Messages alone should be sent via regular email to tr@sar.usf.edu. Prose documents should be produced in MS Word with the .doc or .docx file extension. I will evaluate and grade your work electronically and, as explained below, return it to you by email upon request. Be sure to indicate your preferred email address if it is not obvious from your message. I will acknowledge, via email, the receipt of your message and attachment. All of your written work must bear a filename in this format: Lastname_4260_X.doc (no spaces), where X refers to the assignment number (1, 2, 3 or 4). Do not send your work with a generic name such as “Assignment2.doc” or “Report.doc.” The first time you do this, I will ask you to fix it. If this happens again, your submission will simply be counted as missing and will be penalized accordingly. Orderly procedures and file naming are essential because I receive and answer 100 to 150 student emails per week and evaluate around 400,000 to 500,000 words of student submissions per semester. Occasionally a student or instructor or both may experience problems with email. If this happens, notify me by phone (941-927-2898) and, if necessary, send a message to my alternative email address (thorsdag06@yahoo.com -- the 0 is a zero, not the capital letter “O”). **DO NOT SEND THE YAHOO ADDRESS WITHOUT PHONING ME.** As noted above, each email requires a subject line with your name, the course number (4260), and a brief phrase such as “Assignment 2 question.” Make sure your USF email account is working, especially if you have
messages forwarded from there to a different address. If you wish to hold a Skype video call with me, please email me two or three preferred times so that we can schedule this event at a mutually convenient hour. (My Skype name is “thorolder.”)

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Make sure you receive my acknowledgment of your assignment submission. If you do not receive such a message by 9 p.m. following a 6 p.m. deadline, send the document to me again. Otherwise, your work will be penalized for being late or missing. I will normally use the email header time-stamp to determine whether you have met the deadline or not. (See Section VIII, Grading and Evaluation, for information on the penalty for late submissions; for information on email headers, see [http://www.todroberts.com/USF/Email_Headers.pdf](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/Email_Headers.pdf)) Be sure that the clock in your computer is accurate. I am too busy to acknowledge all submissions as they arrive, so please do not call or email me about your submission if you send it before the 6 p.m. deadline. I will usually acknowledge submissions AFTER the 6 p.m. deadline, not before.

**Last Day to Withdraw from a Spring 2015 Course Without Academic Penalty (and Without Refund of Fees):** Saturday, March 21, 2015, 6 p.m. Confer with your academic advisor before this date to discuss the impact of this action on your degree progress and student loan status. If you are not submitting required work but remain in the course, you will earn an “F.” (Note that the maximum number of withdrawals in upper-division courses is limited; check with your academic advisor about your individual situation.)

**Format for Written Assignments:** See the Formatting Instructions included with this syllabus. Formatting is an important element of technical and professional writing and as such will play a role in your learning experience and grade. All written assignments must be prepared on a computer (Macintosh or PC) using Microsoft Word or equivalent software. **NOTE:** If you use MS Works or WordPerfect or any software package other than MS Office, you must create and save a document as a WORD file (ending in .doc). Do not use the proprietary Apple software PAGES for your documents. Save your document using the .doc or .docx extension. You will not receive credit for work that I cannot read using MS Office on the Macintosh. If you lack MS Office for your personal use, you may also use a shareware program called OpenOffice (www.openoffice.org), but you may find it limited compared to the Microsoft version. Check with the USF Computer Store ([http://www.computerstore.usf.edu/](http://www.computerstore.usf.edu/)) for discounted prices on MS Office software.

**Computer Use:** All professional writing today requires use of a computer and the internet for document preparation and revision, research, and communications. Put all work for the course (assignments, drafts, email messages, syllabus, bookmarks, etc.) into a separate folder labeled 4260_Spring14. Back up that folder at least weekly on a USB flash drive, CD-ROM, or online archive. Send a copy of your messages and attachments to your secondary email address for safe-keeping. **An assignment lost as a result of carelessness or ignorance will diminish your learning experience and grade.** If an assignment calls for the use of tools such as PowerPoint for slides, advanced application of MS Word or Excel, or the creation of websites or audio/video files, budget the time and effort required for you to learn them. Those seeking a professional career today simply cannot survive without such knowledge.

**Course Website:** [http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm). Links to syllabus, assignments, lectures, and helpful resources are available on this site. The Instructor reserves the right to update and reorganize this site during the semester.

**Student Success in This Course:** To succeed in ENC 4260, think and act like a professional, not like a student. Put learning ahead of grades and challenge yourself to work beyond your comfort zone. Read and respond to email, submit work on time, read all assigned material, take notes on lectures on schedule, keep your mind open and unbiased, and ask questions. If you are like most USF Sarasota-Manatee students, you are probably not only studying for a degree but also earning a living and perhaps caring for a family. Thus, to succeed in ENC 4260, especially in a 100 percent online environment, prioritize your time and effort wisely. Your investment in advanced technical writing and analytical skills will pay off significantly over the course of your career.

If you doubt this, talk to students who have already taken my presentation of ENC 4260 and are now working as successful professionals. As the instructor, I am eager for you to experience an excellent return on your investment of time, money, and intellectual energy. If you are not having such an experience, contact me immediately. Don’t let your negative feelings influence the quality of your work or of your interactions with me. Do not take grades personally -- they are merely indicators of a professional evaluation based on my experience and knowledge, not on my view of your character.

**Attendance, Absences, Making Up Work, Extra Credit:** Because this course is delivered as a 100 percent online experience, conventional attendance records are irrelevant. However, the required submission of audio codes for online lectures functions as a simulated means of checking “attendance.” The specific rules regarding audio codes are explained above (see “Lectures”). There is no provision for re-doing an assignment already submitted, grade forgiveness, grade rounding, extra credit, or makeup work. Penalties for late submission of student work are specified below in Section IX, “Grade Penalty for Missing an Assignment Deadline.” Online courses require maturity and self-discipline.

**USF Academic Calendar, Spring 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon Jan 5: first day of classes</th>
<th>Sat Mar 21: Last day to drop without penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Jan 9: Drop/Add period ends</td>
<td>Fri Apr 24: Spring 2015 classes end: online course evaluations due (deadline TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat Jan 10, midnight: Attendance verification due</td>
<td>Sat-Fri, Apr 25-May 1: Final exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon Jan 19: MLK Jr Day (no classes or office hrs)</td>
<td>Sun May 3: USFSM Commencement (6:30 pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon-Sat, Mar 2-7: Spring Break</td>
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**VII. SCHEDULE OF ENC 4260 WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS, SPRING 2015**

Detailed directions for all written assignments will be provided via syllabus, lectures, email, and website posting. Assigned readings will be announced via lecture and email. Note that all written assignments are due to me on a Monday by 6:00 p.m. Lectures discussing assignments and course content will be posted on the course website as both PowerPoint slides and as audio recordings in MP4 format, usually between
Definitions of Grades

A+ = exceeds objectives of the assignment; three or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; very clear, logical thought; originality, creativity, and maturity

A = exceeds objectives of the assignment; three or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; clear, logical thought; originality, creativity, and maturity

A- = meets objectives of the assignment; four or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; logical but uninspired thought; no major surprises

B+ = 89.999-86

B = meets objectives of the assignment; no more than four major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; logical but uninspired thought; no major surprises

B- = 83.999-80

C+ = 79.999-76

C = 75.999-74

C- = 73.999-70

D+ = 69.999-66

D = 65.999-64

D- = 63.999-60

F = 59.999-0

No assignment submitted = zero points; note that this scale differs from the generic scale on Canvas, just as students and instructors differ from their generic counterparts.

Definitions of Grades

The grade you earn on an assignment will be a numerical score. For assignments in this course and for the Spring 2015 semester total score, numerical values are equated with letter grades as shown below:

A = 100-95
A- = 94.999-90
B+ = 89.999-86
B = 85.999-84
B- = 83.999-80
C+ = 79.999-76
C = 75.999-74
C- = 73.999-70
D+ = 69.999-66
D = 65.999-64
D- = 63.999-60
F = 59.999-0

No assignment submitted = zero points; note that this scale differs from the generic scale on Canvas, just as students and instructors differ from their generic counterparts.

VIII. TEXT AND OTHER RESOURCES

- Computer (Mac or PC), Microsoft Office or equivalent software, Internet access, and email account
- Senior-level competence in English grammar, vocabulary, spelling, sentence structure, thesis formation, and supporting evidence
- Competence in the design, composition, editing, and posting of a basic website (tips will be provided for those new to this task)
- Free handbook of English usage at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/; also, memorize the USAGE TIPS at the end of this syllabus; dictionary: http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/
- Regular access to archive of Daily Writing Tips (selected questions on final exam will be derived from these tips)
- Miscellaneous information provided by instructor via course website: http://www.tod roberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm

IX. GRADING AND EVALUATION

The grade you earn on an assignment will be a numerical score. For assignments in this course and for the Spring 2015 semester total score, numerical values are equated with letter grades as shown below:

A = 100-95
A- = 94.999-90
B+ = 89.999-86
B = 85.999-84
B- = 83.999-80
C+ = 79.999-76
C = 75.999-74
C- = 73.999-70
D+ = 69.999-66
D = 65.999-64
D- = 63.999-60
F = 59.999-0

No assignment submitted = zero points; note that this scale differs from the generic scale on Canvas, just as students and instructors differ from their generic counterparts.

Definitions of Grades

A = exceeds objectives of the assignment; three or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; very clear, logical thought; originality, creativity, and maturity

A- = meets objectives of the assignment; four or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; clear, logical thought; originality, creativity, and maturity

B+ = 89.999-86

B = 85.999-84

B- = 83.999-80

C+ = 79.999-76

C = 75.999-74

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A = exceeds objectives of the assignment; three or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; clear, logical thought; originality, creativity, and maturity

A- = meets objectives of the assignment; four or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; logical but uninspired thought; no major surprises

B+ = 89.999-86

B = 85.999-84

B- = 83.999-80

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C = 75.999-74

C- = 73.999-70

D+ = 69.999-66

D = 65.999-64

D- = 63.999-60

F = 59.999-0

No assignment submitted = zero points; note that this scale differs from the generic scale on Canvas, just as students and instructors differ from their generic counterparts.

Definitions of Grades

A = exceeds objectives of the assignment; three or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; clear, logical thought; originality, creativity, and maturity

A- = meets objectives of the assignment; four or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; logical but uninspired thought; no major surprises
C = meets objectives but just barely; five or more major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; some lapses in logic;
often, a cautious effort to “give the instructor what he wants”

D = tries but fails to meet objectives; six or more major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; jumbled, weak flow of
ideas; confused understanding of the assignment

F = complete failure to meet objectives of the assignment

NOTE: A “major error” is defined as one that creates confusion or an impression of unprofessional practices; this includes, but is not limited to,
comma splices, sentence fragments, fused or run-on sentences, pronoun misuse, punctuation mistakes, cringeworthy spelling errors, and
misused words (for instance, using “service” as a verb when the correct word is “serve”). Note also that an accumulation of several “minor” errors
may cause as much harm as a few “major” errors. A misspelling of “moral” for “morale” (or vice versa) may appear minor, but your reader may
find it grounds for doubting your knowledge, skill, and credibility. Such errors may even cause you to lose a job or contract assignment. Although
some students may believe that strict standards of correctness in speech and writing are passé, they may be in for a major surprise when a boss
or client explodes in a fury over a “simple misspelling.” Use old-fashioned flash cards for learning the Usage Tips at the end of the syllabus. For
additional explanation of how errors are defined and evaluated, please see: http://www.todroberts.com/USF/grade_penalties.pdf

Final Grade in Course: Your final grade in the course will be computed on Canvas using the following weighted formula:

60%: Assignments 1, 2, and 3 (20% each, combined total of around 1,500 to 2,100 words)
30%: Assignment 4 (2,000 to 2,500 words)
10%: Final Exam (via Canvas)

To extend a deadline without penalty, you must present compelling evidence of need as defined by the instructor. This varies in individual
circumstances, but such leniency is more likely for a student who has demonstrated a desire to work hard and succeed in the course by,
for example, submitting optional revised work. You are always much better off turning in a late assignment than none at all. The grade you earn, not the
grade that I “give,” is what I report to the registrar using the following plus-and-minus scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
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<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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Inability to Complete Course Requirements On Time: A mark of “Incomplete” is allowed only in rare cases such as a documented health
crisis or family emergency. You may be required to submit a Medical Form to the Academic Regulations Committee (available at
http://www.registrar.usf.edu/data_display.php?link_type=Forms). The policy as stated in the current USFSM undergraduate catalog is as follows:

“Incomplete grade (“I”) is exceptional and granted at the instructor’s discretion only when students are unable to complete course
requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. This applies to all gradable courses, including pass/fail (S/U).
Students may only be eligible for an "I" when:

- the majority of the student’s work for a course has been completed before the end of the semester
- the work that has been completed must be qualitatively satisfactory
- the student has requested consideration for an "I" grade as soon as possible but no later than the last day of finals week.

The student must request consideration for an Incomplete grade and obtain an "I" Grade Contract from the instructor of record. Even though the student may meet the eligibility requirements for this grade, the course instructor retains the right to make the final decision on granting a student’s request for an Incomplete. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed one semester from the original date grades were due for that course.

The instructor must file a copy of the "I" Grade Contract in the college that offered the course by the date grades are due. The instructor must not require students to either re-register for the course or audit the course in order to complete the "I" grade. Students may register to audit the course, with the instructor’s approval, but cannot re-take the course for credit until the I grade is cleared.

An "I" grade not cleared within the next academic semester (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract. I grades are not computed in the GPA, but the grade noted on the contract will be computed in the GPA retroactive to the semester the course was taken, if the contract is not fulfilled by the specified date. When the final grade is assigned, if applicable, the student will be placed on academic probation or academically dismissed (refer to Automated Academic Probation Procedures for information). Students cannot be admitted to doctoral candidacy or certified for graduation with an "I" grade.

See complete USFSM Undergraduate Catalog here: [http://usfsm.edu/catalog/](http://usfsm.edu/catalog/)

**Grading Process.** I do not return your graded submission to you except upon your request. You have two options in this process:

**Option 1.** If you want the submission returned with detailed marks and comments, **you must agree to revise the entire paper** in response to those comments and marks. The revision is due to me no later than one week after you receive the marked paper from me. If you choose this option, the submission you send must be labeled `Lastname_4260_X_markup.doc`, where "X" refers to the assignment number. You will receive from me a document labeled `Lastname_4260_X_markup_graded.doc`. You will then rewrite/revise this and return it to me labeled `Lastname_4260_X_revised.doc`. Omit spaces and insert underscores in filenames exactly as shown. Leave all of my original marks and comments in place and insert your revisions nearby in blue boldface text so that I can quickly compare the original and the revision. (See detailed revision instructions and sample revision on course website, [http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4260_welcome.htm).)

**Option 2.** If you want your grade simply posted on Canvas with no marks, comments, or returned submission, just name your file `Lastname_4260_X.doc`.

The rewriting/revision process is entirely your option, not a requirement. You may choose to revise one or more of Assignments 1 through 3. Assignment 4 occurs too late in the term to allow revision; however, I will provide an optional emailed comment on it upon request. Use this filename: `Lastname_4260_4_comment.doc` (or .docx). I do of course evaluate your work carefully, but I provide detailed comments only for those papers on which students are willing to perform the extra work needed for revising the submission. IMPORTANT: Submitting the revised submission will NOT result in a change in your grade except under this condition: If you request the detailed mark-up, you must submit the revised work within one week of receiving it graded from me. If you do not, your grade will be dropped by one grade (10 points) -- for example, from a B+ to a C+.

Please note that grading a student paper is considerably more demanding than simply reading it; the intensity of this process, combined with other faculty duties, permits me to evaluate only about 10 to 15 submissions per day; given my typical workload of 75 to 80 students per semester, you should not expect a grade to be posted sooner than a week after you submit your work. I first grade the submissions for which students have requested detailed markup, and then those for which no markup is requested. (In rare cases I may return the revision for more work, but this is not common.)

**Reason for This Grading Process:** Because of my heavy teaching load (around 400,000 to 500,000 words of graded student writing per semester), I lack the time needed for marking all student work in sufficient detail as a regular procedure. My grading process therefore offers a compromise. It recognizes that some students are content merely to pass the course in order to satisfy a graduation requirement. This usually means they are willing to settle for an "acceptable" grade. A student’s definition of "acceptable" varies, but based on my experience, many students are satisfied with anything from a "C" to an "A." Students who are enrolled just to satisfy a graduation requirement will likely have personal reasons for not wanting to submit a complete revision. They may be busy with academic work, jobs, or other responsibilities, or they may simply regard the revision process as not worth the required work. However, **this opportunity is open to every student.**

The amount of effort for me as instructor to prepare a detailed mark-up (typically requiring 30 to 40 minutes per individual submission) is commensurate with the extra effort required by the student to revise it. This effort is understandably beyond what some students prefer to do or have time to do. However, I do not discriminate in any way against those who do not want to perform this extra work. I merely offer an opportunity for this enhanced learning experience to those who see value in such an approach.

**IMPORTANT:** Students have no obligation to take advantage of the revising process and will suffer no direct penalty for not participating in this additional work. It should be obvious to you, however, that optimal learning is more likely with, than without, the extra work.
Special Note for Students Majoring in Professional & Technical Communication (PTC): Students in this discipline should not enroll in ENC 4260 merely to satisfy a graduation requirement. They should be serious about honing their writing and editing skills to the level required of a professional who can earn a living using the knowledge and experience gained in this field of study at USF. They are therefore expected (but not required) to request detailed markup and to submit revisions of their work. Word to the wise: any PTC student who fails to request detailed markup should be aware that this fact will be noted as negative feedback on future Letters of Reference prepared by the instructor.

Grievance Procedure for USF Students: The current USFSM Undergraduate Catalog emphasizes that a student must first contact the course instructor before filing a grievance:

III. Statement of Policy

A. Resolution at the Department Level. 1. The student shall first make a reasonable effort to resolve his or her grievance with the instructor concerned, with the date of the incident triggering the start of the process (i.e. the issuance of a grade; the receipt of an assignment) and if the instructor determines it is feasible and may be productive, the instructor shall accommodate a reasonable request to discuss and attempt to resolve this issue.

If, after conferring with the instructor, the student believes he or she is justified in filing a formal grievance, the procedures outlined in the USF Undergraduate Catalog must be carefully followed. A grievance is an extremely grave matter that requires many hours of attention from the student, the faculty, and USF administration. Therefore, pursue it only when other means of redress have completely failed.

Advice About Grades: A grievance will not automatically or necessarily result in a change of grade for an assignment or a course. Over the course of several decades teaching thousands of college students, I have seen only two of my students file formal grievances (1974 and 1997), and in both cases my original grade and teaching approach were upheld by a grievance committee of students and faculty.

I take seriously my duty to be not only a competent and effective instructor but also to help you succeed, not fail. If you believe I am not meeting your objectives as a student, talk with me. I will listen to your perspective and seek a mutually satisfying solution to problems. Any student who writes an anonymous negative review of my teaching or course content at the end of a term but who has never communicated with me in person, by phone, or by email about specific issues lacks credibility. Such a person demonstrates immaturity, ignorance, cowardice, and indifference regarding professional and ethical standards of conduct. That person should in turn expect the same treatment from others.

The time to focus on your grade, if you worry about such a thing, is during the term while preparing assignments, not at the end after you receive the final grade calculation. Students who complain about final grades but who have made little if any sincere effort to excel on each assignment and to confer individually with me can count on little response from the instructor. You have four written assignments (for three of which you are invited to receive detailed markups and to prepare revisions) and a final exam to build a satisfactory final grade, and you are urged to communicate with me at any time regarding your work. Email is available 24 hours a day, so contact me at any time. I try to respond promptly.

Contrary to many students’ view, a grade is earned by you, not given by me. Your job is to perform as well as possible. My job is to evaluate your performance fairly, based on experience, professional judgment, and workplace expectations. There is nothing personal in this process; it is simply a matter of defining, applying, and meeting professional criteria. I am not judging your appearance, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, philosophy, politics, religion, personal values, or social status. (In fact, because my contact with and knowledge of students occurs only in an online environment, I am not even aware of most of those characteristics!) I am interested only in your academic performance and your demonstrated improvement thereof.

Please don’t ask for a grade to be “rounded” to a higher mark. The grading system is designed to record your achievement accurately to three decimal places, so the effect of rounding has already been considered. Grades are calculated by the Canvas system based on the instructor’s individual scale, but if you believe a mathematical error has occurred, notify me immediately.

Read carefully and repeatedly the definitions of grades in this syllabus so you have a clear understanding of the standards that students are expected to meet. If you are confused, simply ask me for clarification. Education begins with you, not with a university, course, or teacher. As you will find or perhaps already know, I am a strong advocate of autodidacticism, a fancy word for “self-teaching.” I recommend also that you read the following links so that you have a clear understanding of my approach to teaching:

- Student evaluations of all my USF courses from 2003 to the present
- A Perfect Storm in Undergraduate Education, Part 1
- From Students, A Misplaced Sense of Entitlement
- Student Evaluations, Grade Inflation, and Declining Student Effort

IX. PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

The use of others’ words, images, sounds, ideas, or expressive work regardless of medium, without permission and/or without providing proper credit, is PLAGIARISM. Taking credit for another person’s work, or submitting your own work as that of another person, is CHEATING. Both activities constitute a serious breach of ethics that harms other students and society in general. The penalty for such an act may include any or all of the following:

- A score of zero points on an assignment (the same as if no assignment were submitted at all), with no opportunity to resubmit the plagiarized work
- Failure in a course (the student’s permanent USF transcript may bear the grade of “FF” to indicate academic dishonesty),
- Dismissal from school, and/or
- Formal prosecution for theft of intellectual property.

USF’s Policy 3.027 on Academic Integrity of Students is stated in the current Undergraduate Catalog. Every student must read and follow this policy. Before you stoop to stealing someone else’s words, images, or ideas, ask yourself: “Would I accept this behavior in other students if it
helped them and harmed me?” The student code of conduct and related documents are also available here: http://sarasota.usf.edu/students/SRR/.

**WARNING:** Plagiarism from online and other sources is easy for me to detect using the USF-supplied Turnitin® software and other means of analysis. Students who violate the rules will tell you that the experience of being caught by me in an act of plagiarism is something they regret now and probably for the rest of their lives. Potentially exemplary careers can be and indeed have been ruined by such selfish, short-sighted, unethical behavior. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_plagiarism_incidents for a brief survey of past and recent examples.

I take plagiarism and cheating seriously because I have a duty to protect the rights and expectations of honest students who work hard to earn a grade based on ethical practices in research and writing. If your work appears unusually better than I might reasonably expect it to be based on your academic or workplace experience, I may suspect plagiarism and will investigate. You may be required to submit complete citations and copies of all source material consulted for a given assignment.

Note that in addition to listing all references used in your work under the heading “Sources Consulted” at the end of a submission, you must also provide parenthetical citations within the text to any direct or indirect quote, idea, image, or words derived from a work other than your own. The Modern Language Association (MLA) format for parenthetical citations and listing of references is explained through this link on the course website: http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/research/mlaparen.html

**USF Official Statement regarding use of Turnitin®:** The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service which allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. Faculty reserve the right to submit assignments to this detection system. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how the student’s paper was plagiarized.

### X. OFFICIAL USFSM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Academic Dishonesty</th>
<th>The University considers any form of plagiarism or cheating on exams, projects, or papers to be unacceptable behavior. Please be sure to review the university’s policy in the USFSM Catalog, the USF System Academic Integrity of Students, and the USF System Student Code of Conduct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Academic Disruption</td>
<td>The University does not tolerate behavior that disrupts the learning process. The policy for addressing academic disruption is included with Academic Dishonesty in the USFSM Catalog, USF System Academic Integrity of Students, and the USF System Student Code of Conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Contingency Plans</td>
<td>In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USFSM to suspend normal operations. During this time, USFSM may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Canvas, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It’s the responsibility of the student to monitor Canvas site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USFSM and College websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information. The USF hotline at 1 (800) 992-4231 is updated with pre-recorded information during an emergency. See the Campus Police Website for further information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Disabilities Accommodation</td>
<td>Students are responsible for registering with the Office of Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) in order to receive academic accommodations. Reasonable notice must be given to the SDS office (typically 5 working days) for accommodations to be arranged. It is the responsibility of the student to provide each instructor with a copy of the official Memo of Accommodation. Contact Information: Disability Coordinator, 941-359-4714, <a href="mailto:disabilityservices@sar.usf.edu">disabilityservices@sar.usf.edu</a>, <a href="http://usfsm.edu/disability-services/">http://usfsm.edu/disability-services/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Fire Alarm Instructions</td>
<td>At the beginning of each semester please note the emergency exit maps posted in each classroom. These signs are marked with the primary evacuation route (red) and secondary evacuation route (orange) in case the building needs to be evacuated. See Emergency Evacuation Procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Religious Observances</td>
<td>USFSM recognizes the right of students and faculty to observe major religious holidays. Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class for a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second week of classes. Instructors canceling class for a religious observance should have this stated in the syllabus with an appropriate alternative assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment Reporting</td>
<td>USFSM is committed to providing an environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence (USF System Policy 0-004). The Counseling and Wellness Center is a confidential resource where you can talk about incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. This confidential resource can help you without having to report your situation to either the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSSR) or the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity (DIEO), unless you request that they make a report. Please be aware that in compliance with Title IX and under the USF System Policy, educators must report incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. If you disclose any of these situations in class, in papers, or to me personally, I am required to report it to OSSR or DIEO for investigation. The Deputy Coordinator for USFSM is Mary Beth Wallace, AVP for Student Enrollment, Engagement and Success, 941-359-4330 or <a href="mailto:marybeth@sar.usf.edu">marybeth@sar.usf.edu</a>. <strong>Campus Resources</strong>: Counseling Center and Wellness Center 941-487-4254; Victim Advocate (24/7) 941-504-9599; List of off-campus resources: Hope of Manatee: 941-755-6805; Safe Place &amp; Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC) - Sarasota: 941-365-1976; First Call for Help- Manatee: 941-708-6488; Sarasota &amp; North Port 941-366-5025; Manatee Glen: 941-792-4800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Web Portal Information</td>
<td>Every newly enrolled USF student receives an official USF e-mail account. Students receive official USF correspondence and Canvas course information via that address.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### XI. ENC 4260 SPRING 2015 ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

**ASSIGNMENT 1: TECHNICAL TOPIC FOR NON-TECHNICAL AUDIENCE (20% OF GRADE, DUE 12 JANUARY 2015, 6 P.M.)**

**INTRODUCTION**

See web links for this assignment on the course website. Do a brief Google search for “business plan” and “business prospectus” to find examples of the type of presentation you will be preparing for this assignment.
DIRECTIONS
A major challenge in almost every profession is to explain a complex topic in language that an educated but non-specialist audience can understand. This is the kind of communication required when, for instance, (a) an accountant explains a financial report, (b) a scientist or engineer outlines a taxpayer-funded project to a citizen group, or (c) a medical doctor discusses the reasons and procedures behind a complex surgical operation. In each case, the message must be structured and worded in a way that is technically accurate, complete, concise, and yet understandable by the non-specialist reader or listener. It is the kind of report we see frequently when government bureaucrats or senior military officials try to explain to members of congress and the taxpaying public complex issues in health care, national defense, and similar topics.

BUSINESS SCENARIO
In this assignment you may choose the role of any specialist who is trained at the master’s degree level or equivalent (or above) and then write a concise presentation in two formats: (1) a brief PowerPoint presentation and (2) a 500- to 700-word prose document (Executive Summary). The audience for your message will be lay-persons (that is, people who may be generally educated but are not familiar with the special knowledge that you possess from your training and experience).

Described below is a scenario that may serve as an example of what you will develop. You may choose any topic, scenario, and audience as long as it helps you learn how to adjust your message to the specific audience that you are addressing. You must consult with me by email if you choose a scenario different from the one below.

EXAMPLE
Assume that you are a freelance technical writer who has been hired to assist Dr. Margaret Brown, an internist, in presenting a new business investment opportunity to a group of 20 venture capitalists. These investors have narrowed their list of possible investment ventures to three, including Dr. Brown’s. She proposes to develop and market a new line of health care aids aimed at retired and soon-to-retire Baby Boomers (around 75 million individuals in the United States, born from 1946 to 1964). Margaret Brown holds an M.D. degree from Johns Hopkins University, and is board-certified in internal medicine. She has been in her own private medical practice for over 15 years but now wants to branch out into business. She is a good scientist but has limited experience as a business communicator.

Dr. Brown needs to develop a prose Investment Prospectus and slide presentation in which she can achieve the following:

1. Describe the “health care aids” in terms that make clear sense to the investors, all of whom are smart and educated people but not specialists in the health care field. (You may use imagination and humor in the choice of health care aids as long as what you present is plausible in the context of the assignment.) Help Margaret choose an attention-grabbing name for her new company.
2. Explain what steps are required to go from the existing prototypes of these products into efficient mass production. Indicate the cost, length of time, staffing, technical know-how, and legal actions needed for this process.
3. Estimate the market (both in dollars and length of time) for Dr. Brown’s health care products and explain the basis for your projections.
4. Discuss the potential risks and benefits to the investors in terms of profit/loss expectations, publicity issues, and any legal liabilities that may be incurred.
5. Conclude with a persuasive sales pitch that will convince the investors to provide Dr. Brown the funds she needs to get her company started.

The specifics you provide in the prose document and slide presentation will be drawn from your own creative imagination and from what you can glean from the instructor, the internet, articles, interviews, and other sources. I will be happy to answer questions on this assignment via email.

NOTE: This is just one example of how you might approach the assignment. If you want to use a scenario different from the one outlined above, contact me before you start to ensure that your choice presents similar challenges to you as a technical communicator. I will be happy to help you create your own scenario. Just ask for help via email.

FORMAT AND STYLE
For the prose Prospectus, use Microsoft Word. Choose 12-point type, 8-1/2” x 11” paper, with default margins. Use double spacing, and 12-point boldface caps for headings. (See format sample at end of syllabus.) Your prose document should not exceed four double-spaced pages. For the slide presentation, use Microsoft PowerPoint. In both the prose document and the slides, you should use graphic elements such as charts, tables, and illustrations where these will help get your points across more clearly than words alone.

REVIEWS AND PROOFREADING
Ask a neutral observer to critique your draft to see whether it transmits your message clearly and concisely. Read it aloud into an audio or video recorder and play it back for yourself later to hear how it flows. Proofread carefully to eliminate errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. (Consult the USAGE TIPS at the end of the syllabus.) Send the two documents to me as email attachments with one of the following sets of filenames:

1. Lastname_4260_1.doc & Lastname_4260_1.ppt (grade only, no marks or comments)
2. Lastname_4260_1_markup.doc and Lastname_4260_1_markup.ppt (detailed markup and comments; student must revise and return graded work within one week)
ASSIGNMENT 2: FEASIBILITY REPORT (20% OF GRADE, DUE 2 FEBRUARY 2015, 6 P.M.)

DIRECTIONS
Lucky corporate technical writer that you are, you have been chosen to help Martha Sterling, the head of engineering at Monolith Projects, Inc., prepare a feasibility report. Before starting, read carefully this information: http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/feas.html. A feasibility report may be defined as a document presenting the following content about a product or service (your specific section titles may vary from what you see here):

1. **Introduction:** defines and describes the problem as it relates to the values of the audience. Describe each possible solution briefly, tell the reader what the report will do, and summarize the conclusion.

2. **Technical and non-technical factors to consider**

3. **Requirements and criteria**

4. **Discussion of options and results**

5. **Recommendation and conclusion:** Unlike the results section, this advises readers to choose a particular solution. The conclusion reiterates the key points in the report and shows logically how the recommendation was reached using the available data and analysis.

You may choose one of the following three projects as the subject of your report, or (after consulting with me) choose a project of your own:

- **PROJECT 1:** Development of new software for a career-planning and job-hunting agency that will respond to a recessionary economy
- **PROJECT 2:** Construction of a project called “Hope Village,” designed to house 2,000 homeless people, in the middle of Longboat Key
- **PROJECT 3:** Creation of the “VeriSci” program that will infallibly detect errors in scientific research surrounding major public issues such as climate change and fiscal policy and thus end the debates over who is right and wrong on such issues

Your job in this assignment is to research (via internet, printed sources, and/or expert interviews) the background and critical factors that are important for determining the project’s feasibility, and then to incorporate your findings in a concise feasibility report that will help senior managers decide on the best course of action.

**FORMAT AND STYLE FOR ASSIGNMENT 2**

Use Microsoft Word. Choose 12-point type, 8-1/2” x 11” paper, with 1” margins on all four sides. Use double spacing, and 12-point boldface caps for headings. Insert a footer according to the instructions in the formatting guide. The feasibility report itself should not exceed 700 words. Follow formatting guidelines shown in the syllabus, page 15. Send the document to me as an email attachment with one of the following filenames:

1. Lastname_4260_2.doc (grade only, no marks or comments)
2. Lastname_4260_2_markup.doc (detailed markup and comments; student must revise and return graded paper within one week of receiving it from me)

ASSIGNMENT 3, OPTION 1: TECHNICAL WRITING OR PROPAGANDA? (20% OF GRADE, DUE 23 FEBRUARY 2015, 6 P.M.)

As you will learn in your first two assignments in this course, technical communications do not happen in a vacuum. They are subject to whims, ideological preferences, and irrational impulses based on an individual’s or group’s objectives.

Your job in this assignment is to find and analyze an example of technical writing that is heavily influenced by a political or ideological agenda. You may draw your example from any field such as climate research (the current controversy over human-caused global warming is an obvious example), environmental impact studies of agricultural practices (the so-called green revolution), research on medical treatments for hard-to-define illnesses such as Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, or the search for solutions to problems such as the Gulf of Mexico “red tide” algae blooms which some believe have a major impact on human health and the economy in southwest Florida.

DIRECTIONS

Provide a thoughtful analysis of how communication in various media can be used or abused in support of one or more persons’ agendas, and discuss how a technical communicator can maintain his or her own ethical standards despite pressures to bend the truth.

Your analysis should be organized this way:

1. **Introduction**
   - Description of the controversy
   - History and background (how and when did it come about?)
   - Brief profiles of the main participants or players

2. **Main Body of the Report**
   - Analysis of specific technical language related to the controversy
   - How and why the “experts” differ
   - Political or ideological motivations for disagreement

3. **Conclusion**
   - Suggested solutions for replacing ideology or politics with responsible, truthful science and technology
Warning signs — how to detect and deal with distortions of truth in science and technology

Key lessons for technical communicators

RELEVANT WEB LINKS
Use Google to explore the following search terms. Invent similar terms of your own devising. Be creative and imaginative in analyzing the relationship between “truth” and “propaganda.”

- bending truth in technical writing
- science writing and truth
- fraudulent science communications
- technical experts and propaganda
- politics and technology technical writing and propaganda
- science for hire

FORMAT AND STYLE
Use Microsoft Word. Choose 12-point type, 8-1/2” x 11” paper, with 1” margins on all four sides. Use double spacing, and 12-point boldface caps for headings. Provide a thought-provoking title for your assignment in 14-point, boldface, centered type. Add a footer according to directions in the syllabus. Your prose document should not exceed 1,000 words (see TOOLS menu => WORD COUNT).

As usual, ask a neutral observer to critique your paper to see whether it transmits your message clearly and concisely. Read it aloud into a tape recorder and play it back for yourself later to hear how it flows. Work at making your prose lively, witty, and provocative by varying your vocabulary and sentence type. Use strong active verbs and try to avoid the passive voice. Proofread carefully to eliminate errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, and sentence structure. Consult the Usage Tips at the end of this syllabus and the online handbook at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

ASSIGNMENT 3, OPTION 2: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL (20% OF GRADE, DUE 23 FEBRUARY 2015, 6 P.M.)

BACKGROUND
You have been working for Mammoth Enterprises, Inc. for about six months. Your growing reputation as an efficient, smart, and effective technical communicator has given you a nice salary boost and your boss ever-higher expectations for your work.

Your boss, Mrs. Saltmarsh, is the head of New Business Development. She has named you the lead writer and editor on an important technical proposal. This document will help determine whether Mammoth will win the competition for a new $15 billion contract to build a new nuclear power plant near San Francisco. (Even the rumors of such a facility have already caused rioting along the California coast.)

DIRECTIONS
Create a concise, 1,000-word proposal for the project, code-named NukeNow. (NOTE: You may invent a different scenario for your technical proposal, but you must consult with me about it first.) Read this first: http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/props.html. Obviously, a thousand words would probably not be sufficient for such a major proposal in real life, so you are permitted to adjust your document accordingly. The proposal should be organized as suggested in the online text and should be a persuasive, compelling, and accurate document which wins the contract for Mammoth Enterprises, Inc.

RELEVANT WEB LINKS
For information and examples, see the following links (also perform your own Google search for relevant information):

- European Space Agency: Writing a Good Technical Proposal (training course): http://esamultimedia.esa.int/docs/industry/SME/Writing/Technical_Part.pdf
- Sample student proposals: http://www.tc.umn.edu/~jewel001/CollegeWriting/WRITWORK/WORKPLACE/Proposal/samples.htm
- Proposal management process: http://www.slideshare.net/anandsubramaniam/proposal-management-process-2755455
- Engineering proposal guidelines from Stanford University: https://undergrad.stanford.edu/tutoring-support/hume-center/resources/student-resources/hume-writing-guides/writing-engineering-project-proposal

FORMAT AND STYLE
Use Microsoft Word. Choose 12-point type, 8-1/2” x 11” paper, with 1” margins on all four sides. Use double spacing, and 12-point boldface caps for headings. Provide a thought-provoking title for your assignment in 14-point, boldface, centered type. Add a footer according to directions in the syllabus. Your prose document should not exceed 1,000 words (see TOOLS menu => WORD COUNT).

As usual, ask a neutral observer to critique your paper to see whether it transmits your message clearly and concisely. Read it aloud into a recorder and play it back for yourself later to hear how it flows. Work at making your prose lively and provocative by varying your vocabulary and sentence type. Use descriptive active verbs and try to avoid the passive voice. Proofread carefully to eliminate errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. (Consult the online handbook and the USAGE TIPS.)

SUBMISSION
Send the document to me as an email attachment with one of the following filenames:

(1) Lastname_4260_3.doc (or .docx) (grade only, no marks or comments)
ASSIGNMENT 4 OUTLINE (DUE MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2015, 6 P.M. -- REQUIRED BUT NOT GRADED)

Whether you choose Option 1 or Option 2 for Assignment 4, you must submit a statement of your (1) topic, (2) thesis, and (3) expected research sources. Send this IN THE BODY OF AN EMAIL (not as an attachment and not via Canvas) by March 9. This statement should be around 150 words. The email subject line should read Lastname 4260 Assign 4 Outline. Take care in what you choose to write -- you will be required to stick with this topic through the completion of Assignment 4 on Apr. 20. No last-minute changes will be permitted. I will respond to your outline promptly by email.

IMPORTANT: I will not accept any Assignment 4 submission for which I have not approved an outline ahead of time. If you fail to observe these instructions, your #4 submission will earn a grade of zero points.

ASSIGNMENT 4, OPTION 1: TECHNICAL WRITING PROJECT (30% OF GRADE, DUE 20 APR 2015, 6 P.M.)

PURPOSE

Option 1 will give you experience in researching, writing, editing, and preparing a slide presentation for a technical communications project. The ideal would be for you to use this opportunity to work on an actual paid assignment for a client or employer, but since this is difficult to arrange, you will attempt to simulate such an assignment. You are welcome to modify any of these topics or to create an entirely new topic as long it meets the ENC 4260 objectives and my approval (explain the details in your outline, due on 9 March 2015).

DELIVERABLES

The assignment will require completion of one of the following three suggested projects:

- User manual or instruction manual
- Scientific or technical research report
- Two-hour workshop on a technical topic

4.1-A. User or Instruction Manual. If you choose this for Option 1, you should first identify a subject for the manual. This could be a software package, a mechanical or chemical process, a medical procedure, operation of a weapon, or anything else resembling those examples. Your objective will be to write and test this manual. The test will require you to find a user who is willing to follow the manual in achieving success with the results your manual tries to deliver. For example, if you wrote a user manual on a specific aspect of MS Word (such as creating a website using that software), you would ask a user unfamiliar with the subject to read and apply your manual to the creation of an actual website. Explain in your outline (due on March 9) these important elements: (a) the subject of your manual, (b) its basic content, (c) how you plan to test it in the real world with an actual user, and (d) how you will report the results of the test in objective, accurate language. You will also prepare a brief slide presentation and brief website (three to four pages) to sum up your work on the user manual project.

4.1-B. Research Report. Choose a subject which interests you and which is suitable for a technical communications assignment of this kind (I will be available to discuss possibilities with you). Topic examples include hardware, software, scientific research, military tactics, and pharmaceutical developments. Prepare research based on the internet, books, articles, interviews, and direct observation. Write and edit a report of around 2,000 words. Prepare a brief slide presentation and a small website (three to four pages) to explain the process you used to create the report.

4.1-C. Workshop on a Technical Topic. Choose an expert to work with (or become an expert yourself on a suitable subject). Prepare a 2,000-word section of a prose script for a presentation requiring approximately two hours before a live audience, including handouts of key information for listeners. Prepare a 20-minute PowerPoint slide summary of the workshop and a small website (three to four pages) on the topic.

ASSIGNMENT 4, OPTION 2: PROFESSIONAL CAREER PORTFOLIO (30% OF GRADE, DUE 20 APR 2015, 6 P.M.)

PURPOSE

Option 2 is aimed at helping students concentrating in professional and technical writing analyze, research, understand, and succeed in the marketplace. The assignment comprises several parts described in detail below. This option is not open to students who have already created such a portfolio!

4.2 PORTFOLIO CONTENT

Your career portfolio will consist of the following elements:

- Research into the nature of the job market, using such sources as books, articles, websites, campus resources, and interviews.
- Customizable cover letter in which you emphasize a strong fit between your qualifications and the reader’s needs.
- Customizable professional resume which presents your qualifications in a concise, positive, and persuasive way.
- Portfolio of writing/editing samples.
- Professional website promoting your services as a writer, editor, and researcher
- Business accessories: letterhead stationery, envelopes, and business cards.

In addition to these elements you will prepare a brief prose report (200 to 300 words) and slide presentation that tells what you learned through this assignment and how you can use this knowledge to reach the next stage of your professional career, whether that be a job, a freelance practice, continued formal education, or some combination thereof.
4.2 RESOURCES

Thousands of books, articles, brochures, websites, and other resources purport to help you create strong cover letters and resumes. However, the primary source must be your own understanding of what these documents can and cannot do, and how they, along with a focused research effort, can help you find a job or other professional opportunity.

A helpful career search tool is the informational interview. The objective of this activity is not to win a job but to gain valuable knowledge, experience, and contacts that will help you find a job. This is an informal but planned meeting (preferably in person, but may also be by phone, internet chat, Skype, or email) arranged to explore ideas and opportunities with a person who has experience and knowledge in one or more of the following areas:

- **Professional discipline** such as journalism, teaching, translating, freelance writing/editing, technical writing/editing, commercial writing/editing, or communications management
- **Specific industry** such as publishing, professional services, manufacturing, retailing, tourism, health care, hospitality, government service, agriculture, or education
- **Career-planning background** such as human resources administration, corporate recruiting, career coaching, or mentoring of women and minorities

**Internet Research.** Sites such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov), Monster (www.monster.com), and USFSM Career Center (http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/CareerCenter/), along with dozens of similar sites, offer you valuable tips and information that will help you refine your search to save time, money, and frustration. Sites devoted to trade and professional associations may also offer valuable information.

**News Media and Trade Press.** A search through various news-oriented websites or paper-based reference sources can reveal valuable facts about current and predicted career opportunities. This can also be a good source of learning what skills (technical, professional, or personal) you may want to improve or acquire to make yourself more attractive to employers, now and in the future.

I will provide, upon your request, additional specific interview suggestions, web addresses, and publication titles as you progress in your work on the assignment.

**FORMAT AND STYLE FOR BOTH OPTIONS**
For the prose component of your assignment, use Microsoft Word. Choose 12-point type, 8-1/2” x 11” paper, with 1” margins on all four sides. Use double spacing, and 12-point boldface caps for headings, 14-point bold for centered titles. Your document should not exceed four double-spaced pages. For the slides, use PowerPoint. Your presentation should last around 20 minutes. For the website component, use any preferred web editing software, or just plain HTML if you are skilled in its use. Your language should be professional, factual, and fair-minded. Strive to demonstrate the “four C’s” discussed this semester — clear, concise, complete, and creative. Define clearly the audience for your work and meet the needs of that audience through your choice of appropriate style, structure, language, media, and message.

**SUBMISSION OF YOUR WORK**
Name your work as Lastname_4260_4.doc (.docx), Lastname_4260_4.ppt (.pptx), and Lastname_4260_4.htm (choose one or more as needed for your option). There will not be time at the end of the semester to provide detailed marks on your work. However, if you would like a brief comment via email, include the word “comment” in your submission file name (Lastname_4260_4_comment.doc).
ENC 4260: STANDARD SUBMISSION FORMAT

**IMPORTANT**: unless indicated otherwise, text is colored and highlighted here for emphasis in the formatting instructions. DO NOT USE COLORED TYPE OR HIGHLIGHTING IN YOUR OWN WORK UNLESS TOLD TO DO SO.

**SPECIFICATIONS.** 12-point Arial or Times New Roman, double-spaced type, aligned left with ragged right margin (do not use right/left justified style); insert blank line (ENTER key) between paragraphs; main title of submission and Sources Consulted = 14-point bold centered; insert name and related information in upper right corner, aligned right, 10-point, single-spaced. The right-alignment command can be found in the toolbar at the top of your Word document. It is the one circled in blue below:

![Toolbar with right-alignment command](image)

Margins = 1.25" on left and right sides and 1" on top and bottom (MS Word default)
Do not indent for new paragraph -- just add blank line (use ENTER key) between paragraphs.

**MAIN HEADING**
Main headings are 12-point, boldface, all caps, flush left. Text begins flush left following the heading (no blank line between heading and text).

**Subheading.** A subheading should be upper/lower case, bold, 12-point, with period at end. Text after subheading begins immediately on same line.

Headings/subheadings, bullet points, call-outs (boxed quotes in large type), and other typographic tools are important because they help your reader scan quickly for key points in your message and to understand how the sections of your essay relate to one another. Although a technical writer is of course expected to write, he or she must also understand the basics of typography, graphics, document design, correct use of citations and references, and online publishing. If you work for a small company or for yourself as an independent contractor, you will need to know all of these facets of how to create and communicate an effective message. Even if you hire a specialist in graphic design, you must understand how to judge that person’s work.

Go to VIEW menu and choose HEADER and FOOTER. Follow directions shown below.

![View menu with headers and footers](image)

**Footer appears automatically on each page and consists of the following information, in 10-point type, aligned right:** First initial period space Lastname space hyphen space ENC [xxxx] space hyphen space Assignment [number] space hyphen space Day Month Year space hyphen space Page <#>

This is how it looks when you’ve done it right (of course, the page number symbol becomes the actual page number without brackets when completed):

A. Lastname - ENC 4260 - Assignment 1 - 25 Jan 2013 - Page <#>

**USING TABLES IN MS WORD**
1. Contents of table should be in 10-point type, single-spaced
2. To adjust size, select the entire table, go to TABLE menu => AUTOFIT => AUTOFIT TO CONTENTS
3. Align numbers in a table column using the DECIMAL TAB.
4. Use TABLE PROPERTIES command in TABLE menu to adjust various aspects. For example, to prevent table from breaking over two pages, go to TABLE menu => PROPERTIES => ROW = Check OFF at “Allow row to break across pages.”
5. Column headings should be boldface and centered.
6. If confused, look at MS Word HELP screens or simply look on the internet. Use Google to search for “MS Word tables.”

**EXAMPLE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>$214,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>14,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentals</td>
<td>1,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>43,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$272,746</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See [http://www.todroberts.com/USF/TypesettingTables.pdf](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/TypesettingTables.pdf) for excellent advice on how to make your tables stand out.

**USING RULES AND BORDERS IN MS WORD**

If the software you are using treats the creation of borders, rules, tables, and other formatting features in a way substantially different from what is shown here, please consult the software HELP menu or perform a Google search -- you are likely to find help from other users online.

One useful site for Microsoft Word assistance is here: [http://www.uwec.edu/help/Word07/word07.htm](http://www.uwec.edu/help/Word07/word07.htm).
Listed here are some common errors found on student papers. Details on such matters may be found in http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/ and in standard writing manuals. While some errors result simply from careless proofreading, others may represent a deeper misunderstanding. A respect for language customs is the mark of a person who understands and observes the basic civilities of a free and educated community. Every student is expected to prepare flash cards for these tips and to commit this information to memory.

**PUNCTUATION**
Comma splice: this means joining two independent clauses together with a comma; this often happens when the word “however” is used. An easy fix is to begin a new sentence with “However” and separate this word from the other words with a comma. “However, he missed the plane.”

Apostrophe: this seemingly unimportant punctuation mark can create confusion if not used correctly. If used in “it’s,” it means “it is.” When referring to possession, “its” never has an apostrophe.

**Hyphen:** this is needed in compound modifiers such as “end-of-century art movement” or “Bush-influenced domestic policy.”

**Dash:** a space plus two hyphens and a space ( -- ). This can be used to introduce an amplifying phrase, or to join two clauses. Example: “The student saw a major opportunity in graduating early -- he could begin his career immediately.”

**WORDINESS:** Writing concisely takes perception to see alternative ways to express a thought, and practice to eliminate unnecessary words. In addition to passive-voice verbs, common phrases that contribute to wordiness are these:

- due to the fact that
- in light of the fact that
- being that
- there (is) (are)
- under these circumstances
- the reason is because

**PRONOUN REFERENCES:** A common error in student writing is the use of they, their, them when a singular pronoun (he, his, him) is needed. This often occurs after indefinite pronouns such as anyone, someone, no one, each one. Each of these is singular and requires a singular reference. Modern teachers and editors, recognizing concerns about “sexist language,” may insist on the awkward he/she, his/her, him/her combination in such cases, but I find these forced pairs awkward and bureaucratic-sounding. Use either the masculine or feminine, but not both. Contrary to some feminists’ claims, the masculine he/him/his historically has nothing to do with male biological identity; it simply refers to “a person.” It appears “masculine,” but only in an archaic sense of grammatical gender. This is still evident in languages such as German, which assigns a masculine gender to “moon” (der Mond); the French do just the opposite, calling the moon feminine (la lune). Considering these “genders” in the same way a person is male or female is absurdly ignorant.

Better yet, convert the reference into a plural to eliminate the problem. Instead of “Any person who goes into business for himself/herself...” write “People who go into business for themselves...” Another pronoun reminder: in formal professional writing, use that or which to refer to ideas and objects and who or whom to refer to persons.

**SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT:** In U.S. English, a collective noun such as “group” or “band” takes a singular, not plural, verb. It also takes a singular, not plural, pronoun. Other collective nouns treated as singular include company, organization, and management. Example: “The management of ABC Corporation has ensured its survival by use of the golden-parachute tactic.”

**PARALLELISM:** When listing items using bullet points or as a series in a sentence or paragraph, put these items in parallel grammatical form. Don’t mix verbs and nouns in such a list.

**GENERAL USAGE TIPS**
In prose, spell out as words all numbers ten or smaller; use the word percent, not the percent sign (%). An exception to this practice is allowed in a table or chart.

Use either/or, neither/nor, and between only with two items of comparison, never three or more. Use the word among for three or more.

Differentiate ensure, insure, and assure. We ensure a result, we insure an auto against damage, and we assure a person of his safety.

Distinguish between the verbs serve and service. The latter refers to the process of having the oil changed in your car ... or to bringing a bull and cow together in unholy matrimony. If you say your company services customers, you may lose business.

Learn how the verbs effect and affect differ. To effect means to bring about: “The dean effected an important change in the way office space was allocated.” To affect means to influence: “The actor’s performance in Hamlet deeply affected me.” Don’t confuse the noun forms of these words! (See dictionary.)

Spell out an acronym the first time it is mentioned in your paper so the reader knows what it refers to.

Alot vs. a lot: The first is a common misspelling of the second; it’s too informal for professional writing.

Between you and I vs. between you and me: The pronoun “me” is required because it is the object of a preposition; using “I” in writing or speaking will brand you as ignorant.

**Lay vs. lie:** These verbs are confused even by supposedly educated speakers and writers, so those who understand their proper use will be a step ahead; “lay” is normally used as a transitive verb (one that takes a direct object); for instance, “If you lay your head on the pillow, you’ll fall asleep”; “lie” is an intransitive verb and thus cannot have a direct object (“If you lie down on the bed, you’ll fall asleep”). More confusion: “lay” is the past tense of “lie”: today he lies in a ditch -- yesterday he lay in bed.

Hopefully vs. it is hoped or I hope: This confusion is commonplace but still a sign of ignorance; “hopefully” means “full of hope,” as in ’She looked hopefully upon the teacher as a source of forgiveness for her goofing off all term.”

Who’s vs. whose: The first one is a contraction of “who is” or “who has”; the second is a possessive relative pronoun.

There vs. their vs. they’re: These homophones are commonly confused; the first is an expletive or adverb; the second is a third-person plural possessive adjective; the third is a contraction of “they are.”

**Your vs. you’re:** The first is a second-person possessive adjective; the second is a contraction of “you are.”

**Number vs. amount:** The first is used as a collective noun referring to countable items (as in “the number of hours in a day”); the second is a collective noun referring to uncountable items (as in “the amount of lust generated by excessive testosterone”).

Different from vs. different than: The first is standard in U.S. English; the second is preferred by the British. (And don’t spell “than” as “then”!

**Verbal vs. oral:** The first refers to any communication expressed in words, whether written or spoken; the second refers only to communication expressed in speech. “Verbal agreement” in reference to a spoken agreement is misleading.

Imly vs. infer: Only a speaker or writer can “imply”; only a reader or listener can “infer.”