

# LCC 3403

## TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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**COURSE WEBSITE:** HTTP://T-SQUARE.GATECH.EDU  
**OFFICE:** SKILES 309  
**OFFICE HOURS:** MWF 9:00-10:00 OR BY APPT.

### Section J

MWF 10:05-10:55  
 Skiles 302

### Section B

MWF 11:05-11:55  
 Skiles 302

### Section G

MWF 12:05-12:55  
 Skiles 302

## Introduction

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LCC 3403 is designed for students of all disciplines and attracts students from a variety of majors, such as sociology, political science, business administration, biology, English and engineering. The course is intended for students who, in their present or future work, must be involved primarily in transactional writing--writing that gets a particular job done.

## Course Outcomes

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LCC 3403 Outcomes Specified by Georgia Tech's Writing and Communication Program

Category	Outcomes
<b>Rhetoric</b> Rhetoric focuses on available means of persuasion, considering the synergy of factors such as context, audience, purpose, role, argument, organization, design, visuals, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fashion artifacts that address the exigencies of diverse contexts, exhibiting effective persuasive strategies, tact, and sensitivity to theoretical, ethical and legal concerns.</li> <li>• Collecting, craft, and present technical information in ways that convey a clear purpose to a specific audience.</li> </ul>

conventions of language.	
<b>Process</b> Processes for communication—for example, creating, planning, drafting, designing, rehearsing, revising, presenting, publishing—are recursive, not linear. Learning productive processes is as important as creating products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct, select, craft, revise, and repurpose information to reflect individual, cultural, and/or organizational values.</li> <li>• Collaborate on artifacts that meet the needs of the specific audiences.</li> </ul>
<b>Modes and Media</b> Activities and assignments should use a variety of modes and media—written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal—singly and in combination. The context and culture of multimodality and multimedia are critical.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create WOVEN (<b>W</b>ritten, <b>O</b>ral, <b>V</b>isual, <b>E</b>lectronic, and <b>N</b>onverbal) artifacts— such as memos, emails, proposals, reports, instructions, manuals, websites, and short and long presentations—that display strategic uses of generic and stylistic conventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Design</b> Documents and other artifacts should arrange visual elements according to consistent, efficient, and effective principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use theories and principles of document design to create and present accessible, comprehensible, and usable artifacts.</li> <li>• Integrate graphics to achieve maximum clarity in print documents, presentation slides, websites, and other artifacts.</li> </ul>

## Course Theme

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LCC 3403 is required by many disciplines, each of which has its own unique rhetorical conventions. There's simply no way a single class can cover all of those conventions. How, then, do we make it as useful as possible for all of you? Those of us who teach this class each have our own answers to this question – we use a lot of different textbooks, come up with a lot of different assignments, cover a lot of different bases. Each section of 3403 is different, and you deserve to know what you're getting into.

This class will be a simulated company, a company that makes board- and videogames. You'll each act as employees in this company, and everything you do in the course will relate to your simulated roles in it.

My hope – my expectation – is that you'll find a way to apply your own skills and interests to this simulation, and that you'll be able to transfer the skills you learned here back to your own profession. If you think you can do this, you're in the right place. But if you're uninterested or put off by this theme, you should drop this class and enroll in another section. I'll understand, and we'll both be happier for it.

## Teaching Philosophies

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Here are the primary philosophies that inform my teaching, so you have an idea of what to expect from me and how our class will run on a daily basis:

- Good learning is situated in real-life (or simulated) practice, not in abstract discussion.
- A good teacher is a coach rather than a "sage on the stage."

- People learn new things by connecting new information or skills with information/skills they already have (also known as "scaffolding").
- Good learning is a back-and-forth process of hypothesizing about a new idea, trying it out, and reflecting on how that trial went. (This dialectical process is also known as "active and critical thinking.")
- Students learn best when they're engaged with the material. The ways that I try to engage my students are:
  - by giving you as much choice as possible about what you'll study/create, and encouraging you to choose subjects that you're excited about
  - by encouraging you to actively seek information rather than passively absorb it
  - by making you play as much as possible

## Projects

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### Project 1: Individual Game Concept (10%)

In order to generate a lot of ideas for potential games, and to practice giving persuasive presentations, you'll each come up with a concept for an original game (or a mod) and pitch it to your classmates to try to persuade them to work on your game with you.

#### **Deliverables**

High concept document  
Pitch proposal (with 1-page PowerPoint)  
Individual qualification statement

### Project 2: Group Game Concept (20%)

Groups of 3-4 will form around the best ideas from Project 1, and each group will flesh out their game concept with a longer treatment document that describes and illustrates the game more fully. You'll also develop more detailed and formal presentations, in which you'll try to convince me and an external panel of experts (acting as the company's chief executives) to pick your game for the whole class to develop in the next project.

#### **Deliverables**

Game treatment  
Formal proposal (with visual aid)  
Individual and group progress memos

### Project 3: Game (40%)

At this point, the entire class will work on two games from Project 3 that the panel and I choose for production. You'll form new teams that will work on various parts of this game – its technical design/construction, instructions, marketing, copyright, etc. (You'll get to propose and join these teams based on your skills and interests.) Each team will be responsible for accomplishing its specified goals

and communicating with the other teams. At the end of this project, we'll have built two working, market-ready games.

### **Deliverables**

Game  
Usability testing report  
Individual and group progress memos

## Project 4: Progress Report (10%)

The last project is an individually written progress report in which you'll reflect on the rhetorical challenges you faced and lessons you learned in the in the class, and how you'll transfer them to your own profession.

### **Deliverables**

Progress report

## Other Graded Components

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### Homework and Other Small Assignments (10%)

There will be homework almost every day; homework assignments involve things like doing research or reading something, and writing a response in discussion forums. Homework will usually be worth 5 or 10points, depending on its complexity, and you'll need to provide thorough answers (though not polished writing) for full credit.

### Class Participation (10%)

Since this is a professional communication course, and since it simulates a company, you should think of attendance here as you would in a job. Miss class as seldom as possible; if you have to miss class, let me know ahead of time, preferably via email.

Every day, you will earn 5 points for adequate participation in class. This includes engaging in class discussions, group work, and in-class writing assignments. If you're disruptive, reading the paper, playing with Facebook, etc., you'll lose points. Your participation grade is also affected by your attendance: you don't get points if you aren't there. I refuse to weigh the relative merits of people's reasons for missing class, so I count all absences the same, points-wise. More than two weeks of absences (6) is considered excessive and grounds for failure in the course.

And a note to the punctually challenged: coming in more than ten minutes late counts as half an absence.

## Final Grade Percentages

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A	90% and above
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	below 60%

## Required Texts

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Anderson, Paul V. *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2011.

## Required Materials

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A laptop or notebook for in-class writing and notes. (A laptop is better: it'll allow you to access the course website in class.)

\$10-\$20 for materials to build the game for Project 4. (We'll pool this money, and it'll be our operating budget. We'll figure out exactly how much we need when we begin Project 4.)

## Additional Policies

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### Syllabus Changes

This syllabus is subject to change according to the needs of the course. I will announce changes in class, but you are responsible for knowing and following them.

### Revision

Revision is a crucial part of the composition process, so you will in fact revise your work many times before turning in its final copy. However, if you are unhappy with the grade you earn on a given assignment, you may revise it within a week of the day I've returned it. These second-chance revisions will be averaged with the original grade of the assignment.

### Late Work

Assignments' due dates and the methods for turning them in will be described on every assignment sheet, and you will be expected to adhere to them. Major assignments will lose 10% for every day they are late. I don't accept late homework unless you've emailed me before being absent, and/or you have a University-sponsored excuse.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Georgia Tech complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon, preferably in the first week of the semester. Please request that an ADAPTS staff verify your disability and specify the accommodation you will need. No retroactive accommodations will be provided in this class.

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by GT's policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu>. The following text appears on the website:

“Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a Student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or person, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a member of the Faculty so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the Student.

While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.”

Work that violates the Honor Code will receive zero credit and may result in failure of the entire course. I will also report any serious misconduct to the Dean of Students.

If you consult outside sources in order to supplement or advance or generate your own ideas, you need to give credit to the author(s), whether you directly quote them or not. You're all aware that intentional plagiarism is wrong, and that it has dire consequences (failure in the class and an investigation from the Office of Student Integrity). Most students who intentionally plagiarize do it because they're pressed for time and feel too stressed to write their own paper. My advice: come talk to me if you have any problems getting the work done, or if you're confused about documentation. I'm here to help you, not catch you.

## Discrimination

I am committed to providing a safe classroom environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with the professional nature of this course, only professional behavior is acceptable between the instructor and the students and between students. No harassment of any kind is allowed in class including but not limited to gender, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. That being said, ignoring our differences in an attempt to avoid conflict or discomfort can sometimes wind up reinforcing the same prejudices and conflicts we're trying to avoid, so I will encourage the input each of you brings to the class based on the identities you're comfortable speaking from.

## Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

## Electronic Distractions

I understand that we're all used to multitasking like crazy these days, and that a classroom, with its demands for your full, undivided attention, comes off as not only old-tech but downright dull. There will be times in here where you'll be allowed – if not required – to multitask, but there will be other times when you'll need to put the old nose to the grindstone and focus on one thing. I ask that you be sensitive to those latter times and focus accordingly. I also ask that you refrain altogether from reading the newspaper or texting your friends during class, since they have nothing to do with class and come off as insults to me.

# Signed Student/Instructor Agreements

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**PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS TO THE INSTRUCTOR**

## **Syllabus**

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for LCC 3403 and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

\_\_\_\_\_

print name

\_\_\_\_\_

signature

\_\_\_\_\_

date

## Reproduction of Student Work

**DIRECTIONS:** Read carefully and check all that apply.

- I give my instructor, Christopher Ritter, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, LCC 3403, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.
- I do *NOT* give my instructor, Christopher Ritter, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, XXXXX as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.

Please indicate whether you want to be acknowledged if your work is used:

- Please use my name in association with my work.
- Please use my work, but do *NOT* acknowledge me.

If your instructor decides to use your work, he//she may wish to contact you. Please provide your contact information below:

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print name

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signature

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email address

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phone number

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print permanent address

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print campus address

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date