

# Technical Writing A to Z

## Course Syllabus

Summer - Fall 2008

### Instructor's Name

David L. Gray dgray@aint.com

Notes and/or telephone messages will be placed in instructor's mailbox.

### Materials Required

Writing materials, Class Handout (supplied at beginning of first class) laptop computer (optional, supplied by student)

### Course Description

This course uses classroom instruction, hands-on activities, and instructor demonstrations to introduce the student to the profession of Technical Writing.

Examples of technical writing in everyday life demonstrate what technical writing is and what writing skills are required.

Students, working in teams, will create a project and then write assembly instructions for that project. The component parts and the assembly instructions are then given to a different team to assemble. The quality of the assembly instructions is evaluated, based on how well the testing team duplicates the original project.

Grammar, Style and Format are introduced, as well as the role of the Style Sheet/Style Guide.

In the second session, the class is divided into teams to interview a Subject Matter Expert chosen by the team and develop a technical document based on the interview. This can take the form of preparing a special recipe or performing a difficult task.

In the second part of the class, the role of the technical editor and examples of common editorial marks are introduced.

The first part of the third session applies the grammar and editorial skills introduced previously to editing samples of technical writing. Results will be discussed in class.

The last part of the last session is devoted to the following topics:

- Important considerations in translating technical documents into another language
- Alternatives to Microsoft Word. Sources of trial programs and open-source software.

- Careers in Technical writing – what is available and what to expect.

### **Class Attendance Policy**

Active student participation is a large part of this class, making class attendance extremely important. The instructor will decide on an individual basis what make-up work is necessary or if a student has missed too much class time to be able to successfully complete the course.

### **Grade Determination Procedure**

Each student's grade will be based on performance in the hands-on portion and the editing portion of the course. The editing assignment is open book/open notes and assumes only high school-level knowledge of English grammar.

### **Description of Number and Type of Exams to be Given**

No formal exams will be given in this course.

### **Other Assignments**

Assignments outside class are optional and are at the student's discretion.

### **Statement of Class Objectives**