Instructor: Dr. Lynne Cooke  
Office: Auditorium 316  
Office Telephone: (940) 565-4386  
E-Mail: COOKEL@UNT.EDU (the best way to get in touch with me)  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-5:30pm

Course Description
This course will prepare you to write, edit, test, and publish print procedural documentation. Even if you do not intend to enter industry as a technical writer, you may find yourself working with technical writers or preparing documentation for both technical and non-technical audiences. In any case, you will most likely be working in group situations to produce documentation that is both well-written and visually accessible to your audience. Consequently, in addition to focusing on clear, concise, effective writing and user-friendly design, this course also offers the opportunity for you build your collaborative skills by working in teams.

Course Texts and Materials:

Required
Web site: http://www.writingsoftwaredocumentati on.com/

An active e-mail account (UNT or any other account)

Recommended

A comprehensive grammar handbook such as John Cunyus Hodges’ *Hodges’ Harbrace Handbook*, 14th edition. Heinle Publishers, 2001. (Note: Inexpensive used copies of this book are available through amazon.com and other used booksellers.)

Policies & Procedures
I will not formally take attendance during each class, but it is important that you attend class regularly. Poor attendance (missing more than two classes) will be reflected in the quality of work you produce for this class. (Trust me on this one.) Excessive absences will be grounds for failing this class.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty
While I encourage scholarly cooperation, I do not condone cheating and plagiarism. The 14th edition of the *Harbrace College Handbook* defines plagiarism as “presenting, deliberately or accidentally, the words or ideas of another person/source as your own work”. This includes printed and online information. You are responsible for keeping which ideas and words are your own and which belong to other people/sources. I will fail anyone from this course who I catch plagiarizing. If you are unsure as to whether or not you are in danger of plagiarizing, please see me before you turn in your assignment.

Americans with Disabilities Act
In accordance with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, I will work with the Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA) to help reasonably qualified students with disabilities. If you have such a disability, please advise me in writing of your needs no later than the second class meeting. If you have disabilities and have not registered with the ODA, I encourage you to register.
Course Activities

Final grades are assigned on the basis of the following points:

**Quizzes** (200 total points possible)
- Quiz #1 50
- Quiz #2 50
- Quiz #3 50
- Quiz #4 50

**Class Participation** (100 total points possible) 100

**Individual or Team Manual Assignment** (350 points possible)
- How to Create a Manual 200
- Usability Test Report 100
- Memo 50

**Individual or Team Computer Game Manual Assignment** (350 total points possible)
- User Manual 200
- Usability Test Report 100
- Memo 50

**Extra Credit** (2 assessments @ 10 points each) 20
- Team member or individual assessment for how to create a manual assignment
- Team member or individual assessment for computer game manual assignment

**Grade Distribution (in Points Earned)**
- A = 900-1000 excellent (reserved for real excellence)
- B = 899-800 good (an honors grade)
- C = 799-700 fair (average competence)
- D = 699-600 passing
- F = 599 and lower failure

**Quizzes**
The quizzes are a test of your mastery of the material covered in the Writing Software Documentation book and the lectures. Sometimes the quizzes will be announced ahead of time and sometimes they will not be announced ahead of time. Quizzes cannot be made up.

**Class Participation**
Your class participation is based on your engagement in the course. Arriving to class late, leaving class early, composing/reading email, surfing the web, and coming to class unprepared are ways for you to lower your class participation grade. On the other hand, promptness, attentiveness, and consistent contribution to class discussion will boost your class participation grade.

**Individual or Team Assignments**
For each assignment, you will receive a handout detailing the specifics The criteria for evaluation will be clearly listed on each assignment sheet and/or discussed in class and your grade will be determined based on how well you meet these criteria.

All assignments must be laser-printed, professional, and when necessary, stapled. Make two copies of your assignments — one to turn in and one to retain. No handwritten work will be accepted. No late assignments will be accepted unless you present a compelling reason with documentation at least one week in advance of the due date. The course schedule includes the due dates for assignments and whether assignments are due at the beginning or the end of the class. The beginning of this class is defined as 5:30pm and the end of the class is defined as 9:20pm. This means that you need to physically turn in the assignment by these times, not that
you are printing the document. (Of course, you can always turn assignments in early.) Assignments will not be accepted via email unless arrangements are made with me ahead of time.

**Working as Part of a Team**

You have the option to work as part of team on two projects: (1) the How to Create a Manual Assignment (2) the Computer Game Manual Assignment. Since businesses often expect that college graduates understand how to negotiate the dynamics of a team environment, I encourage you to take the opportunity to gain experience collaborating with other students.

You will receive a fair amount of class time to work on these projects; this should minimize the need to coordinate meetings outside of class. Regardless of whether you choose to work individually or as part of a team, all work will be based on the same grading system. That is, the same high quality of work is expected whether you work alone or in a team with one, two, or three other people.

If you work as part of a team, all members of the team will receive the same grade for each assignment unless individual performance problems become issues. I strongly believe that all team members do not deserve the same grade if they have not contributed equally to the deliverable. That’s why you can fire a team member if he/she is unproductive. If you choose to take this action, you need to document every instance of this person’s non-performance (i.e. dates of missed deadlines, meetings, etc.) and/or substandard performance (i.e. shoddy writing, does not stay on task, etc.). It is important that you do this from the beginning.

If you choose to fire a team member, you must have documentation because I will need it in order to make a case when I intervene. Since the team assignments take place over days instead of weeks (as they would in a semester), missing just one meeting or failing to meet a team deadline can be grounds for firing. If you are fired from a team, you can complete the assignment individually but you cannot use any of the work or ideas produced by the team.

You may have a team member whose work is not up to par but the situation is not serious enough to fire this person. That’s where post-project team evaluations come into play. If you choose to do so, you can complete an evaluation sheet on your team members for extra credit (up to 10 points per team evaluation, not 10 points per team member evaluation. I will be the only one to see these evaluations so I encourage you to be candid about the positives and negatives of a person’s performance). The more information I have, the better I will be able to assess each person’s contribution and the better I can assign accurate grades.

Although I have discussed procedures for handling unproductive team members in the previous paragraphs, I find that students who choose to work in teams rarely have to resort to firing a team member. In fact, they usually enjoy collaborating with other students to produce high-quality deliverables.

**Technical Writing Lab Summer Hours**

Mondays — Thursdays  8:00am – 10:00pm

Note: The Technical Writing Lab is NOT open on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday but other computer labs on campus are open during these times. To find out where the labs are located, the software installed on the computers, and the hours of operation, go to the General Access Computer Labs web site at http://www.gal.unt.edu/location.php
### Daily Course Schedule and Due Dates

ALWAYS bring your book, *Writing Software Documentation*, to class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Contents</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignment Due</th>
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| 1    | Tuesday, June 5 | Syllabus & introduction to the course  
Computer lab orientation  
Graphics orientation  
Icebreaker prep  
Icebreaker  
Types of manuals and documentation  
Team info sheets | |
|      | Thursday, June 7 | Manual elements  
Planning and writing your documents  
Analyzing your users  
Strategies for working as part of a team  
How to create a manual assignment handout (includes usability test report and memo)  
Meet your team members  
Assignment workshop | Chapters 1, 5 & 6 |
| 2    | Tuesday, June 12 | Quiz – Chapter 3  
Developing a style sheet  
Writing to guide – procedures  
Assignment workshop | Chapter 3  
How to create a manual assignment memo due at the end of class |
|      | Thursday, June 14 | Quiz – Chapter 13  
Document design  
Designing for task orientation  
Photoshop orientation  
Using graphics effectively  
Assignment workshop | Chapters 10 & 13 |

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Contents</th>
<th>Reading and Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tuesday, June 19</td>
<td>• How to conduct a usability test</td>
<td>• Chapter 8</td>
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<td>• How to write a report</td>
<td>• How to create a manual assignment usability test report due at the end of class</td>
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<td>Thursday, June 21</td>
<td>• Usability testing</td>
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<td>• Assignment workshop</td>
<td>• Team member or individual assessments due at the end of class, for extra credit</td>
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<td>• Assignment workshop</td>
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<td>• Team info sheets</td>
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<td>• How to create a manual assignment manual due at the end of class</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Tuesday, June 26</td>
<td>• Quiz – Chapter 12</td>
<td>• Chapter 12</td>
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<td>• Computer Game Manual Assignment handout</td>
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<td>• Getting the language right</td>
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<td>• Meet your team members</td>
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<td>• Assignment workshop</td>
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<td>Thursday, June 28</td>
<td>• Quiz – Chapter 2</td>
<td>• Computer game manual assignment memo due at the beginning of class</td>
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<td>• Editing and fine tuning</td>
<td>• Chapters 2 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>• Writing to teach</td>
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<td>• Assignment workshop</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Tuesday, July 3</td>
<td>• Designing an index</td>
<td>• Chapter 14</td>
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<td>• Usability testing</td>
<td>• Computer game manual assignment usability test report due at the end of class</td>
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<td>• Assignment workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thursday, July 5</td>
<td>• Assignment workshop</td>
<td>• Computer game manual assignment manual due at the end of class, for extra credit</td>
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<td></td>
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Please Note: This schedule is subject to change. All changes will be reasonable and geared toward achieving maximum learning in the course.