Course Title: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE  
Course Number: MALC 630  (3 credits)

Course Description  
This course provides in-depth study of technical communication, with an emphasis on technical writing and editing. Students will learn, critique, and apply technical communication theory, technical research methodology, and effective writing techniques. Emphasis is placed on documents and contents for communication within government, scientific, industrial, and other agencies.

Course Outcomes  
Here is a list of the outcomes for this course.  
By the end of this class, I will be able to:
1. Articulate the historical perspectives of the discipline in relation to theoretical development  
2. Explain the work of major scholars in the discipline  
3. Explain the diversity in the way communication is perceived as a result of physiological, psychological, and multicultural/educational differences of the receiver  
4. Apply the basic communication concepts used by business, government agencies, and industry  
5. Anticipate those areas of the communication process in where blocks are most likely to occur  
6. Apply systems and concepts designed to overcome and/or circumvent communication blocks when they do occur  
7. Articulate theoretical conflicts within the discipline

What do you as learner know about this course?

What do you as facilitator of learning bring to this course?

Name the theories and viewpoints that you will investigate for this course (use both contemporary trends and authors as well as historical traditions and viewpoints).  
This course will be 50% theory and 50% application. The communication theories covered in this course are:
  ♦ Received view theory  
  ♦ System theory  
  ♦ Theories of signs & language  
  ♦ Theories of discourse  
  ♦ Theories of message production, processing, & reception  
  ♦ Theories of symbolic interaction, dramatism, & narrative
Theories of social & cultural reality
Theories of experience & interpretation

The research methodologies that will be used for this and all following courses are:
- Qualitative & quantitative
- Skills for technical communication
- Primary, secondary, & tertiary sources
- Idea generation
- Planning
- Ethics

Case studies & document analysis for this course will serve as examples for other courses in the certificate program.

The required texts for the course are:
Franklin Covey Co. (1999). Franklin Covey style guide for business and technical communication.


Please choose three of the four options listed below to accomplish the outcomes:

1. Select a book about publication. The list on the following page contains suggestions. Write a review analyzing/evaluating the book in light of the theories studied in this course. The book review guidelines are attached.

2. Many professional documents, such as corporate or government reports, are written for a general audience, which consists of numerous diverse cultures. Using and citing from at least three documents that you select as examples, discuss the application of the theories studied in class. Write a brief research paper (10 pages, single-spaced). examining/researching the application of theory as used in diverse cultures in today’s professional communication documents.

3. Select one professional user manual or technical report written for technical or expert audience. Analyze the document in respect to the theories studied in class. Be sure to cite examples throughout your paper, which should be 10 pages, single-spaced.

4. Select 5 case studies from the Frantz text for analysis in respect to the theories studied.
**Book List**

These books are examples only. You may select one of these or find one on your own; however, your instructor must approve your book selection.


Guidelines for Presenting
Critical Analysis of Selected Books

The following guidelines are presented in outline form. The information listed below is the minimum acceptable for a critical analysis; of course you may expand on it. In addition, you may change the order of the information presented. Remember this is a guide, not a laboratory protocol.

1.0 Bibliographic Information on Book Being Analyzed

2.0 Information on the Author
   2.1 Short biographic information
   2.2 Qualifications of the author to write a book on the topic.
   2.3 Comments by critics about the author.

3.0 Purpose and Intended Audience of the Book
   3.1 As stated or implied by the author.
   3.2 As you perceive the purpose and intended audience.
   3.3 The degree to which you believe the author did or did not achieve his/her intended purpose.
   3.4 The degree to which you believe the book was appropriate for its intended audience. Remember, these books were not intended as texts with a student audience in mind.

4.0 Summary of the Book
Do not list the title of each chapter and attempt to summarize each chapter! Summarize the book as a whole!

5.0 Discussion
   5.1 Cite those points in the book that you consider of particular merit in relation to the theories studied in class.
   5.2 Indicate those points in the book that you believe detract from its strength or usefulness and give your reasons. Pay particular attention to the theories studied in class.
   5.3 Give quotations from the book to support your arguments for both strengths and weaknesses.

6.0 Points to Consider
   6.1 Accuracy of Content: Compare with information in other books or journals you have read, particularly those in class-- cite sources. Remember, your personal experiences very possibly are too limited to use as criteria.
   6.2 External Criticism: consider whether this book is applicable in general or only to the specified audience to whom the author is writing.
   6.3 Internal Criticism: Consider whether this book is consistent within itself. Does the author say one thing at one place in the book and disagree with himself/herself at another place in the book?
   6.4 Writing Style:
      6.4.1 Appropriateness to intended audience -- consider the use of jargon, cant, etc. What is the tone of the language used? Is it formal, informal, "folksy," specific industry oriented, etc.
      6.4.2 Ease of reading -- consider the author's purpose: 1) is this a text, 2) is this an industry book, 3) is this intended for relaxational reading? What is the average sentence length, what is the average paragraph length, what is the
average vocabulary level. Note: If you have access to *Word for Windows*
Type several paragraphs from the book onto a disk, then click on the "Tools" menu
and select "Grammar." It will give you a complete reading analysis.

**7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 To whom would you recommend this book and why?
7.2 To whom would you not recommend this book and why?

My additions to the designated outcomes above are:

1.

2.

3.

**Here is a list of the ways that I will be evaluated for this course.**

1.

2.

3.