Technical and Professional Communication Graduate Program and Curriculum Guide

Journey with us…
The Graduate Program in Technical and Professional Communication

The Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) program is taught by qualified professors who bring a balance of academic theory and practical real-world experience to their teaching. Coursework focuses on the core principles of communication so that you, as a professional communicator, will be able to help your company focus on its professional goals.

With a 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio, we can focus on face-to-face interactions, so you will not only learn the academic foundations of technical communication, but you will develop the softer skills that employers seek: the ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively in a team.

Theory—Principles That Guide Action

We help you to develop a sound theoretical framework upon which to build personal success. Core courses provide a working knowledge of communication principles that will provide the technical professional with the tools to achieve professional advancement and personal fulfillment.

Practice—Application of Ideas

The program is designed with the flexibility to allow working professionals to tailor courses to enhance their current positions or broaden their skills in order to move to new positions or another field. Our program provides academic grounding in communication theory that is both timeless and expandable. Through the choice of electives and special topic courses, you will be able to explore an area of interest to you—oral, written, or digital—or sample a range of topics.
Master of Science in Technical and Professional Communication

Degree Requirements
A total of 30 credits, ten 3-credit classes, are needed to complete the Master of Science in Technical and Professional Communication (MSTPC). There are five required classes, four electives, and a required practicum.

Required Core Courses
The five required core classes will give you a firm academic grounding in the tools that you will need to advance as a technical communicator. We recommend that you take Foundations of Technical Communication and Research Methods and Applications as early as possible.

- COM 6103 Foundations of Technical Communication
- COM 6443 Rhetoric of Technical Communication
- COM 6453 Research Methods and Applications
- COM 6473 Advanced Publication Design
- COM 6553 Advanced Interpersonal Communication

Practicum
A practicum or thesis is an exit requirement. All students select topics that are meaningful to them, either involving a situation at work or an internship, or preparing them in some way for the next phase of their careers.

- COM 7203 Technical Communication Practicum

Elective Courses
The four electives you choose will allow you to focus on oral, digital, or written technical communication, or to sample across the curriculum to get a broader perspective.
Digital communication
  COM 5963  Website Design
  COM 6533  Writing for Social Media
  COM 6963  Multimedia Design and Analysis
  COM 7103  Special Topic—Public Relations

Written communication
  COM 6543  Technical and Professional Editing
  COM 6573  Instructional Design
  COM 7103  Special Topic—Medical Writing
  COM 7103  Special Topic—Proposal Writing
  COM 7103  Special Topic—Advanced Publication Design II

Oral communication
  COM 6123  Professional Presentation Strategies
  COM 6463  Team Problem-Solving and Decision-Making
  COM 6523  Developing the Corporate Story

"The coursework, research, and studies involved in this degree enriched my ability to run my company at a professional level that would not have been possible otherwise. The environment is intimate. This program was brilliantly crafted, where professors coach students to teach each other. They are outstanding people who have diverse technical backgrounds. In addition, they are the type of people who should be teaching and mentoring—individuals who are intelligent and patient, as well as having leadership ability."

—Gary Rose, MSTPC 2010
Graduate Certificates

A bachelor’s degree from an accredited university is required. Each certificate requires a total of 15 credits, that is, five 3-credit classes. Credits from a Lawrence Tech TPC certificate may be applied to the Master of Science in Technical and Professional Communication.

Instructional Design, Communication, and Presentation

You will acquire advanced skills to develop training for mediated and non-mediated situations, with a focus on addressing land-based, audience-centered training needs. All classes are required.

**Required classes**

- **COM 5963** Website Design
- **COM 6123** Professional Presentation Strategies
- **COM 6443** Rhetoric of Technical Communication
- **COM 6553** Advanced Interpersonal Communication
- **COM 6573** Instructional Design

A spread from an instructional design document showing the instructor how to set up the room and start the class (left), and what the participants’ instructions are (right).
Technical and Professional Communication
You will acquire the basic theoretical foundations of technical communication and have an opportunity to explore further or focus on a specific topic. There are three required classes. The remaining two classes must be COM 5000- or COM 6000-level electives.

Required classes
- COM 6103 Foundations of Technical Communication
- COM 6453 Research Methods and Applications
- COM 6553 Advanced Interpersonal Communication

Writing for the Digital Age
You will acquire the skills to write for websites and social media networks. There are four required classes for this certificate. The remaining class must be a COM 6000-level elective.

Required classes
- COM 5963 Website Design
- COM 6443 Rhetoric of Technical Communication
- COM 6523 Developing the Corporate Story
- COM 6533 Writing for Social Media

“Thanks to the guidance of Professor Stavish, I am pursuing a minor in Technical and Professional Communication. The program has already opened up exciting new opportunities for me. The Technical and Professional Communication certificate helped me land an internship with Car and Driver Magazine this past summer. My improved communications skills were also instrumental in winning the first prize in the “Make Your Mark” competition. I owe it all to Professor Stavish and the Technical and Professional Communication program at Lawrence Tech!”

—Paul Wright
BSTM 2012, TPC certificate
Course Descriptions

Required Courses

**COM 6103  Foundations of Technical Communication**
This course provides an overview of the fundamental theories and research that inform technical communication as a practice, including the historical and social context of technical communication, the aims of technical discourse, readability, usability, audience analysis, technical style, and design. Theoretical information is put into practice through individual and collaborative presentations.

**COM 6443  Rhetoric of Technical Communication**
This course gives a brief overview of classical and modern rhetoric in order to address the rhetorical dimensions and impact of technical communication upon various audiences. Special attention is given to the roles of verbal and visual rhetoric.

**COM 6453  Research Methods and Applications**
This course includes an in-depth examination of the basic materials available for research in technical communication, analysis and application of qualitative and quantitative research methods, evaluation of the application of research results within professional workplace settings, and practice in the conventions of reporting research results for publication. The final project is a research proposal.

**COM 6473  Advanced Publication Design**
This course is an introduction to the principles of graphic design as they apply to technical communication. In the process of creating collateral material for the client of your choice, you will learn how to effectively manage the development of technical publications.

**COM 6553  Advanced Interpersonal Communication**
This course helps the student understand and develop effective listening skills, perception, uses of verbal and nonverbal communication, and
conflict management skills. All students will present a seminar on an interpersonal communication topic during the semester.

**COM 7203 Technical Communication Practicum**
This course allows students the time to write their practica or theses. A practicum may be based upon an internship or a workplace communication problem. Generally, the proposal for the practicum or thesis is presented and approved before the beginning of the semester. This course must be taken once for three credits.

**Elective Courses**

**COM 5963 Website Design**
This course covers the principles and practices of effective content, organization of content, and design principles for effective websites. Students will learn how to hand-code HTML and edit images for websites.

**COM 6123 Professional Presentation Strategies**
This advanced speech course focuses on rhetorical analysis, dynamic oral skills, storytelling techniques, and how to present professionally.

**COM 6463 Team Problem-Solving and Decision-Making**
This course explores the strategies of problem-solving and decision-making techniques that are used by skilled collaborative teams of technical communicators in the workplace.

**COM 6483 Managing Organizational Communication**
This course is a study and analysis of managerial frameworks and practices of technical communication within organizational structures.

**COM 6493 Communicating Across Cultures**
This course provides an opportunity to review and discuss current readings in multicultural studies with the conceptual and theoretical framework supporting studies in multiculturalism.
**COM 6523 Developing the Corporate Story**
This course focuses on gathering, developing, writing, and telling the corporate story. Students will learn the history of corporations and use researching, interviewing, and writing skills to develop personal and business stories for social media, online journals, blogs, and websites.

**COM 6533 Writing for Social Media**
This course focuses on intensive reading, research, and writing for social media. Students will create and maintain a carefully crafted blog throughout the semester. Students will also create and promote a wiki with a strong civic component. Students will research and analyze blogging, wikis, viral media, podcasts, virtual communities, RSS (Real Simple Syndication) and other communication platforms. Class discussions will link academic research with practical applications of social media and its implications for society.

**COM 6543 Technical and Professional Editing**
This course provides the fundamentals of several types of editing with a focus on the needs of the final recipient of the information. A wide variety of technical communication types are covered, including graphics.

**COM 6563 Advanced Nonverbal Communication**
This course familiarizes the student with the theories, practices, and power of nonverbal communication through the lens of the workplace and its mix of cultures. The dynamics of nonverbal communication are covered in detail: body language, proxemics, chronemics, facial cues, paralanguage, and environment.

**COM 6573 Instructional Design**
This course teaches adult learning principles, how to conduct needs assessments, and how to develop lessons and instructional manuals for training using the ADDIE system of instructional systems development.
**COM 6963 Multimedia Design and Analysis**
This course teaches techniques for extending basic websites through multimedia techniques—integration of text, sound, graphics, animation, and video—that would be useful to the technical communicator.

**COM 7103 Special Topics**
A single topic is covered in a semester, but topics vary from semester to semester, including Public Relations, Medical Writing, Proposal Writing, and Advanced Publication Design II. This course can be repeated with different topics for additional credit.

**Faculty**
Our professors and adjunct instructors are seasoned professionals who bring a balance of academic theory and practical experience to the classroom. Theory is authenticated with practical applications that reveal the realities of the world of business and industry.

Corinne Stavish  
Program Director, Technical and Professional Communication  
College Professor

Holly Helterhoff  
Director, Lawrence Tech Scholars and Undeclared Programs  
Senior Lecturer

**Adjunct Faculty**
Mary Arnold  
Thomas Glennan  
April Mack  
Marylou Naumoff  
Richard Nunez Jr.

Thank you to Scott Gaffan for taking photographs of students for the cover. All other photography, photoediting, writing, and design was completed by the students of the Fall 2011 Advanced Publication Design II class.
### My MSTPC Program:

Name: 

Student number: 

### Required Courses
6 courses—18 credits

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<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Term</th>
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**Total credit:**

### Elective Courses
4 courses—12 credits

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**Total credit:**

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**Lawrence Tech**

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Contact

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