Here's an excerpt of a detailed course syllabus (the original syllabus includes course handouts, guideline sheets detailing expectations for each assignment, and team/ individual evaluation sheets). Although this syllabus is for a particular course, it can be adapted to for use in most courses. We've included a section-by-section explanation

Course Syllabus
JGEN 300-001
Fall 2007

Instructor: John Doe

Office: 25 FIC
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 –1:30 p.m. (or by appointment)

Office Phone: 472-6031 (leave a message after three rings; speak loud and clear)

E-mail: jdoe1@alltel.net

Class Hours
Tuesday 8:00-9:30 a.m.

Textbook
Lay, M.M., Wahlstrom, B.J., et .al., 1995. *Technical Communication*. Chicago: Richard D. Irwin, Inc.

Additional Materials
•Loose leaf notebook for handouts, and
Requirements supplemental materials

•E-mail account
•Photocopies as required for in-class work
•Plastic cover/spine for final feasibility study (1 per group)

Course Information
This course in technical communication emphasizes the principles and strategies of good technical communication, both written and oral, and gives you practice in applying them to present technical and scientific material informatively and clearly. It is specifically designed to allow students from different majors to interact and communicate with each other and with various other audiences about subjects their disciplines may have in common. The course involves applied, activity-based collaboration and therefore relies heavily on a team approach to learning

Course Objectives
Briefly, the course's objectives are to help you:
    1. Understand the importance of technical communication in your career

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Provide basic contact information so students can communicate with you as easy as possible. Students appreciate easy access. Note that the instructor also lists additional materials that students may need to be successful in this course. Students need to know up front what materials they need.

Include the course number and title. If you're teaching the same course for several semesters, it's useful to include the date to distinguish it from one semester to the next.

Note that this syllabus reflects the instructor's philosophy of teaching. You may have very different ideas about course structure and policies.

This is a good overview of the course--what it is and what students will be doing in the course. You'll note that throughout this syllabus there is important course information that students probably

2. Develop basic skills and strategies important in technical communication (audience and purpose analysis, organization, style, document design, graphics development, editing, and proofreading)
3. Analyze and evaluate technical and scientific material
4. Synthesize information in technical communication
5. Prepare professional technical documents, in both electronic and print format
6. Integrate information from diverse fields and understand how your own specialization fits in a broader context
7. Collaborate with students from different fields to communicate about topics relevant to several professions.

Instructional Methods
One of the major benefits of a communication course is the opportunity to work with other people — both those who are like you and those who aren't. During this semester, you'll work with three or four other students to complete a major collaborative communication project. This course will challenge you to find ways of working productively with people from other disciplines and to discover how to deal with both the drawbacks and rewards of writing in a multi-disciplinary context. Most classes will follow a workshop/discussion format. You should be prepared to meet with your collaborative group outside of regular class hours.

We may spend some time discussing topics and theories that relate to your work in progress, but the amount and nature of that discussion will depend on what you need to know to complete assigned work. Part of your responsibility in this course is to identify topics you want me to explain and discuss.

Collaboration
In the workplace, employees within and between departments and divisions frequently work together on projects. Under the leadership of a project supervisor, members of a team may engage in various kinds of work: gather and evaluate information; design prototypes; test and evaluate products, policies, and procedures; and investigate problems and solutions. They keep careful records of their activities, assign team members specific tasks, and in the end, produce a report, article, or manual. The resulting document represents the collaborative efforts of all project team members. Its quality reflects not only the competence of the individuals involved, but their combined ability to manage a project, set and meet deadlines, and carry a document through all essential stages of the writing process.

Purpose
This project will give you experience working as a member of a team to identify an issue or problem (related to the overall theme I identify) that is common to professionals in the fields represented on your team; to reach consensus about the objectives of your research and the purpose of your study; to develop a project plan that will actively and equally involve all team members; and to ultimately produce a report that accurately reflects the views of the team and achieves the objectives identified at the project's outset. In addition, you'll gain experience in project planning, time

won't read the first day. But they'll have it to read later or to use as a reference. It's always good to go back to the syllabus during the third and fourth week to gently remind students of course requirements and/or their responsibilities.

Here the instructor discusses his instructional methods. Note again, how his philosophy of teaching is embedded in this paragraph.

Talks about student responsibility...

More value/belief statements about the purpose of the course.

The instructor explicitly explains the purpose of the course project. Notice how some of the objectives are written. Students who read this paragraph won't have to guess what they're supposed to learn from this project.

management, group dynamics, problem solving, and decision-making.

Ground Rules
Successful collaboration requires considerable cooperation as well as respect for the differences among team members. Team members must listen well, be sensitive to others, and offer encouragement and constructive suggestions for improvement. Above all, collaborators must learn to negotiate and compromise in the best interests of the group and the achievement of the team's goal. You must agree to cooperate with each other and should assign responsibilities at the outset. If a team member isn't fulfilling his or her responsibilities, work as a group to encourage that person to participate. If you don't succeed, one option is to make an appointment for the team to ask me to mediate.

Assignments and Assessment
Within the parameters of the collaborative project, you'll complete some independent work as well as work that results from a team effort. The group will produce two major reports: one written, the other oral. The other written reports you'll produce are listed on pages 11 and 12 of this packet. In addition, you'll participate in group conferences, peer reviews, and oral briefings. There's no final exam for this course. Two quizzes are scheduled.

Review Draft
For two documents (Proposal and Feasibility Report), you'll prepare at least one draft, which another writer (or writing team) will review according to criteria we'll establish beforehand.

Description. The review draft is an early version of a document that you revise and reorganize in order to produce a polished, professional communication. It differs from the rough draft in that it's intended for readers other than the author and it resembles the finished product closely enough that another person can respond to it usefully. Working with a review draft gives you the opportunity to: 1) gain experience organizing and reorganizing information; 2) get useful early feedback about writing and see how other writers manage similar writing tasks; and 3) exercise your review and editing skills.

Requirements. Review sessions are noted in the class schedule. On those dates, bring your review draft to class, exchange drafts with another writer or writing team, and review them according to the criteria we establish for each project. The emphasis of your review will be on completeness, organization, clarity, logic, tone, etc. — not simply on spelling, grammar, and other mechanical elements.

To receive full credit for preparing a review draft, it must:
- be typewritten/computer-printed, complete, and on time
- follow the appropriate organizational structure
- be properly formatted and incorporate visuals where appropriate
- show evidence of proofreading.

To receive full credit for reviewing another draft, your comments must:

The instructor sets the stage for this course by establishing ground rules up front. Depending on the course you're teaching, you may expand this section to include rules like "turn your cell phones off" or "if you bring food or beverages into class, make sure you take the containers out when you leave." If you're teaching a lab section you might need to spell out the safety rules as well.

This paragraph outlines some of the assignments involved in this course. It might read easier if these assignments were listed and bulleted.

This section outlines two documents that students will have to prepare in the course and describes the guidelines for preparing these documents. It also identifies how students are going to be graded. This ensures that everyone is clear about the standards.

The instructor provides clear criteria for grading. Using such a scale helps ensure that grading is more consistent and fair, it saves time in the

- respond to all aspects of the draft
- be comprehensive, constructive and accurate
- suggest specific, helpful improvements.

In some cases, I'll collect review drafts and reviewers' remarks at the end of the review session, add my feedback, and return the drafts for revision. In any case, keep track of the review sheets and hand them in along with the revised, professional draft of the document.

Professional Draft
Using the suggestions you get from all reviewers, revise the review draft and hand in the resulting professional draft on the day designated in the schedule. Place the finished professional draft in one pocket of a two-pocket folder. Place all early drafts and review sheets in the other.

Scoring Categories. I'll assign graded work to one of the following five scoring categories:

Excellent (EX)
An excellent document commands attention because of its insightful development, logical organization, accuracy, and clear style. It meets or exceeds all standards of adequacy and shows that the writer can choose words aptly, use sentences effectively, and observe the conventions of written English.

Clearly Competent (CC)
A clearly competent document is thoughtful, well organized, and accurate. It may be less fluent and complex in style than an excellent document, but it meets all standards of adequacy and may exceed some. It shows that the writer can choose words accurately, vary sentences effectively, and observe the conventions of written English.

Adequate (AD)

An adequate document marginally meets all standards of adequacy, but its reasoning may be less developed and its style less effective than that of a document described as excellent or competent. Still, the adequate document shows that the writer usually can choose sufficiently precise words, control reasonably varied sentences, and observe the conventions of written English.

Below Standard (BS)
A below-standard document fails to meet at least some standards of adequacy. It may be illogical, lack coherent structure, or reflect an incomplete understanding of the topic. Its prose is usually characterized by at least one of the following: imprecise word choice; little sentence variety; occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage.

Unacceptable (UN)
An unacceptable document shows serious weaknesses and fails to meet all or most standards of adequacy. Its logic is frequently flawed; it may contain simplistic or incoherent analysis; it may reflect some significant

grading process (because the instructor is clear about what he's looking for, he can move through students work much faster), it helps the instructor diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses more specifically, and, most important, students know what the instructor is looking for. It makes assessment explicit.

This paragraph explains how the instructor assigns points to students' work.

By including this breakdown of points, students can track points earned throughout the semester. It provides students immediate feedback on where they stand in the course and, in most cases, thwarts end-of semester complaints about grades.

Required attendance needs to be explained and incorporated into course or activity objectives, and clarified on the first day. Here the instructor is not real clear about what qualifies as an excused absence. A better way of stating this might be to say "Absences for which a medical or

misunderstanding of the topic. Its prose is characterized by one or more of the following: simplistic or inaccurate word choice, monotonous or fragmented sentence structure, and repeated errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage.

Grading. The scoring category of each graded assignment translates to a corresponding number of points. (See page 10 for the points assigned to each assignment.) I do not "take off" points when I grade. Instead, I evaluate holistically, taking into account the overall quality of the writing, as well as (when appropriate) the quality of revision and your responses to reviewers' suggestions. Thus, if a report is worth a maximum of 50 points and I place it in the "Adequate" category, it could receive anywhere from 35 to 40 points. Don't look for specific areas where I "deducted" points — instead look at my comments explaining why I categorized the work as I did. You may earn a maximum of 500 points for the course. Letter grades are awarded according to this conversion table:

A = 450 - 500
B+ = 425 – 450
B = 400 – 425
C+ = 375 - 400
C = 350 - 375
D+ = 325 - 350
D = 300 - 325
F = below 300

PLEASE NOTE: Failure to complete any major assigned work will be grounds for a final course grade of "F." If you cannot complete an assignment, you must see me. Otherwise, you risk failing the course, even though your point total without the grade for the missed assignment may still fall in the passing range. You can't pass the course if you don't complete it.

Because this course emphasizes revision, I encourage you to use a computer and to save all documents on disk. That will spare you the burden of retyping and will make it much easier to revise and improve drafts.

Attendance and Participation
Attendance is mandatory. Several of your grades will depend on in-class activities. In addition, I'll explain assignments in class, hand out related materials, and discuss and clarify assigned readings. Much in-class time will be spent working within groups on the collaborative project. Missing class during that time will hurt not only you, but your group as well.

You may have no more than three excused absences. If you can't attend a class because you must participate in an outside event, or because of illness or emergency, let me know ahead of time. If you miss a class, you're still responsible for any assignments and materials presented in class. I'll deduct four points from your final grade for each unexcused absence.

Deadlines
You must hand in assignments in class on the dates they are due. I'll deduct

court excuse is provided will be recorded but not figured into your grade. Likewise, one absence for which advance notice is given by phone will not be figured in the attendance grade. Otherwise, all absences are considered non-excused."

It's best to be as precise as possible "up front" rather than clarifying policies and expectations as questions and problems arise.

Here the instructor heads-off those questions like "does it have to be typed?" and "does it need to be double-spaced?" The instructor is very specific about how the format and draft of the final project.

Again, students may not read this the first day of class, but it's in writing and they can go back to it for a reference when they're ready to put the final draft of the proposal together.

This is an important section especially for a class that requires written reports. The instructor might want to expand this section to

four points from the final grade for each day an assignment is late (no matter how many points it is worth). You're responsible for your work until you give it to me or, under special circumstances, to one of the department secretaries personally. I'm not responsible for documents left outside my office or slipped under the office door in my absence. You may choose to hand in documents that way, but you do so at your own risk.

Form for Professional Drafts
The format and design of your professional draft contributes to effective and clear technical communication. An attractive, readable professional draft creates a favorable first impression and lets the reader find information quickly and easily. Follow these guidelines for preparing a well-organized, cleanly-formatted document.

Paper and Typography
Type or computer-generate your final draft on 8-1/2 by 11-inch, white paper. If you use a computer, please print the professional draft on a letter quality printer.

Margins and White Space
White space is the blank space outside and around areas of typing or print. White space makes information more readable and easier to find, by leading the eyes to typed or printed areas. Leave at least 1- to 1.5-inch margins all around the page. For bound reports, the left-hand margin should be 1.5 inches. Keep tables, graphs, illustrations, and other visuals within the margins. Allow extra space above headings and subheadings, above and below graphics, etc.

Most reports should be double-spaced for reading ease. Correspondence (letters, memos, etc.) should be single-spaced, with an extra line space between single-spaced paragraphs. Set off long quotations (4 lines or more) and numbered lists by separating them from the text with double-spacing. Single-space within the quote or list. Indent the entire quotation or list 10 spaces from the left margin
and 5 spaces from the right margin.

Pagination
Always use page numbers for documents longer than one page. You may choose the system of pagination you wish to use — just remember to be consistent in the way you place page numbers throughout the document. The easiest pagination systems for readers to use are thumbnail pagination — page numbers in the upper right corner — or bottom centered pagination. Page numbers should stay within margins. Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). Don't number page 1 if it is the first page of the document. Begin numbering on page 2.

Some reports include information before the body — a title page, abstract, table of contents, list of illustrations, executive summary, etc. Number these pages with lower case Roman numerals, centered at the bottom of the page. The title page, which is page "i," doesn't need a number. Begin numbering with page "ii" and continue through all preliminary material. Use Arabic

include a definition of plagiarism and also include the University's policy regarding cheating.

The next page outlines a weekly/daily schedule to help keep the course on track and to let students know what is coming up or what they'll miss if they're absent. It also shows good planning and organization.

The schedule should not be so tight that it's difficult to keep up with or that it doesn't allow some flexibility. Here's a tip: Until you've taught the course a couple of times, a weekly schedule may be preferable to a daily schedule. And always entitle your schedule as "Preliminary" so you're

numerals for the body, beginning with page "1."

Documentation
Give credit to your sources every time you quote directly or paraphrase material from books, articles, other publications, lecture notes, or interviews. See the chapter on Documentation in your text.

not legally at risk if you diverge from it even a little.

Preliminary Course Calendar

Week	Day/date	Topics/Activities	Reading/Preparation	Assignment Due
1	T 8/22 Th 8/24	Course introduction; features of effective technical communication Intro to semester project; topic brainstorming	ch 1	
2	T 8/29 Th 8/31	Writing process; thinking rhetorically Writing for readers; audience analysis	ch 4 ch 3	+ Personal profile + Topic idea list due
3	T 9/5 Th 9/7	Problem-solving and feasibility studies; scenarios for final study Collaborative models; team management	ch 2 ch 16, p. 506-518 ch 6	+ Letter of application due
4	T 9/12 Th 9/14	Team assignments; collaboration and synergy Writing the prospectus; guidelines for progress updates; team planning		
5	T 9/19 Th 9/21	Prospectus workshop; Quiz 1 Argument and persuasion; Research and summarizing	ch 5 ch 7, 8, 9 (p. 256-263)	+ Quiz 1 (in class) + Project prospectus + Summary exercise (in class)
6	T 9/26 Th 9/28	Project briefings; writing the proposal Proposal workshop	ch 17	
7	T 10/3 Th 10/5	Proposal workshop Workshop: proposal review + Proposal review draft		
8	T 10/10 Th 10/12	Technical editing and style; editing exercise Organizing and outlining;	ch 10 ch 9, p. 243-256	+ Proposal in progress + Editing/style exercise in class
9	T 10/17	Feasibility report structure	ch 15	+ Proposal

	Th 10/19		ch 16	professional draft
10	T 10/24 Th 10/26	feasibility report; quiz review Quiz 2; feasibility report workshop Document design and graphics; graphics exercise	ch 12	+ Research reports 1&2 + Quiz 2 (in class) + Graphics exercise (in class)
11	T 10/31 Th 11/2	Workshop Planning & delivering oral reports	ch 20	
12	T 11/7 Th 11/9	Conferences Workshop		+ Research reports 3& + Outline
13	T 11/14 Th 11/16	Workshop: planning the oral report Workshop		
14	T 11/21 Th 11/23	Review of feasibility report Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class		+ Review draft of feasibility report (review comments)
15	T 11/28 Th 11/30	Workshop Oral reports; writing the completion report		
16	T 12/5 Th 12/7	Oral reports Oral reports; evaluations		+ Feasibility report professional draft
17	12/13	Group Wrap-up/closure + Ind/Team Evals		+Completion report due

**Note: This is a preliminary schedule and may change due to class needs.