

## WRIT 340 – Advanced Writing and Communication for Engineers

Units: 4

Spring 2023

Section 66827, 66833, 66857

MW 12:30 – 1:50 PM, 3:30 – 4:50 PM, 5:00 – 6:20 PM

Instructor: Sarah Mojarad

Virtual Office Hours available for sign up each week or by appointment

Contact Info: [mojarad@usc.edu](mailto:mojarad@usc.edu)

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

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

Illumin: <http://illuminate.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.*

**Non-Viterbi students who have an interest in science, technology, and engineering are welcome to enroll in this section. Please speak with Professor Mojarad the first week of class.**

### 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:

This course does not have required texts; however, you will do reading and research using the USC Library databases. **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:**

A subscription to PitchVantage is required for this class. The student rate is \$40 for a 6-month license. More details will be provided in Week 1. To use the PitchVantage software, you will need a headset, microphone, or earbuds.

**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.

PitchVantage will be used in lieu of individual presentations. There will be an in-class 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 be made available in the **Assignment Packet** for this course the first week of class. A brief summary of each component of the course is presented below.

Assignment	Points
Illumin	300
Ethics	300
Portfolio	500
Group Project	650
In-Class Work	~ 50 - 90
<b>Total</b>	<b>~ 1,800 - 1,830</b>

**INDIVIDUAL MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS** (1,100 points)

You have two main individual writing assignments 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** (300 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.

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

**Ethics Paper** (300 points)

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

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

**Portfolio** (500 points)

The portfolio is a university-wide 340 component and will consist of two *substantially rewritten* course assignments: *Ethics and Illumin*. A summary of changes is required for each of the essays in the portfolio. Details will be discussed in class.

### **COLLABORATIVE WORK** (650 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 self-select your groups in Week 10.

### **GRADING:**

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.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required and expected.

**Turning things in on time:** Major Writing Assignments turned in prior to the due date 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.

Unless otherwise stated, anything more than five (5) days late will be eligible to earn 50% of the available points, so long as the work is submitted two weeks prior to the last day of class.<sup>1</sup>

**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.**

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that in-class work, PitchVantage assignments and peer reviews are not subject to this late policy, and they are ineligible for partial points. In-class work cannot be made up. PitchVantage assignments and peer reviews receive zero points if the work is not submitted on time.

## COURSE CALENDAR

Date <sup>2</sup>	Activities <sup>3</sup>	Deliverables <sup>4</sup>
<b>Week 1</b> 1/9	Introductions and diagnostic Assignment rubrics	<b>Illumin Paper Topic; PitchVantage</b>
<b>Week 2</b> 1/16	Scholarly Sources, Research, and IEEE Plagiarism 1/16 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day ( <i>No class</i> )	<b>Bibliography</b>
<b>Week 3</b> 1/23	Organization and Outlines	<b>Outline</b>
<b>Week 4</b> 1/30	4 Cs	<b>First Draft</b>
<b>Week 5</b> 2/6	Constructive Peer Feedback	<b>Peer Reviews Final Paper; PitchVantage</b>
<b>Week 6</b> 2/13	Spring Break	
<b>Week 7</b> 2/20	Engineering and Ethics	<b>Ethics Paper Topic; PitchVantage</b>
<b>Week 8</b> 2/27	Ethics in Practice 2/20 – President’s Day ( <i>No class</i> )	<b>Bibliography and Outline</b>
<b>Week 9</b> 3/6	Writing Style	<b>Ethics Draft</b>
<b>Week 10</b> 3/13	Ethics Paper Workshop	<b>Peer Reviews Final Paper; PitchVantage</b>
<b>Week 11</b> 3/20	Engineering Equity and Inclusion	<b>Proposal Pitch Group Petition; Extra Credit</b>
<b>Week 12</b> 3/27	Group Project - Purpose, Genre, and Audience	<b>Proposal Outline; Extra Credit</b>
<b>Week 13</b> 4/3	Proposal Drafts	<b>Proposal Draft and Slides</b>
<b>Week 14</b> 4/10	Final Proposal	<b>Final Proposal</b>
<b>Week 15</b> 4/17	Group Project Oral Presentations	<b>Group Presentations</b>
<b>Week 16</b> 4/24	Portfolio Week	<b>Portfolio; Course Evals</b>

<sup>2</sup> This may be subject to change.

<sup>3</sup> Some classes include in-class work that may not be made up.

<sup>4</sup> **Unless otherwise stated, deadlines are Sunday by 11:59 PM.** 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)

## GRADING RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS<sup>5</sup>

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

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaches Expectations</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>THESIS, FOCUS, PURPOSE (30%)</b>	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.
<b>ORGANIZATION (20%)</b>	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.
<b>SUPPORT (20%)</b>	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
<b>SOURCES (10%)</b>	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.
<b>STYLE (10%)</b>	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.
<b>CONVENTIONS (10%)</b>	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.

<sup>5</sup> 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
<b>Content (40%)</b>	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.
<b>Structure (20%)</b>	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.
<b>Delivery (40%)</b>	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.