

WRIT 340 – Advanced Writing and Communication for Engineers

Units: 4

Spring 2020

Section 66837

MW 5:00 – 6:20 PM

Instructor: Sarah Mojarad

Virtual Office Hours: W 4:00 – 5:00 pm and by appointment

Contact Info: mojarad@usc.edu

Engineering Writing Program: <http://viterbi.usc.edu/ewp>

EWP Twitter: <https://twitter.com/USCEngWriting>

Illumin: <http://illumin.usc.edu/>

Viterbi Conversations in Ethics: <https://vce.usc.edu/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

340 Advanced Writing (4 units): 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.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will exhibit:

- A variety of professional and academic engineering communication skills.
- Proficiency in writing for academic, public, and professional audiences.
- Flexibility in communicating for a variety of purposes.
- The ability to prepare effective written documentation both individually and collaboratively.
- The skills required to create and deliver effective oral presentations.
- An awareness of the ways engineering affects broader society.
- An understanding of ethics within engineering practice.
- The ability to engage in rigorous critical analysis.
- The ability to give and receive critical feedback.

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of WRIT 340 students 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.
- Utilize 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.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

You will do a lot of additional reading and research in this course. Most of it will be in service of your own projects, and therefore it will be chosen on an individual basis. As with all writing courses, a dictionary and a

thesaurus are likely to be of use. If you are shaky on any of the details of grammar or usage, a grammar and usage manual will be of great use to you. **The expectation in 340, however, is that students have moved beyond the need for instruction in the mechanics of writing.** If you need additional help with grammar, please attend the Grammar Workshops provided by the Engineering Writing Program. Contact your instructor for more information.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT:

To use the PitchVantage software, you will need a headset, microphone, or earbuds. This is REQUIRED.

ASSIGNMENTS:

As much as possible, while still meeting the university’s criteria for academic writing, the assignments in this class are designed to mirror the kinds of communication tasks you can expect to find in the workplace. The *Illumin* article, Ethics paper, the writing portion of the group project, and the portfolio (the “Major Writing Assignments”) will all be designed to share with an audience outside of this course.

There will be one oral presentation that will be delivered as part of the group project.

There are two significant components to the course: 1) individual assignments (the *Illumin* Article, the Ethics paper, the portfolio); and 2) the group project.

Specific parameters for each assignment will available in the **Assignment Packet** for this course and a brief summary is presented below.

Assignment	Points
Illumin (Bibliography, Peer Review, Article)	220
Ethics (Peer Review, Paper)	220
Portfolio	250
Speaker Symposium Pitch	20
Group Petition	25
Group Proposal	100
Group Oral Presentation	100
In-Class Work	about 25-50
Total	about 960-985

INDIVIDUAL MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (690 points)

You have two main individual writing assignments here in WRIT 340: *Illumin* and Ethics. You will draft and re-draft them throughout the semester, ending with a polished portfolio that showcases your best writing. This portfolio will be due at the end of the semester and be shared with other WRIT 340 professors.

Illumin (220 points)

You will respond to a Call for Papers from *Illumin*, an on-line magazine published by the USC School of Engineering. Your audience is the actual *Illumin* audience – real people interested in science and engineering who might not be professional scientists or engineers. The *Illumin* assignment consists of three components:

1. Annotated Bibliography (20 points)

As part of your preparation for writing your article, you will submit an annotated bibliography identifying potential sources. You must have 10 sources in IEEE citation format and 10 related annotations.

Due: Friday, January 29 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard

2. Draft and Peer Reviews (20 points)

Before submitting your final Illumin article, you will submit a polished draft and also provide an anonymous peer review for two draft papers via Blackboard/PeerMark. You must first submit a draft if you want to participate in the peer reviews. If you have thoughtfully completed and submitted two peer reviews on Blackboard/PeerMark by the deadline, you will receive 20 points.

Polished draft due: Friday, February 5 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard

Peer reviews due: Tuesday, February 9 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard/PeerMark

3. Magazine Article (180 points)

You will attempt to educate non-engineers on some aspect of engineering practice relevant to people in their everyday lives.

Final draft due: Friday, February 12 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard

Ethics Paper (220 points)

You will examine the role of engineering in a relevant ethical context. Your audience will be your professional peers in your own engineering discipline.

1. Draft and Peer Reviews (20 points)

Before submitting your final Ethics paper, you will submit a polished draft and also provide an anonymous peer review for two draft papers via Blackboard/PeerMark. You must first submit a draft if you want to participate in the peer reviews. If you have thoughtfully completed and submitted two peer reviews on Blackboard/PeerMark by the deadline, you will receive 20 points.

Polished draft due: Sunday, March 14 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard

Peer reviews due: Tuesday, March 16 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard/PeerMark

2. Ethics Final Paper (200 points)

You will write a paper that examines the role of engineering in a relevant ethical context. Depending on your approach, this might be an article, a personal statement, a memo, or a position paper.

Final draft due: Friday, March 19 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard

Portfolio (250 points)

The portfolio is a university-wide 340 component and will consist of two *substantially rewritten* course assignments: *Ethics and Illumin*. Details will be discussed in class.

Due: Wednesday, April 28 prior to 11:59 PM via Blackboard

COLLABORATIVE WORK (about 245 points)

In the collaborative portion of WRIT 340, you will work with your peers to develop a proposal to increase equity and inclusion in society through the use of technology. You will select your own groups and define your own topic.

We will be using Blackboard Wiki and PitchVantage for this assignment. Your Blackboard Wiki contributions and completion of PitchVantage sessions constitute the individually graded portion of this assignment.

All other components of this project will be graded as a group, and all members of the group will receive the same grade for such components.

Viterbi Student Speaker Symposium Pitch (20 points)

You will submit a response to the call for the Viterbi Speaker Symposium via Blackboard.

1. Week 6 DUE by Sunday, February 28 at 11:59 PM (5 points)
2. Week 6 Monday, March 1 in class peer review (5 points)
3. Week 6 Wednesday, March 3 1-minute PitchVantage presentations (10 points)

Groups will be assigned during Week 6.

Group Petition (25 points)

Your group must prepare and submit **one** Group Petition prior to 11:59 PM on **Friday, March 26 via Blackboard**. **Select one group member to submit on your group's behalf.** This deliverable is worth 25 points, and all group members will receive the same grade.

Group Proposal (100 points)

Once a group petition has been approved, groups will develop the concept into a fully drafted proposal. Group work should be conducted in the Blackboard Wiki shared space for this portion of the assignment. The group should submit their completed work via Blackboard by **Friday, April 9 at 11:59 PM**.

Group Oral Presentation (100 points)

Each group will give a final oral presentation accompanied by presentation slides. **Oral Presentations will be given in class on 4/26 and 4/28.**

Group in-class work (10-25 points)

During weeks 10-32, there will be a few in-class deliverables related to the Group Project worth at least 5 points each.

IN-CLASS WORK (25-50 points):

Some class sessions may include some or all of the following: in-class exercises, small group work, draft reviews, workshops, and other activities. Some of the in-class work will be individual and others will be completed in groups. Credit will be given for thoughtful and timely completion. The lowest two scores on in-class work will be dropped. There are no-makeups for in-class work.

PROFESSIONALISM

This is an interactive-style class. Things don't go well if people are routinely absent or late or act disrespectfully towards others. Therefore, you are expected to attend class, to arrive on time, and to stay until the end of the class session. You are also expected to communicate with everyone in this course in a professional manner. We need everyone to participate, attend consistently, and treat each other with respect so that we can get the most out of time together!

Mandatory Drafts and Peer Reviews: A particularly important contribution you'll make to the class is critiquing other students' work in our polished draft peer review workshops. Our in-class peer review workshops are crucially important, and 1) *you must attend them*, 2) *you must arrive with a full written draft*, and 3) *you must give full and useful feedback to your classmates*.

Draft Review Policy: Complete draft reviews by me are not feasible in light of the number of students. Please do not email your drafts and demand a review or "edits." If you come to office hours, please do not expect to sit there silently while I read your work and "pre-grade" it or "tell you what you have to fix" to get an A. The grading process and the conferencing process are fully independent of one another. **Anyway, any list of "what to fix" I could possibly give you would not be exhaustive, and it would be unfair to you for me to pretend otherwise.**

Office Hours: I invite you to meet with me individually according to your own needs. *You* will be responsible for guiding the discussion. Have questions prepared regarding not only the specific piece of writing we're working on in class at the time but also your writing more generally. It would be wise to bring your last graded assignment as well as the assignment you are currently working on.

During office hours, I am happy to review up to one page of your writing and answer your questions about it. Most students find that attending office hours can greatly enhance the learning process in WRIT 340, and I would love to meet with you in person and answer any and all of your questions during office hours.

Missed classes: I do not count attendance as part of your grade, but if you do miss a class, you may miss in-class assignments that cannot be made up.

Questions I do not expect to hear from you and will not respond to: Did we do anything important yesterday? What did we do yesterday? Did I miss anything? Can I come to your office so you can catch me up on what I missed? Will you send me an email and let me know what you did in the class I missed?

Assume that we did do something important and that you did miss it. Contact one of your colleagues to fill you in on what you missed. Better yet, let one of your colleagues know in advance that you'll be missing class and he or she can take notes and collect any handouts for you.

Emails. Your email represents you as much as any other written or oral communication does. Take care to make it professional. This includes, but is not limited to, using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation; employing a direct and concise writing style; and organizing the document to further its purpose. It also means employing a respectful and professional tone. Please feel free to email me at helenhch@usc.edu. I will try my best to respond to your email queries within 48 hours of receipt.

All of the above are basic expectations for this class. If you adhere to these standards, you will be eligible to earn all available points for this class. Failure to adhere to professionalism standards will result in a loss of points and a revision of your grade downward of at least 1/3 of a letter grade. Thus, a B could be lowered to a B-, C+ or lower if a student exhibits poor professionalism, fails to participate in class discussions and engages in behavior as set forth above.

GRADING:

Grading of written work:

All writing assignments will be graded according to the rubric attached to this syllabus and assigned point values according to the following ranges:

- 90-100% (A)
- 80- 89.99% (B)
- 70- 79.99% (C)
- 60- 69.99% (D)
- 0- 59.99% (F)

Pluses and minuses equal the top and bottom 3 points of each grade category (i.e., 87.0 to 89.999 = B+ and 80.0 to 82.999% = B-).

Grading rubrics for the Major Writing Assignments and the oral presentation are attached to this syllabus.

Critical information: 1) **This course is not curved.** 2) **You are not graded on your effort. You are graded solely on product** – the end result, the document or presentation that the reader has in front of them.

Turning things in on time

Major Writing Assignments turned in prior to the due date and time are eligible to receive the full number of points available for that assignment. Assignments turned in within the next 24-hour period will be eligible to receive 90% of the number of points available for that assignment; within the next 24-hour period, 80%; and so on. For example, if an assignment is due at 11:00 PM on Blackboard, and it is submitted at 11:00:01 PM, it will be considered late and subject to the penalty. Please plan accordingly and do not wait until the last minute.

It is very rare that a student is able to increase the quality of a paper enough with extra time to compensate for the late penalties. Bottom line: It's smarter to work and meet the deadline than to turn in a late paper, even if the late paper is better than the on-time version would have been.

Anything more than five (5) days late will be eligible to earn 50% of the available points, no matter how late it is, if the work is adequately completed.

Please note that in-class work and PitchVantage Trainings are not subject to this late policy, and they are ineligible for partial points. In-class work cannot be made up, and late PitchVantage Trainings receive zero points, pursuant to the Assignment Packet.

Do not, under any circumstances, **fail to turn in a Major Writing Assignment**. Even if you have earned enough points with the other assignments to technically put you into passing territory, **you will automatically fail the class if a Major Writing Assignment is not turned in.**

COURSE CALENDAR

Date¹	Activities²	Due Dates³
Week 1 1/20	1/20: Introductions and diagnostic	
Week 2 1/25	Intro to Illumin Bibliography	Illumin Annotated Bibliography Due on Blackboard: Friday, January 29 prior to 11:59 PM
Week 3 2/1	Thesis and outline Illumin draft workshop	Illumin Draft Due on Blackboard: Friday, Feb 5 prior to 11:59 PM.
Week 4 2/8	In-class peer review and Illumin drop in session (2/10)	Illumin Peer Review Due on Blackboard/PeerMark: Tuesday, Feb 9 prior to 11:59 PM Illumin Article Due on Blackboard: Friday, Feb. 12 prior to 11:59 PM
Week 5 2/15	2/15 – no class Engineering & Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	
Week 6 2/22	4Cs – Correctness, Concision, Clarity, Cohesion	Speaker Symposium Pitch Due on Blackboard: Sunday, Feb 28 prior to 11:59 PM
Week 7 3/1	Intro to Ethics Application of frameworks	1-min Presentations Due on PitchVantage: Wednesday, March 3 prior to 3:30 PM
Week 8 3/8	Sample paper grading; topic selection Thesis and outline	Ethics Draft Due on Blackboard: Sunday, Mar 14 prior to 11:59 PM.
Week 9 3/15	Ethics Paper – Peer Review and Open class (3/17)	Ethics Peer Review Due on Blackboard/PeerMark: Tuesday, March 16 prior to 11:59 PM Ethics Paper Due on Blackboard: Friday, March 19 prior to 11:59 PM
Week 10 3/22	Introduction to Group Project Mandatory Group Meetings in-class	Group Petition due on Blackboard: Friday, March 26 prior to 11:59 PM
Week 11 3/29	Mandatory Group Meetings in-class	
Week 12 4/5	Mandatory Group Meetings in-class	Group Proposal due on Blackboard: Friday, April 9 prior to 11:59 PM
Week 13 4/12	Portfolios	
Week 14 4/19	Group Conferences	
Week 15 4/26	Group Presentations	Portfolio Due on Blackboard: Wednesday, April 28 prior to 11:59 PM

¹ This may be subject to change.

² Some classes may include in-class work. Such in-class work may not be made up; the lowest grade for in-class work will be dropped.

³ This list of due dates is not exhaustive. Please refer to the Assignment Packet and other course materials.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

The School of Engineering adheres to the University’s policies and procedures governing academic integrity. These standards will be enforced in this class on all assignments – including drafts, in-class writing, and group work.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

GRADING RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS⁴

(This rubric, in addition to that set forth here: <https://ewp.usc.edu/courses/> will be used for all written work in this class)

CRITERIA	Excellent	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Needs Improvement
THESIS, FOCUS, PURPOSE (30%)	Thesis and purpose are clear, closely match and promote the writing task, and provide fresh insight.	Thesis and purpose are fairly clear and match the writing task. Thesis and purpose are somewhat original.	Thesis and purpose are somewhat vague and/or loosely related to the writing task, and and/or unimaginative.	Reader cannot determine thesis and/or purpose, and/or thesis has no relation to the writing task.
ORGANIZATION (20%)	Fully supports thesis and purpose. Sequence of ideas is effective and logical. Transitions are smooth and effective. Organization is clear on overall, paragraph, and sentence levels.	Organization generally supports thesis and purpose. Transitions are generally appropriate and effective. However, sequence of ideas could be improved in terms of logical connections and style.	Some signs of logical organization in support of the thesis. Transitions are abrupt, illogical, and/or ineffective.	Unclear organization and/or organizational plan is inappropriate to thesis or purpose of assignment and/or no transitions.
SUPPORT (20%)	Substantial, logical, and concrete development of ideas. Assumptions are made explicit. Details are germane, original, and convincingly interpreted.	Offers solid but less original reasoning. Assumptions are not always made explicit or recognized. Contains some appropriate details or examples.	Offers some support that may be dubious, too broad or obvious. Details are too general, not interpreted, irrelevant to thesis, or inappropriately repetitive.	Offers simplistic, undeveloped, or cryptic support for ideas; inappropriate or off-topic generalizations; faulty assumptions; and/or errors of fact
SOURCES (10%)	Uses sources to support, extend, and inform, but not substitute for writer's own development of ideas. Skillfully combines material from a variety of sources. Always conforms to IEEE style.	Uses sources to support, extend, and inform the writer's own development of ideas. Appropriately uses quotes. May not always conform to IEEE style.	Uses relevant sources but substitutes them for the writer's own ideas. Quotations and paraphrases may be too long and/or inconsistently referenced.	Fails to use sources and/or overuses quotations or paraphrasing and/or uses source material without acknowledgement.
STYLE (10%)	Sentences are varied, complex, and employed for effect. Diction is precise and appropriate for the task/audience. Tone is mature, consistent, suitable for topic and audience. Adheres to assignment parameters.	Sentences show some variety and complexity. Diction is usually accurate and generally appropriate. Tone is appropriate. Adheres to assignment parameters.	Sentences show little variety and are simplistic. Diction is somewhat immature – with some reliance on clichés. Tone is inconsistent in terms of tense and person.	Superficial and stereotypical language. Oral rather than written language patterns predominate.
CONVENTIONS (10%)	Essentially error free. Superior language control.	Grammar and syntax are generally correct with very few errors in spelling and punctuation.	Repeated weaknesses in mechanics and usage. Pattern of flaws.	Mechanical and usage errors so severe that writer's ideas are difficult to understand.

⁴ This rubric is based on the Academic Essay Rubric resource developed by the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching.

WRIT 340E ORAL PRESENTATION GRADING RUBRIC

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
Content (40%)	Speakers significantly contributes to audience’s knowledge; purpose is clear and responsive to audience expectations; ideas are well developed; intro captures attention; transitions are smooth; conclusion is compelling and memorable; language is precise, vivid; the talk is uniquely oral; visual aids are appropriate and do not distract or overwhelm.	Speakers show understanding of subject; purpose is stated; main idea is evident but not always supported fully; intro and conclusion are serviceable; transitions may be awkward; language is appropriate but not always vivid or precise; talk is delivered as a memorized script; visual adds are adequate but do not add significant value to the talk.	Speakers do not relate to audience needs or interests; ideas are unclear and undeveloped; purpose of talk is unclear; main points are difficult to identify; supporting material is undeveloped; intro, conclusion and transitions are ineffective or missing; language choices are vague and limited.	Speakers are off topic; failure to fulfill basic requirements of assignment.
Structure (20%)	Talk is organized for listening; structure aids in understanding and memorability; organization reflects purpose, content, and message; goal/purpose are clearly articulated at start; organization is explicit and reinforced throughout; talk progresses logically	Talk is organized and generally accessible to audience; goal and purpose of talk are clear but may not be reinforced or completely fulfilled; all points are covered but not presented in a way that creates clear understanding; structure is generally functional and speakers demonstrate above average skills in preparing and organizing information	Talk conforms to basic assignment but lacks clear structure; generally the talk makes sense but some parts are not readily identifiable; lack of organization confuses audience.	Talk is clearly unprepared and may include only jumbled information.
Delivery (40%)	All speakers are polished, well-prepared and in control of material. Delivery strengthened impact of talk and is appropriate for the audience; clear, comprehensible, articulate verbal expression; professional demeanor, tone, and style; fluent, accurate and precise language; clear and audible pronunciation; natural body language; clear integration with visual aids.	Some speakers are polished, well-prepared and in control of material; other speakers were not as polished. Delivery is generally effective but does not significantly contribute to audience’s experience; proficient verbal expression; command of language; body language does not distract; speaker(s) show hesitancy or nervousness.	Most speakers were not polished or well-prepared. Delivery undermines the message. Verbal expression is unsophisticated. Speaker(s) mumble, use filler terms, poor articulation and pronunciation. Speaker(s) are clearly uncomfortable and expresses discomfort to audience.	All speakers were unresponsive to audience and unprofessional. Speakers unable to complete basic assignment.