

**Instructor: Elisa Warford, Ph.D.**

Sections 66812, 66820, and 66826

MW 2:00-3:20, 3:30-4:50, and 5:00-6:20

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OHE 106N, 213-821-5832

MW 12:00 - 2:00 and by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

As engineers, around half of your time will be spent in the lab or in the field, devising new designs and numerical models and collecting experimental data. The other half (actually up to 64%, according to one study) will be spent communicating your findings and proposing new research to your colleagues, the industry you work in, and the public. Without this communication, the results of your work are meaningless. In this course, you will learn to write and give oral presentations for the different types of audiences you will communicate with in your professional careers: professional audiences, academic audiences, and general audiences. We'll also talk and write about ethics in engineering (engineering writing and communication is, in fact, an ethical issue itself), and we'll look at the ways engineering and technology intersect with society.

This semester, you'll be writing articles and reports, giving oral presentations, and learning to present data in drawings and graphs. In your final semester project, you'll undertake a literature review on a topic related to the National Academy of Engineering's Grand Challenges.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Write for academic, public, and professional audiences.
- Demonstrate research and documentation abilities at the upper-division level.
- Identify and analyze pressing ethical issues within an engineering discipline.
- Compose a professional proposal for a real-world constituent that reflects the importance of engineering solutions in society.
- Revise and edit to advanced academic and professional standards.
- Prepare and give professional oral presentations for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- Use visual aids in both written and oral communications.
- Articulate the impact engineering has on everyday life.
- Work collaboratively to research, write, and present information and ideas.
- Write accurate, precise technical prose.

Catalogue Description

WRIT 340 Advanced Writing (3-4, FaSpSm): Instruction in writing for various audiences on topics related to a student's professional or disciplinary interests, with some emphasis on issues of broad public concern. *Prerequisite:* WRIT 130 or WRIT 140. *Required.*

Contact Me

Please contact me if you have questions about the course or your progress in it. The best way to contact me outside of class is by email; I do my best to respond to emails as quickly as possible (but expect a longer turnaround over the weekend). You are also welcome to drop by my office anytime during office hours; one of the best ways to enhance your education is to interact with your instructors one-on-one. My office hours and location are listed at the top of this syllabus.

A word about emailing your professors

You should think of your emails to me and your other professors as professional documents rather than texts to your friends; that is, your email should represent your best professional self. This means, in part, that you should not use a salutation of "Hey prof!" and you should use an appropriate closing (e.g., "Best regards" or "Regards" if "Sincerely" sounds too formal) and your name. The body of your email should be clear, concise, well organized, and free of grammatical errors.

Blackboard

This syllabus (including updates to it as necessary), the paper assignment sheets, course handouts, your grades, announcements, and other course materials will be posted on our course Blackboard space. Please check Blackboard often.

Assignments and Grading

You will be evaluated on the following assignments and activities:

Technical description

A brief description of a common, simple object.

Illumin magazine article

An article in an online magazine that shows a general audience how engineering affects our everyday lives. This will be submitted for publication in the magazine.

Oral presentation of *Illumin* article

Ethics position paper

An academic research paper in which you argue a position on an ethical issue in your field of engineering.

Literature review

A collaboratively written literature review on a topic related to the National Academy of Engineering's Grand Challenges.

Oral presentation of literature review

Portfolio

Revisions of your ethics paper and Illumin article.

Participation

Your level of involvement and professionalism in the class (see below).

Overall class participation

In general, I will award high participation grades to those who demonstrate an active engagement in the class. You can gain participation points by attending class regularly and arriving on time, acting professionally in class, doing the readings before class, and making valuable contributions to the class during draft workshops, group work sessions, and class discussions.

You can lose points by being absent, being consistently late, texting during class or taking phone calls, working on assignments for other courses during class, coming to class unprepared, or otherwise disrupting the class.

Grade breakdown

Each assignment will receive a specified number of points, for a total of 1,000 points.

Assignment	Points
Technical description	50
<i>Illumin</i> article	175
<i>Illumin</i> presentation	75
Ethics paper	225
Literature review	150
Proposal Memo for lit review	50
Literature review presentation	100
Portfolio	125
Class participation	50
Total	1000

There is no curve in this course: an A is 94% and above, A- 90-93.5%, B+ 87-89.5% and so on.

Paper grades will be based on a common WRIT 340 rubric, available at <http://viterbi.usc.edu/academics/programs/ewp/writing/>. The rubric for oral presentations can be found at <http://viterbi.usc.edu/academics/programs/ewp/presentation/>.

Attendance

There is no official attendance policy for this course. However, I will take roll at the beginning of each class period, and a portion of your participation grade will be based on your attendance. Furthermore, you can expect your paper grades to suffer as a result of excessive absences. As you would for a supervisor at work, if you must miss class it is a good idea to give me an explanation, particularly if the absence is justified and/or if you have several absences. You should also talk to a classmate about what you missed and check Blackboard for announcements or schedule changes.

Paper submissions

Unless otherwise directed, papers will be submitted through Turnitin as PDFs. Papers should be formatted as required by the assignment.

File names

Please use the following file name for your papers: "Last name Major Assignment." For example, "Turner ME Ethics."

Rough draft policy

Due to time constraints, I cannot provide general comments on rough drafts over email. I will, however, go over rough drafts in conference in my office. I am happy to answer specific questions about rough drafts over email.

Late papers

Papers are due by 11:59 p.m. on the day specified on the schedule of assignments. However, for whatever reason, you will be allowed one late paper without penalty for the technical description, ethics paper or *Illumin* article. You have one class period (until midnight) after the original due date to turn in the paper; after that, it will be penalized one plus- or minus- letter grade for each additional class period it is late. After you have used your free extension, any paper turned in late will be penalized one-half letter grade for each class period it is late. You do not need to inform me in advance that you will be using the extension.

Any paper not turned in will result in a 0, which will significantly lower your course grade. *It is therefore always in your best interest to turn in a paper, even if it is very late. I will always accept late papers.*

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is an issue in both academia and the professional world. With the proliferation of digital resources on the Internet, many of which cut and paste information from one website to another with no acknowledgement of the original source, it can be difficult for students to understand the importance of clear documentation. However, both students and professionals can face serious consequences for claiming someone else's work as their own.

Because we are in an academic setting, plagiarism (e.g., submitting someone else's work—in whole or in part—as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without my permission) or falsifying information will not be tolerated. This includes failing to document sources properly, paraphrasing too closely to the original, and, of course, outright stealing. Depending on the violation, according to official University sanctions, you may fail the paper, fail the course, and risk suspension from the school. For an the University's sanctions, see <http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus/>. For an overview of the University's policies concerning academic integrity, including what constitutes plagiarism, see <http://breeze.usc.edu/academicintegrity>.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

Required Texts and Materials

Tufte, Edward. *Visual and Statistical Thinking: Displays of Evidence for Making Decisions*.

Available as an e-book (\$2) at <http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/ebooks>

Available in print at Amazon (\$7), which may have faster shipping, or at http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/books_textb

Tufte, Edward. *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within*

Available as an e-book (\$2) at <http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/ebooks>

Available in print at Amazon (\$7), which may have faster shipping, or at http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/books_pp

Recommended Text

Williams, Joseph M. and Gregory G. Colomb. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 11th ed. Boston: Longman, 2010.

Available at Amazon and in the bookstore.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Please complete any readings before coming to class on the day they appear on the schedule. Bring the reading to class on these days as well, as we will be working from it.

Week 1	M 8/22	Introduction to course: Why WRIT 340? Writing for an audience: Einstein's letter to FDR
	W 8/24	Introduction to technical description Technical description in-class writing
Week 2	M 8/29	Due in class: Technical descriptions (printout, with rough draft) Introduction to <i>Illumin</i> assignment Engineering writing for the general public
	W 8/31	Readings: <i>Illumin</i> articles (TBA) before class, NY Times handout (on Blackboard), "Icon of the Air" (on Blackboard) Analysis of published <i>Illumin</i> articles
Week 3	M 9/5	Labor Day holiday
	W 9/7	Reading quiz: Tufte <i>Visual and Statistical Thinking</i> textbooklet Engineering graphics and illustrations
Week 4	M 9/12	Due in class: <i>Illumin</i> article rough draft (print or electronic) <i>Illumin</i> article draft workshop IEEE format
	W 9/14	Due by midnight (via Turnitin): <i>Illumin</i> article Giving oral presentations: Content and delivery
Week 5	M 9/19	Reading quiz: Tufte <i>Cognitive Style of PowerPoint</i> textbooklet PowerPoint slide design — bring laptops to class
	W 9/21	Class canceled
Week 6	M 9/26	TED Conference: <i>Illumin</i> presentations
	W 9/28	TED Conference: <i>Illumin</i> presentations

Week 7	M 10/3	Introduction to engineering ethics Reading: “When Technologies Make Good People Do Bad Things: Another Argument Against the Neutrality of Technologies” (available on Blackboard) Ethics of engineering communication Style: Clarity in Verbs
	W 10/5	Introduction to Engineering Ethics Ethics case study: software vulnerability research Introduce ethics assignment
Week 8	M 10/10	Read for class: “Ethics of Electronic Sniffers,” available on Blackboard under Ethics Materials/Articles Ethics paper workshop — bring laptops to class Style: Clarity in Subjects
	W 10/12	Due by midnight: Ethics abstracts Abstracts Analysis of ethics paper models Style: The Ethics of Style Style: Cohesion and Coherence
Week 9	M 10/14	Introductions Ethics paper metadiscourse Williams, Lesson 6: Emphasis Other stumbling blocks to clarity
	W 10/19	Individual conferences — bring draft of ethics paper
	Fri 10/21	Individual conferences — bring draft of ethics paper
Week 10	M 10/24	Individual conferences — bring draft of ethics paper
	W 10/26	Page layout and formatting Style: Concision Bring drafts of ethics papers (editing workshop)
Week 11	M 10/31	Ethics papers due via Turnitin by midnight Introduction to group project

		Proposals/reports Introduction to proposal memo Group meetings Style: Catch-up
	W 11/2	Tips for successful collaborative writing Literature reviews
Week 12	M 11/7	Due by midnight: Proposal memos Style: Abbreviations, numerals, interruptions Group meetings
	W 11/9	Reading: How to Write a Literature Review Group meetings Literature review examples Discuss presentations Data display review
Week 13	M 11/14	Discuss report format (TOC, abstract) Group meetings Portfolio review — bring ethics and <i>Illumin</i> papers to class Group meetings
	W 11/16	Group project presentations
Week 14	M 11/21	Group project presentations
	W 11/23	Thanksgiving holiday
Week 15	M 11/28	Portfolios due in class (printouts) Upload <i>Illumin</i> articles Course evaluations Group meetings
	W 11/30	Group conferences with Prof. Warford
	Fri 12/2	Group projects due via Turnitin